CAF

REPORT ANNUAL FORUM 2015

STEPS OF PROGRESS IN TIMES OF CRISIS

common action forum

Wadah Khanfar
Chairman, Common Action Forum

Presentation

Common Action Forum (CAF) is an international non-profit foundation based in Madrid, Spain, designed to establish independent platforms of cooperation, research, innovation and advisory in order to shape alternative solutions and empower global citizens to address socio-political issues and economic inequalities of our time.

Working as a worldwide network, CAF advocates for the exchange of experiences and collective design of global strategies by bringing together prominent and emerging experts from diverse backgrounds including academia, politics, media, civil society and culture. To reach active solutions we support dialogue, mediation, research and projects committed to justice and alternative frameworks positioned to deal with contemporary challenges.

The official launch of CAF took place on Dec 5th and 6th, 2015, in Madrid, through the celebration of the roundtable conference 'Steps of Progress in Times of Crisis' where a diverse group of intellectuals, activists, politicians, journalists and artists came together to debate on the changing contemporary international order. The gathering addressed the progress in development during recent centuries within the evolution of a system that currently seems to have reached its limits. Unforeseen inequalities and boundless conflicts define the unfolding realities of transnationalism, exchanges, mobility and mobilization. As much as knowledge, technology and communication become part of everyday life, giving societies new dynamics and possibilities, expansion and exclusion no longer happen without crisis and social repercussions.

The present document is a report on the two- day conference that highlights the current questions raised, as well as the proposals for change made, by participants within four strategical dimensions: **International Affairs & Universal Jurisdiction | Politics & Economics | Governance & Civil Society | Media & Technology.** The event ultimately aimed at providing a research and development platform for ideas and practical steps to make political and international systems fairer and more equal.

common action forum

2015
Steps of progress in times of crisis

Juan Luis Cebrián
Opening Session

Introduction

The Forum was held to address the structural change in the international system, analysing the reasons why global economic and political organizations have failed in the equitable sharing of resources and governance, resulting in the increase of the rate of poverty and marginalization worldwide as well as a pervasive feeling of injustice and exclusion.

More than 50 intellectuals, experts, activists, journalists and politicians from all over the world engaged in roundtable and panel discussions for collective exchange and deep conversation in order to move from passive criticism towards proposed actions that lead to achieving real reforms within this ageing system.

Six sessions were conducted over the course of two days (an opening session, four thematic sessions and a closing session) where each thematic session had a first half of keynote and expert speeches and a second half of debates, a format intended to create a space for open dialogue as well as networking opportunities in favour of long term cooperation and collaborative works.

CAF's Chairman Wadah Khanfar and Juan Luis Cebrián - CEO of PRISA, opened the event by placing the spotlight squarely on the current global hegemony and the need for new solutions that consider alternative political paradigms to that of neoliberal capitalism.

The first CAF annual Forum also marked the launch of RefugeesMap.com, a volunteer-driven multimedia project collating information regarding the global movement of people to provide an interactive tool that empowers and optimizes transnational action against the migration crisis.

first session

The paradigms of international politics in a turbulent globalization

Progress in contraposition to the global crisis and the return of big powers competition

Three major events in 2008 modified the relationship between world powers, as their disagreement in foreign policy became public, leading to the loss of international consensus. These events included the Olympic Games in China, the military conflict between Russia and Georgia and the collapse of Lehman Brothers.

The Olympic Games in China represented the consolidation of the Asian giant as a major new geopolitical actor in the world. The Russian invasion of Georgia was the first time a member of the United Nations Security Council started a military conflict since the fall of the Berlin Wall. Finally, the shattering of Lehman Brothers meant the beginning of the current economic crisis and the end of the golden era of capitalism.

We are not only witnessing the melancholic finale of capitalism's golden age, but also the end of the illusory achievement of the zenith of progress in human history. In the transition between the 20th and the 21st century, we happily witnessed the increase in social and human rights, technological development, the significant progress of developing nations in certain areas and the establishment of democracy as the hegemonic political system.

