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Editorial

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In honour of Matthieu Giroud, a geographer killed on 13 November 2015 at the Bataclan.

We express our sincere thanks to the Middle East and Islamic Worlds GIS and the International Organisation of La Francophonie, as well as the URMIS, which financed a workshop during the GIS conference in July 2015. We are also very grateful to the INALCO's Scientific Council for funding this translation.

- 1 Of the many publications concerning the Arab revolutions to have appeared since 2011, relatively few deal with migrations when compared to themes like social networks and the internet, the re-appropriation of public space, the mobilization of various social forces, institutional processes of political transition or the geopolitical repercussions. This issue of REMI proposes to analyze the relationships between international migrations and the Arab revolutions¹ through contributions from geographers, historians, political scientists and sociologists. There are several ways of approaching this question. Focussing on their origins, one might ask how migrations contributed to sparking the revolutions: did certain Arab diasporas fuel discontent in their societies of origin, via their experiences with Western democracies? Did these emigrations, on the contrary, contribute to rigidifying social hierarchies by reinforcing authoritarian structures and preventing the renewal of post-independence elites (Bel-Air, 2014)? In addition, does emigration not reinforce social and territorial inequalities, which would have stoked discontent? Did the curtailment of opportunities for expatriation to Europe or the Gulf at the end of the 2000s not exacerbate frustrations?
- 2 However, the articles in this issue focus on the repercussions of the exceptional events of 2011 (the successive toppling of Ben Ali and Mubarak in January 2011, then, in February, the start of revolts in Libya, Syria and Yemen) on migrations in the Arab world, rather than on how migrations may have contributed to sparking the revolutions. Did 2011 inaugurate a new cycle in the history and geography of the

region's migrations? To what extent were national and regional migratory systems reconfigured after 2011? What are the changes and the continuities in terms of migratory flows, migration policies, and how the diasporas are involved in various forms of transnational engagement?

Migrations and Revolutions: Alternatives to Frustration?

- 3 Are migrations and revolts not two possible responses on the part of the frequently educated youth whose aspirations – stalled in the context of economic liberalization, where opportunities for social mobility are constantly decreasing and the job market typically offers only insecure and unqualified positions – are a source of frustration?
- 4 Observers have indeed pointed to processes of structural marginalization of broad swathes of society in the Arab world – and of youth in particular – in order to explain individuals' growing discontent. Deprived of economic and social rights as well as political and civil ones, these individuals find themselves unable to engage in any form of participation in public life or decision-making. Social and religious norms (patriarchy, segregation between men and women, fundamentalism) governing individual and collective behaviour ultimately also fuelled feelings of anger and revolt that translated into revolution, migration, or some combination of the two. In order to transform society and pursue their objectives, migrants, especially young ones, put in place strategies and made use of means aimed at changing their daily lives: social and political mobilization, debate, street gatherings, pressuring decision-makers, etc. However, the balance sheet of the last five years suggests that these efforts bore little fruit. The recent social turmoil in Tunisia in January 2016 reveals the extent to which the process of change is slow, halting and sometimes regressive.
- 5 Demographic analysis of the Arab revolutions (Fargues, 2012) based on Robert Merton's theory of "relative deprivation" places youth front and centre. Fifty to sixty percent of the region's population is under 30. Younger people are more likely to revolt or emigrate than the older generations. The "youth bulge" (the increased percentage of young people in the overall population) corresponds to a generation freed from the constraint of family responsibilities toward numerous dependents: this cohort of youth have fewer children than their predecessors, while at the same time their responsibility to care for aging parents is lightened by the fact that they belong to large families and can share this burden among siblings. This particular demographic configuration, which contributes to augmenting risk-taking behaviour by youth and favours revolt, coincides with the emergence of a society that is increasingly enmeshed in cultural globalization and the circulation of people. Demographic approaches of this kind can be classed alongside modernization theories that maintain people in the Arab world are less and less religious, and increasingly liberal and secular (Courbage and Todd, 2007). In addition, a new overarching sociological category has appeared whose members are central actors both of migration and social demands: young unemployed graduates of the middle classes (Van Hear, 2015).
- 6 Such analysis, in terms of generations, has been questioned by some researchers (Allal and El Chazli, 2012; Bonnefoy and Poirier, 2012), who consider it to be too broad-brush and lacking in explanatory power on the individual level. In response to the question "why do some people revolt and not others?" these approaches can inform us about

the preconditions for protests, but cannot locate the specific tipping point or provide insight into the proximate causes for particular individuals' involvement when most were not activists to begin with. How does an exceptional event generate new collective and individual imaginaries, causing young people either to get involved or, if they are emigrants, to return home to participate in their country's political transition? A number of both ethnographically rich (Bonney and Catusse, 2013) and more quantitative studies (Hoffman and Jamal, 2012)² invite us to deconstruct or nuance the generational reading through a more complex representation of youth in the Arab world.