Despite these accomplishments, we are experiencing a political crisis of representation worldwide, as citizens are unsatisfied with the performance of their democracies, thus generating the emergence of a new political demos.

This political disenchantment is just a reflection of the structural crisis we are living, characterized by imbalances between political, economic, social and cultural processes. All of these pillars are collapsing in a global scenario that has repercussions for the regional level. This situation raises the possibility of a domino effect with potential crisis transfer between ecosystems around the world, leading ultimately to a future of permanent structural, cyclical crises.

Current issues

1 The big powers are back and their relationship is of competition rather than cooperation, taking this rivalry to the international arena with special protagonism in the Middle East.

2 Regional problems have a global impact, which demonstrates the interdependency that globalization brings along, meaning that whatever is done, or is not done, has a large-scale impact.

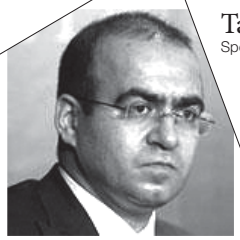
3 Following the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan after the attacks of 9/11, there were many reports warning of upcoming crises, yet these reports were more findings rather than solution-oriented proposals to fix structural problems. Sadly, this represented the beginning of an era of political apathy.

4 This political apathy is underway in countries that hold global economic and military power in their hands, allowing the disappearance of intervention mechanisms to solve postmodern age problems, and the arrival of a latent global nihilism.

5 The G20 had great results in halting the collapse of the economy, yet it failed to coordinate a sustainable way to grow, thus not being truly effective. The depression subsequently followed, one which we are still suffering from today, which has translated into the increase of inequalities.

6 The incapacity of politics to solve these problems has resulted in people's disenchantment and a lack of trust in politics, causing the emergence of more influence from civil society organizations.

Sami Zeidan
Moderator 1st Session



Taha Ozhan
Speaker 1st Session

Javier Solana
Keynote 1st Session

Matias Bianchi
Speaker 1st Session

7 Civil society organizations are more important in the international scene due to the influence they are obtaining through social media and new communication techniques that ultimately gives them the opportunity to engage with the power vacuum that exists between the interaction of transnational and regional powers.

8 The crisis we are suffering today finds its core in political parties because their essential features (hierarchy, bureaucracy and discipline) do not represent society any longer.

9 Consequently, a new style of thinking and acting is emerging and generating changes through networked reforms and micro-political revolutions by employing cooperation and communication (i.e. hacker-ethics, positive impoverishment etc.).

10 Because these conflicting perspectives interact in our modern day political system, we are seeing a loss in translation between this new emerging society and the traditional political system. This, alongside with the difficulties of its network nature (lack of a single leadership), prevents the penetration of new demos in politics.

11 These difficulties are aggravated by the lack of education in the minds of individuals that are not set on the construction of cooperation amongst big powers. As a result, economic inequality continues, magnified by religious and identity conflicts that seem to be here to stay.

12 Modernity is based upon the balance between The Enlightenment, the State and the Economy. Yet this balance is fractured. Today, technology represents The Enlightenment rather than the process of achieving it. The State has become a political apparatus without adequate and updated political structures. And businesses have replaced the art of Economy.

13 Globalization is exclusively financial. We are ready to produce at the price of Bangladesh and sell at the price of London, yet we are not ready to see Africans, Palestinians or Syrians seek refuge in the European Welfare States.

14 Money has abandoned its material security and is growing inorganically, thus creating a political crisis rather than just an economic one: the ultimate financial global village.

15 Inequality in developed countries today has grown to levels seen in the 1910s as a result of the corruption in integration processes as different worlds are produced along with non-concurring flows. Inequality and poverty must be separated as, though many times they go together, they are different malaises.

16 The South is gaining more influence and is expanding faster than expected, thus becoming a major geopolitical actor. Stopping this expansion would mean that we would have to put an end to our relationship between finance and production as we know it today, as well as to our global dependency network; a network which, in the near future, seems untenable.

Alberto Mayol
Speaker 1st Session

"We just find a way to harmonize our relationship between liberty and equality."

Challenges

A better understanding of the big powers is needed through the usage of diplomacy to the last resort.

The paradigm of policy-making needs to change from an elitist, top-down approach to a more plural bottom-up perspective of contemporary problem solving.

To solve the problem of power construction, the current political system must be adapted to a 21st century society that experiences the presence of micro-revolutionary groups within politics. Through their inclusion in more participatory democracies, the threats of radicalization can be avoided.

Every human creation harmonizes contradictions and opposites. In music, harmony and melody are opposites and they are harmonized; in painting, shape and color are opposites and they are harmonized.

We are standing between global political nihilism and global political opening. Choosing the second option means the revival of politics as a means to create a platform for the re-emergence of revision, constructive intervention, and politics itself.

Money and power are like a fluid that need a circulatory system, a body. This body must be the social structure also integrated into culture and institutions.

To break the vicious circle of cyclic structural crises, the undeclared economic tensions between North and South must be addressed. This entails updating global institutions built in the post-World War II order, institutions that currently reflect the circumstances of a bygone century.

second session

To live without hope is to live without fear: Time, politics and affection

Revising the notion of progress and the emergence of new political subjects

From Ancient Greece to the Enlightenment, History was, to a great extent, a collection of examples: "History as a teacher of life" as Cicero would say; an investigation by means of questioning witnesses that allowed individuals to look for big actions in order to know how to proceed in the face of similar situations in the present.

Since the French Revolution, the experience of a radically new time presupposed the possibility of a profound rearrangement of the balance of power and our perception and understanding of History. This means that finding orientation in the political order entailed acting from the knowledge of the causes that define the present as a holder of the latency of what has not taken place yet. This is why history became no longer a space of reproduction of the past in the present, but the construction of the promise of a different forthcoming social body. To date, that is termed "progress."

Still, progress has evolved in a level time rather than in the spatial one, thus setting the basis for colonization built on controlling others. In the end, progress must not mean domination of others to endure time, but cooperation with them in the spatial dimension.

On the other hand, progress needs expectation to maintain its temporal continuity and thus, utopias were born. They could guarantee that the notion of progress was an account of what was not yet within the realm of possibilities in social life. In other words, utopias rise as the ideal representation to defend the power of transformation in politics, implying the articulation between time, politics and emotion.

Therefore, political life is affected by two emotional systems: inclination and vigilance. The first one administers emotions like enthusiasm, agreement or confirmation. Meanwhile, the second one handles the emotions of fear and distrust. Regulating fear ultimately plays an important role in the construction of "the vigilant dimensions of societies". This dimension focuses on the revision of protocols and legal mechanisms that ensure values such as participation, equal opportunities within political and epistemic inequities.

Furthermore, social movements are integrated via frameworks that provide interpretations and conceptions, explanations for events and diagnoses, with which people come to understand phenomena and establish consensus.

Current issues

1 The political task could have been seen as the politicization of temporality achieved by two strategies: acceleration of time as the unification of the origin of the destiny of past and future; and the repetition of surpassed struggles left behind in the hope for a liberating recovery.

2 This leads us to live in a constant search of the achievement of utopias. This craving is characterized by a time of expectations where the ideal future has already been designed in the present and it determines the idea of "what must be".

3 There is a temporality belonging to utopia as well as a circuit of emotions produced by social life that cooperates with the political establishment.

4 The time of utopia is marked by the movement of hope as the central political emotion; it is the expectation of a future good.

Vladimir Safatle
Keynote 2nd Session

María Navarro
Speaker 2nd Session

Romualdo Días
Speaker 2nd Session

Clayton Swisher
Moderator 2nd Session

5 Hope cannot exist without fear, and vice versa. Those who cling to hope are afraid that their desire may not take place and those who are afraid of the realization of a future harm also hope that this thing does not take place.

6 Any policy based on fear brings a status quo to politics as it creates, maintains and feeds superstition towards change. Therefore, any politics based on hope thus leads to no change as it traps us in the chains of inaction.