- 7 The "Exit, voice & loyalty" theory is very frequently employed by analysts of the Arab revolutions (Fargues, 2011b; Van Hear, 2015). For Hirschman (1970 and 1993), individuals have three choices when faced with a dysfunction: protest and resist ("voice"); change products or leave ("exit"); remain passive, not change their consumption patterns, not leave their country, remain silent and loyal ("loyalty"). Hirschman is primarily interested in the "exit" and "voice" options. He initially postulated that they were inversely proportional, like two the arms of balance scale: the more protest there is, the more migration will decrease, and *vice versa*. However, after the revolutions in Eastern Europe in 1989, he revisited his theory, exploring a different type of relationship between "exit" and "voice" that he had not initially considered, in which the two feed off and reinforce one another. It is the convergence of these two forces that, in his view, precipitated the fall of the totalitarian regimes of Eastern Europe: in 1988-1989, the massive flow of Germans from East to West Germany or its embassies in Budapest, Prague and Warsaw fuelled protests and contributed to the fall of the Berlin Wall. The Arab revolutions allow for further refining this model through a re-assessment of the term "loyalty". The return of qualified Egyptian migrants to participate in the democratic transition or the national pride expressed by Egyptian expatriates in 2011, described by Delphine Pagès-El Karoui in her article, clearly demonstrate that distance from their country did not preclude loyalty toward it. Their departure from Egypt is not so much a matter of loyalty as one of having lost hope in the prospect of timely change. It would therefore be more accurate, in Hirschman's framework, to speak of resignation than loyalty.

The Effects of the Arab Revolutions on Migratory Flows: The Importance of Geopolitics

- 8 The Arab revolutions clearly nourished large scale and diverse migratory flows, even if these are difficult to quantify. A proportion of the young Tunisians who participated in the movement leading to the fall of the Ben Ali regime are the same who, the very next day or in the weeks that followed, took advantage of the temporary lapse in security to hop on boats headed for the Italian island of Lampedusa, as Hassan Boubakri demonstrates. Others preferred to leave because they were members of the old regime (such as the Gadhafi supporters who came to Tunisia), were considered its allies (as was the case for the nationals of certain sub-Saharan countries, perceived to be mercenaries by the Libyan population), or simply because they were civilians fleeing hostilities or fearing the uncertainty ahead (the civil war in Libya resulted in the displacement of 1 million people). A certain number of expatriates, generally those with qualifications, chose to return home. The welcome and assistance provided to

migrant workers, Libyan families, and refugees, particularly from sub-Saharan Africa, who arrived in Tunisia from Libya, embodied the new values of the revolution.

- 9 The example of Libya in 2011, followed by that of the Syrian refugees, demonstrates that it is less the revolutions themselves and more the conflicts to which they give rise that generate the most significant migratory flows. 2011 therefore echoed the major migratory crises to have marked the Middle East in the past, whether in connection with the Israel-Palestine conflict in 1948 and 1967, or the 1990-1991 Gulf War and the massive exodus of foreign workers from Kuwait (including the Palestinians, who were thrown out by the government), Egyptians from Iraq, and Yemenis expelled from Saudi Arabia. In Egypt or Tunisia, where the security situation is fragile but has deteriorated less than in the neighbouring countries, which are at war, the stagnation of the economy, which remains weakened by the post-revolutionary period (increased unemployment, collapsing tourism, increased strike action and other social movements), has resulted in sustained or even increased emigration, though not on the level witnessed in Libya or Syria.
- 10 Whereas most of the hundreds of thousands of migrant workers who fled Libya to neighbouring countries have now been repatriated, the shock wave produced by the massive exile of more than 4 million Syrian refugees has reverberated beyond the Near East to reach the European Union, seriously threatening the Schengen area, one of the pillars on which it was founded. Initially, the Syrian refugees, like all refugees, moved to neighbouring countries, in the hope that they would be able to return home quickly. They were mainly taken in by Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Egypt. The articles by Myriam Ababsa and Kamel Doraï show how Jordan and Lebanon initially favoured opening their borders, but then, as their capacity to absorb refugees was saturated and they started fearing Jihadists would filter through, began to progressively close them off, imposing entry and residence restrictions on refugees, leading to these populations' increasing marginalization. Kamel Doraï analyzes a very particular sub-group of refugees from Syria, Palestinians. Their transnational networks, established during earlier waves of migration, remain highly resilient. As the Syrian conflict has become more protracted and refugees' living conditions in neighbouring countries have deteriorated, Europe increasingly appears to be the best destination, particularly since the rich Gulf countries are prepared to help Syrian refugees financially but not to take them in, in contrast with Germany's generous refugee acceptance policy. However, the massive inflow of migrants to Europe (of which Syrian refugees currently constitute about half) is unsettling to European societies, where fear of immigration has become one of the greatest preoccupations.
- 11 In this context, migrants are hostage to geopolitical tensions: the murder of a Jordanian pilot by Islamic State (IS) led to a crackdown on Syrian refugees in Jordan; in Libya, the execution of Coptic migrants by IS-affiliated groups resulted in retaliatory airstrikes; in Europe, the fear of Jihadists filtering through has led to the conflation of refugees and terrorists, and the exploitation of this fear by extreme-right political parties. Other flows had immediate repercussions on regional and global geopolitics: the return of sub-Saharan mercenaries from Libya caused a crisis in the Sahel and a war in Mali; the arrival of thousands of combatants from the Arab countries as well as Europe swelled the ranks of Jihadist groups in Syria, Iraq and Libya, contributing to Islamic State's territorial expansion. The return of these Jihadists from Syria to France poses unprecedented security challenges for Europe, which has been unable to respond