7 In contrast with hope and fear, security emerges as something that eliminates doubt because; it is based in control over circumstances. However, this means denying the main feature of time, the unpredictable nature of the contingency. In understanding time from a non-removability perspective, politics emerges as an attempt to falsify time.

8 The current political demands from society are not searching for better economic, social or political conditions, but power removal; ultimately, power redistribution.

9 In societies where there is asymmetry, broad political phenomena are described by the term "framed alignments." This refers to the political behaviour of citizens who lend their ideological support to certain political ideas, while not professing a special degree of involvement.

10 However, despite the construction of these political frame alignments, still, the notion of representativity is not always taken into account within participatory processes. For instance, the electronic models of democracy where the participant nominates and selects herself/himself to participate, does not address the representativity of the sample.

11 Moreover, unfortunately, individuals in general have become idle observers of the political process rather than assuming their position as actors. This is due to the cultural environment we live in, which has reduced us to spectators expecting for things to happen as our sole reaction towards accidents.

12 Before globalization arrived we used to believe and belong to a place. This has changed with the weakening of geography and has generated a fracture between believing and belonging, thus setting the basis for a disenchantment towards the State.

13 This fact has generated the phenomenon of time displacement, rather than the traditional geographical one such as experienced by refugees. This event dispossesses us of our condition of being time's legislators.

Khalid Hajji
Speaker 2nd Session

Challenges

In order to promote the emergence of new political actors, it is necessary to get rid of the passive expectations and reconcile ourselves with the absolute present, disowning utopias.

To overcome fear, as well as economic and social adversity, we must accept the tragic vision of life and its cycle of transforming the unimaginable into reality. And we can only achieve this by accepting uncertainty and embrace that which we cannot control: contingency and dispossession. Assuming this tragic vision of live involves reshaping emotions in order to generate new, coercive forces that inject courage and indignation in our societies.

Rebuilding political legitimacy demands the opening of deliberative settings within participatory processes, where representativity is essential in developing a deliberative model of democracy that ensures equal access.

We must address the development of deliberation, understood as a nested system, by looking deeply into our own culture and capturing all the informal deliberative experiences of daily life. Recovering all the principles with which we currently reach decisions and deal with disagreement in our communicative practices could lead to a different political landscape.

We must, as a species, reclaim the spatial dimension of progress and focus our energies on cooperating with each other to endure time, rather than compete to endure time individually.

Language is fundamental to our survival as sentient beings, yet we must find a new language that permits us to concentrate in the present. The concepts of progress, time, space, media and politics need to be renewed within a new mindset, developed through new tools.

In the end, it is important to focus on what is essential for a politics of the common, and surpass fragmented multicultural demands that often become ornamental politics.

third session

New principles of universal jurisdiction for economics and environment

Universal jurisdiction and its extension to prosecute crimes of global repercussions and the public interest reflected in economy and culture

In recent decades, Universal Jurisdiction has proven to be a necessary instrument in ensuring a full and completely satisfactory judicial response to international crimes, under the precept that certain crimes, due to their nature and seriousness, transcend the responsibility of a particular sovereign State and affect humanity as a whole. International criminal law has developed considerably, from the establishment of the Nuremberg and Tokyo Trials in the 1940s, to the creation of ad hoc tribunals. However, a major advance in International Criminal Law was the adoption of the Rome Statute (1998), which established the International Criminal Court, and its review in the Conference of Kampala (2010).

The Princeton Principles and those of Cairo-Arusha went a long way in defining the key ideas of Universal Jurisdiction by offering a rational, measured response to criminal offences, which has led to progress in protecting victims and in combating impunity.

In addition, Madrid-Buenos Aires Principles also went a step forward in the extension of Universal Jurisdiction, including in the prosecution of offences with economic and environmental aspects in crimes against humanity. The underlying aim of these Principles was to present prosecution as an aspiration to ensure the full protection and survival of humanity.

However, in legal doctrine, addressing economic or environmental crimes requires defining the protected legal asset and who the victims are and who the perpetrators, questions intrinsically connected to jurisdictional sovereignty and public property, which are often undermined.

Sovereignty is always understood within a territory, a nation, but the question of what sovereignty is exercised over is never mentioned. This is also accompanied by the fact that developing States have rejected and lost their legislative sovereignty. At the same time, historical constitutionalism has little to say about public property, and protection from the legal system is scarce. As a result, two questions emerge: Which are the natural resources and wealth that form sovereignty? And, what is the legal protection regime of this sovereignty?

These questions of sovereignty apply to other areas, including culture and education. Intellectual property, for example, became a very controversial topic in these past decades. In this context, Creative Commons illustrates new articulations of copyright laws, free software licenses and open knowledge movements, allowing creators to decide to what extent they want to share their own work.

Globalization is based on the belief that this universal system will deliver beneficence to society because it is inorganic and it has its own system of autoregulation. However, the reality is that the global system is an organic system consisting of individuals with socially constructed behaviours and norms. We must not forget that we live in a Euro-centric system that essentializes a particular value system imposed on the rest. Consequently, conflicts of sovereignty, territoriality and application of law come into play when it comes to universal jurisdiction.

Current issues

1 Despite all the advances made in universal jurisdiction, the application of this principle has faced limitations in various countries over the past years, leading to direct and indirect consequences for transnational legal cooperation in the prosecution of crimes, such as corruption or terrorism, in detriment to both the individual country and international security.

2 There is a worldwide regulatory deficiency over actions from multinational corporations which violate Human Rights through mechanisms of abusive exploitation of resources, confrontation with native peoples, repeated corruption processes, lack of democratic, economic and financial controls and, above all, lack of responses at a collective, international level.

3 Article 7 of the Rome Statute establishes the classification of crimes against humanity, including: torture, slavery, and apartheid, forced relocation of people and forced disappearance. This exposes the need for holistic systemization of people, of a policy, of a State, and of organizations. The letter K of the Article also adds, “Any other act of a similar nature that is also developed in a systematic, repeated way and so on.” This raises the question, what do we understand as ‘Any other act of similar nature’?

4 There are international legal grounds to prosecute economic and environmental crimes irrespective of the place where these actions have been committed, but they are subjected to a systematic effect of interpretation. This means choosing either between a localist view, which depreciates universal jurisdiction, or an internationalist interpretation, according to the nature of the actions and their impact on the people, the ecosystem and the economic structure.

5 As a result of the strengthening of the global financial and economic system, many States have lost their jurisdictional and legislative sovereignty to economic powers, thus generating a lack of regulations regarding public property; that is, natural resources.

6 The right to self-determination, which includes civil, political, economic and social rights, is enshrined in the clauses of the United Nations, which establish the people's ownership over natural resources. However, this regulatory statement has little protection in daily activity, because national legal systems lack operating systems that can prevent the plundering of natural resources.

7 In contrast with private property, with a regulatory arsenal derived from constitutions, there are little regulations referencing public property and its nature. For instance, expropriation criteria do not have an accurate, mathematical balance between the expropriated asset and the sum it compensates. Accordingly, other variables ought to be introduced; for instance, how much utility has the expropriated asset had in order to amortize the expropriation value?

8 We are living admidst financial globalization. Supranational courts are at the service of international financial capital, protecting investors and disabling the national power of the state that has lost the judicial and legislative sovereignty. Those that benefit.

9 Judges are not too skillful when it comes to applying the Constitution or international conventions. They can deal with usual codes and laws and precedents, however, they see the Constitution and international treaties as matters that only concern the Supreme Court.

10 The current global system is a reflection of the local system and, as we have been unable to deliver social good and justice within the national system, we have created an unjust and competitive global system characterized by inequality and crisis. We are no longer talking about the economy, an economic activity determining the progress and outcome, but the financial system, and morality has been forgotten in the process.