without compromising its democratic ideals, as the 13 November 2015 attacks in Paris tragically demonstrated. The debates and tensions stirred up by the proposed amendment of the French constitution, to strip French nationality from dual-citizens convicted of terrorism, show just how deeply the Arab revolutions and the refugee flows they have generated are reverberating through the political sphere not just in the Middle East, but in Europe too.

Diasporic Forms of Political and Civil Engagement

- 12 Thanks to social networks and ICT's, and the close ties maintained between diasporas and their societies of origin, migrants participated significantly in the successive phases of the uprisings, whether at a distance or by returning to their countries. Members of the diaspora, who quickly sided with the revolution, intensified their exchanges with activists in the countries in revolution. Family networks also played a decisive role in the mobilizations. Immediately after Ben Ali and Mubarak were toppled, travel increased as people sought to participate in the protest movements and celebrate victory. During the first two years after the revolution, an important number of expatriate migrants, qualified or not, returned to their respective countries. They invested in various sectors to sustain the Egyptian economy; supported individuals and organizations devoted to local development, social causes, or the environment; provided technical know-how or advisory support; or participated in political life. The difficulty in bringing the process of political transition to completion (Tunisia), or its failure (Libya and Egypt), ultimately resulted in the disenchantment of a number of these volunteers, who later returned to their countries of adoption.
- 13 This renewed political engagement on the part of members of the diaspora also resulted in their participation in elections. This question is tackled by Thibaud Jaulin and Björn Nilsson in the Tunisian case, and by Célia Lamblin and Delphine Pagès-El Karoui with respect to Egypt. Both Egypt and Tunisia have organized several elections since 2011. Despite rather timid turnouts, these elections allowed migrants to fully exercise their citizenship and loyalty to their country of origin for the first time. The voting patterns of Tunisians abroad – among whom the Islamists achieved an almost identical score as among voters inside the country – presented by Thibaud Jaulin and Björn Nilsson provide an opportunity to enrich the debate around the “social remittances” discussed by Peggy Levitt (1998). How social remittances translate into political behaviour merits further exploration³: immigrants living in a country that is more liberal or more conservative than their country of origin do not necessarily adopt the dominant values of their host society. The structure of immigrant communities (how long they have been there, their socio-economic profiles, the manner in which networks are organized) needs to be taken into consideration in order to explain the electoral behaviour of migrants. For Egyptians, emigration can be a synonym for radicalization, irrespective of the destination country: they place the figure of the Coptic fundamentalist in the United States side by side with the “Wahabized” Islamist in Saudi Arabia (Hafez and Ghaly, 2012).