11 The global system we live in is, in essence, Euro-centric. It is thus based on cultural and social conceptions and interactions linked to competition. This means that the current global system is incompatible with other nations' cultural and social perspectives, which are rooted in other emotions, such as cooperation and solidarity. This situation generates friction amongst nations and ultimately generates the current global situation of a lack of understanding between nations.

12 We are living in an extraordinary innovative and creative processes, yet there is no universal harmonization around measures to share the knowledge. The copyright system is evolving and becoming global as well, representing an imminent threat if not adapted to the new era. Without adaption, it can limit the access to and production of cultural diversity, thus preventing critical thought, the so-called 'food for thought.'

Miguel Jiménez
Moderator 3rd Session

Mehmet Asutay
Speaker 3rd Session

Baltasar Garzón
Keynote 3rd Session

Eduardo Barcesat
Speaker 3rd Session

Fátima São Simão
Speaker 3rd Session

Challenges

Universal jurisdiction must be recovered and reinforced in order to defend globalized society from the overwhelming power of transnational corporations, consequently recognizing the destruction of ecosystems and financial crimes as crimes against humanity.

To apply Universal Jurisdiction principles, we must ensure finding a mechanism to create two effects: one, comprehensive protection of victims, who can be individual victims, collective victims or the ecosystem itself and nature as an actor possessing Human Rights. And, two, the eradication of impunity by limiting these spaces where new individual or collective, personal or corporate actors, can act outside the Law.

The international Criminal Court's function needs to be strengthened at the local level by applying the Universal Jurisdiction. This would allow for the reporting of new sources of impunity and the means to prevent it, in order to establish an 'opinio juris' to consolidate this principle as an effective instrument in eradicating impunity and protecting victims and the ecosystem.

International law has to be proactively interpreted to favor the victims as they are the element that requires more protection, an integrated, sustained and sustainable protection. Those organisms that protect human rights, like international courts, should assume the obligation of coordinating the interpretation that the human rights vision is universal.

International human rights treaties must be, along with constitutional text, the highest law in the nation. We need judges that fully exercise the role of knowing and deciding, which does not only entail the knowledge of laws and precedents but, fundamentally, the knowledge of their constitutions and ratified international treaties.

The exercise of jurisdiction may have an overall precautionary nature for the future. That is, not just acting to mend the damage but also creating mechanisms to prevent it. We have to manage to express all this universally, in rules and principles that can be accepted by the international community and by every country. Consequently, a global vision must be built to coordinate these actions in order to extend the so-called global village to all areas.

In order to be globalized, we must identify nature and ourselves as legal subjects, by guiding lawmaking activity via a principle of not thinking of man as center, but of man's existence in nature.

The new demos and its organic realities are emerging in different parts of the world beyond the global system and beyond the universal jurisdictions, representing exciting yet small initiatives and innovations, such as participatory economy.

In this regard, the participatory economy should be considered as an architecture of the new paradigm shifted to generate beneficence by socializing everyday economic and financial actions, by recognizing the values beyond the prices. It is also important to notice that the moral is related to outcomes and consequences as well as forms, and it requires ethics to be incorporated within the ontological forms of knowledge, leading to a particular morally-oriented market system.

Simultaneously, to promote a collaborative economy and to allow the access of shared knowledge, we also need to bring the copyright laws discussion to the center of policy making.

fourth session

Post-political governance: Networks, cities, citizenship and micropolitics

Patterns of political transformation and the need for an agenda that contemplates both social technology and pedagogy in which the commons operate

Speaking of post-political governance implies thinking in the primacy of economics over politics, especially in this post-industrial era. So far, we have looked, powerless, at how cities have been challenged by capital fluxes, reducing the world into a single Global City. However, in the last few years, classic forms of representation and governance are being challenged by social movements around the world in protest against social and economic inequalities. Right after the Arab Spring in 2010, there came the Outrage Movement in Spain and Greece in 2011; the same year, Israel and Russia experienced similar situations, as did the United States with The Occupy movement, and a year later Mexico with the movement Yo Soy 132 ("I am 132").

This general discontent, translated into action, has opened a new hybrid space where hyperlocal politics are generated while spreading throughout the world in real time. Ultimately, we have moved from a Global City towards a Global Street. This "street" gives society the chance to cultivate new social relationships though a reconciliation of thoughts and feelings, and the acceptance of the existential category of suffering as a political exercise.

Nonetheless, some of these social movements are still in the making, so we cannot say yet whether they are revolutions. This is the case in the Middle East, an extremely complex region that has undergone many changes over the years. In fact, if we look back in history, the situation in the Arab region right now is similar to the one experienced in the last days of the Ottoman Empire: confusion in decisiveness, loss of control of all powers, wars, inconsistency in politics and interventions, overemphasis on maintaining regimes as the only way for stability. This generates two possibilities: either the Old Order falls and a New Order is implemented in the region, or the region enters a transitional status without a New Order in the horizon.

Even so, it must be stressed that most of these social movements were the result of a synergy among different collectives, giving rise to a sort of convergence. This new ecosystem, based on social networks, is a common space from where collective actions are generated; it counts on social media as a new tool of empowerment.

Technology then plays a major role in the construction of new narratives, to the extent that a new concept has emerged: the smart cities, those cities that use new digital technology for a resource preservation and sustainability, as well as conducting future-oriented policy. In other words, cities use big data network applications for the efficient steering of (formerly) public services such as mobility, energy, environment, safety, health and administration.

The crucial point behind the promises held by the notion of smart cities takes place in the bio-political dimension, where a society of control could be accomplished though technology against the common interest, and the new forms of control could decrease the quality of social ties.

Current issues

1 There are three main elements, amongst many catalysts, which lead to a system of transformation in the Middle East: religion and ideology, wars and revolutions, external intervention and external actors. Currently, these three factors are in play simultaneously, thus causing the entire region to undergo a migration status, physically and intellectually.

2 Arab regions are in a moment of intense political struggle, at the heart of which are two different positions, largely: one is the determination to maintain the status quo, and the other is the determination to create change.

3 This intense struggle is displaying counterrevolutionary tactics such as 'Divide and Conquer'. That is, the act of creating and defining different social and political groups and fragmenting them by privileging certain groups over others. One of the main strategies used is desectorialization: trying to resurrect ethnic sectarian identities under the precept of "There is no alternative to dictatorship".

4 Meanwhile, there is inconsistent European and North American policy intervention in the Arab world, with the Western powers claiming that the region has always had a weak democratic legacy.

5 There is a blackmail from transnational political bodies, as they marginalize those countries that refuse to join the universal market economy and become globalized, and designate economic concessions to those who do join.

6 When it comes to local governments, the idea of citizenship becomes particularly important. In many Arab countries, people are not citizens but subjects due to the prolonged historical heritage of puppet dictatorial regimes, which, ultimately, gave people the option to choose between the "security" of a dictatorship or the chaos and terror of liberty and change.

7 Politics is both macropolitical and micropolitical, simultaneously. Everything operates on both levels, which creates problems for those unaware of the consequence in the other realms because of their focus on one or the other. We ignore the holes and the gaps in which war machines generate de-territorializations that create fascism, both personal and social. Totalitarianism as a concept is macropolitical, but this ignores the cancerous growth of fascism in small groups, communities, and individuals that allow fascism to thrive.

8 Nonetheless, here micropolitics refers to the politics of emotions, the politics of the beings that find themselves in a public space and form a common space. It is not the individual act in itself that matters, but the way people respond to it, the way people interact with it and do something about it.

9 Social media has a role to play as a tool for disseminating and creating knowledge, as well as providing the first step towards bring people together. Nowadays, a hashtag on Twitter pops up and, in 48 hours, it has already gone around the planet. Nonetheless, it is still the act of exchanging ideas and planning for action physically and intellectually that creates change, something that the social networks cannot achieve by themselves.