The Revolutions' Repercussions on the Migrations Policies

- 14 The chaos that currently reigns in Libya has resulted in foreign workers being left to their fate and exposed to numerous dangers, such as migrant trafficking, violence, and various other abuses. In the Tunisia, the country most significantly engaged in democratic transition, new institutions for migration have been created (the Migration Observatory and the State Secretary for Migration) and others are planned, such as the Consultative Council of Tunisians Residing Abroad. But in reality, very little has changed; borders and the movement of people continue to be governed by authoritarian laws adopted under the old regimes.
- 15 In order to regain legitimacy, the new authorities hastened to reassure the European countries that they would keep up the “fight against illegal migration”. In response to the surge in migration from Tunisia and Libya in 2011, the European Union proposed agreements with its southern neighbours, called “Mobility Partnerships” for the management of migratory flows. Morocco and Tunisia attempted to resist the EU’s desire to repatriate anyone who had transited through or departed from these countries, and to restrict this only to their own citizens. However, the migratory context in the Mediterranean since 2014 and especially in 2015 completely changed the agendas for these negotiations as well as the way migration functions within European space. Controls at borders inside the Schengen area were re-established, particularly between countries through which refugees’ transit. In order to encourage it to retain Syrian refugees, Turkey was once again presented as a serious candidate for membership in the EU, whose citizens could benefit from freedom of movement in continental Europe through the elimination of visa requirements.
- 16 The Gulf countries managed to quell the protests that broke out in 2011 by redistributing oil wealth to their citizens, who are increasingly unemployed and have shown hostility toward migrant workers, whom they consider to undercut the labour market. This is shown by Hélène Thiollet in her analysis of Saudi Arabian immigration policy. Saudi Arabia has increased restrictions, especially toward nationals of other Arab countries but also other groups, to prevent revolutionary contagion. These policies are indicative of a return to older approaches, which aimed to nationalize the workforce. This is being done, yet again, at the expense of an increasingly insecure status for migrants, hundreds of thousands of whom have been expelled. However, with the current drop in the price of oil, this strategy for “containment” is not likely to be viable in the long term.

Conclusion

- 17 Migrants took part in their home countries' revolutionary periods on different scales and to varying degrees. The first thing this participation allowed was for migrants to re-enter the realm of politics, by means of renewed freedom of expression, mobilization in public spaces, debates, election campaigns, and participation in elections. It also allowed them to reignite their feelings of belonging to the nation of origin and of allegiance to their country, irrespective of the distance separating them under the authoritarian regimes. The national cause was a point of reference for

expatriate citizens and one dimension of their multi-faceted identities. However just as certain migrants were empowered, it is necessary to underscore, as all of the articles that follow do, how the status of migrants inside Arab countries has at the same time become more insecure.

- 18 Migrations cast light on a central aspect of the revolutionary movements, namely the role of the state and of the national imaginary. The Arab world has entered a period of transition and is trying to turn the page on the authoritarianism through which the independent post-colonial states were built. Undermined by corruption and its inability to generate growth, the state began to falter. Long-muffled discontent with its inefficiency eventually overflowed in the form of the 2011 revolts, creating a new shared horizon of democratic reforms. This region, the importance and relevance of which was underscored in 2011, is today extremely weakened and divided; the countries comprising it are retreating behind their borders and building walls. Whereas in Libya, Syria and Yemen the revolutionary process undermined the national narrative and plunged the countries into civil wars, reaffirming people's attachments to local, tribal and religious identities, in Egypt a strong consolidation of the national identity has been predominant. The revolutions' failure stems from their incapacity to transform the momentum of protest into new institutions capable of reinventing the state in a manner that would grant citizens more equality. The events since 2011, which are far from having established democracy in the Arab world – with the fragile exception of Tunisia – have also affected democracy in Europe: the new mobilities resulting from the Arab revolutions (the exodus of Syrian refugees and the movement of Jihadists) have weakened the proper functioning of democracy in Europe and have turned back the clock on regional integration, by re-establishing national border controls.

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NOTES

1. Here, the word “revolution” is used in the sense of “revolutionary situation” (Tilly, 1995) in order to avoid the recurrent debate over whether these are actually genuine revolutions or not. Five years after the start of the revolts in the Arab world, the dominant mood is one of great pessimism, due to the grim results: civil war in Syria, Libya and Yemen, counter-revolution in Egypt, fragile transition in Tunisia. However, since this moment indisputably caused a radical break in the region’s history and the word “revolution” is the actors’ own, we have chosen to use the term.

2. On the basis of a poll conducted several years before the Arab revolutions, these authors paint a portrait of the region’s younger generations. Their results confirm certain expectations: compared to older generations, youth are more educated, have higher rates of unemployment, are more connected to other Arab countries and the rest of the world via social media, and are more inclined to protest (they vote less and participate more in street protests). Other results were more surprising: whereas a decrease in religious practice and belief was observed on the part of youth, they were more likely to support Islamic law, less tolerant toward other religions, and had a higher likelihood of identifying more strongly as Muslims than as citizens of their country or Arabs. Finally, they were more satisfied than the older generations with their pre-2011 political leaders. These findings invite us to reconsider the opportunities, both real and perceived, that motivated youth to mobilize.

3. Linking fertility and emigration, Philippe Fargues (2011a) has argued for differentiated “demographic remittances”, according to the type of host society. He attributes the low fertility rates in Morocco and Turkey to the significant emigration rate to Europe and the importation of new demographic norms, suggesting that the higher fertility rate in Egypt could be related to the significant rate of emigration to the Gulf, where the fertility rate is higher.

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