10 On the other hand, we are witnessing the decline of nation-states and the rise of cities as new spaces of political creation, where new municipalities are strengthening every day, more and more. These new spaces stem from the social technology, assembly methodology for collective science, open digital tools, and so on.

11 However, when we talk about technology regarding the city, it is hardly referred to as an innovation and it is always referred to from the perspective of a startup logic, linked to competition and proprietary technology. This is how the smart city is conceptualized.

12 Some technological aspects of the smart city are harnessed to maintain social segregation and exclusion. An example is the "Operation Center" in Rio de Janeiro that was implemented in 2010 by IBM and integrates the data of 30 municipal units like fire departments and police stations, reducing the use of these big data network applications to stimulate safety. Therefore, we find out that the central analysis of data, including surveillance cameras on the metro, train, bus and in public spaces aims to prevent crime in the city, yet it is destined to benefit the rich rather than the entirety of urban societies.

Ramzy Baroud
Moderator 4th Session

Emad Shahin
keynote 4th Session

Challenges

Modern political ecosystems demand a nation-state framework where citizenship, identity and democracy can coexist and cooperate. For the Middle East to achieve that, a better understanding about its patterns of political transformation is needed in order to come up with a workable, action-oriented agenda for reform. This grand plan also requires damage control to avoid the increasing disintegration of more states in the region.

The Middle East has always revolted and rose up to achieve freedom, self-determination, and an underlying, full emancipation. Hence, international media and external actors should stop justifying their inaction regarding the Arab world crisis based on the premise that it has a weak democratic legacy.

Although the Arab Spring's aim is aborted, it is still an ongoing process. These movements that are emerging around the Arab world represent an interesting experiment that enables the exploration of new avenues of political participation, avenues that were not available before the Arab revolutions.

Jamal Khashoggi
Speaker 4th Session

Martin Gegner
Speaker 4th Session

Rafael Heiber
Closing session

Intissar Kherigi
Speaker 4th Session

Bernardo Gutiérrez
Speaker 4th Session

We can identify, at least, four factors that can tell us where the Arab region will be in the long term. A) Demography: the youth population in the Middle East is expected to reach almost 100 million by 2030; B) Water and food scarcity: the region imports more than 50% of its food consumption; fluctuations in market prices can cause famine and hunger; C) The State capacity: eight States in the region are classified as 'Failing States'' when it comes to human right violations, state legitimacy, and political grievances; D) The non-state actors: their actions have global implications, starting with Hezbollah, Hamas, Al Qaeda, and ISIS.

Authoritarian states act as a black hole for societies at the micro-level, as they penetrate into every cell and structure of society. As a result, the Arab region not only has the huge task of rebuilding the nation-state, but it is also confronted with the challenge rebuilding society, citizenship and the public interest. To this end, micropolitcs acquires a vital importance. In some countries like Tunisia, revolution was an affirmation of the people beyond the center, on the fringes geographically, economically, politically, and socially.

All these movements of ephemeral and temporary occupation of urban areas went on to create political prototypes that come from hacker ethics and define an unfinished model of something that can be improved by means of collective action. Therefore, we have to address people coming together in collective action.

Still, the challenge remains in how to deal with the issue of leadership and spontaneity; how a social movement can be vibrant but also develop a leadership that is able to articulate certain political demands and pressures.

We cannot accomplish Eternity, but we can leave a cultural work for the enjoyment of others that will come after us. This is the way to build our relation with the world and with values that believe in this world. Through the existential spheres of necessity, reality and possibility, we might achieve the political strategies to overcome suffering and indignation.

In this regard, we must conceive of ourselves as social technology, as if our behaviour was the software, and our bodies the hardware, in order to improve the source code of democracy. Social technology of shared knowledge, city networks, pro-common cities, promotes this institutional scalability which, from occupied squares and from neighborhoods constantly connected with the world can re-configure global politics with a local connection.

Instead of seeing the city as a "system", to be automated and controlled, we should conceive the city as an "ecosystem" of diverse, competing and uncontrolled human networks in order to, ultimately, ask ourselves what the social problems that we want technology to solve are.

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