Policy Report

Youth policies in leisure education: “Peer socialisation” as firewall for youth exclusion in the AMCs

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We would like to acknowledge the contribution of all the members of the national ethnographic fieldwork teams in the project. Their engagement permitted us to collect extraordinary and valuable qualitative data working with the youth of Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt and Lebanon. Moreover, we would like to acknowledge the work of the CIDOB team coordinating the process of achieving the objective of surveying 10,000 young people in the region in cooperation with the project's Arab partners. And finally we would like to thank all members of the SAHWA Project team for the depth and richness of the scientific and technical discussions. Without them this Policy Report would have been impossible to write.

1. Introduction

> *"I spend my free time at the youth club. I do theatre, voluntary work; I participate in conferences and forums. I never stay at home to sleep. I always look for new things to do. So my free time is mainly in the youth club … We are always preparing something new to participate in forums … They (neighbours) find it strange because I go outdoors and participate in such things … It's a matter of mentality. They blame me for organizing cultural activities. Cause they say "organize" is a heavy duty. It is really a backward mentality"* (Syrine, 19, Djerba, Life Stories Videos).[1]

These words from Syrine, a 19-year-old woman from the island of Djerba in Tunisia bring together the key elements of the relationship between cultural policies, cultural practices and youth culture in the countries where we have developed research activities. According to the data obtained through SAHWA Project fieldwork, young people like Syrine involved in cultural activities acquire greater opportunities to develop personal skills, abilities and become socially recognised, which allows them to plan their lives in current societies with a significant individualising character.[2] Nevertheless, in a broader sense, the youth in the Arab Mediterranean countries (AMCs) are living in societies where the interest of the group prevails over the interest of the individuals. The individual self is integrated into the family, and the triumphs of familial interest prevail over individual interest. However, a certain kind of more codified social relationships correspond to certain social classes: in the privileged classes the level of individual autonomy is greater than in less favoured classes.

Our starting point is how "youth culture" is experienced in the Arab Mediterranean countries by young people, governmental structures and society, and the effect of this on the current situation of cultural policies, especially related to leisure activities. This means that a broader sense of the concept should be considered, including issues related to family, religion and social values, which are recognised as adult-centred institutions. As pointed out in the SAHWA Background Paper (2016): "youth and specifically the issue of the cultural practices and identities that shape youth conditions are central for understanding the current processes of social and political transition in contemporary Arab Mediterranean societies" (Camozzi et al., 2014: 6). We are looking toward what Paul Willis (1990) conceptualised as the "common culture" of young people, but in a different time (the information age and the post-crisis conjuncture) and in a different space (the Arab Mediterranean region and the five countries participating in the project). Our analyses consider the construction of "youth cultures" as a two-way street process; as the ways every society moulds the ways of being

young and the impact of adult institutions upon the world of youth. This allows the trans-cultural study of youth and criticism of the adult-centric, non-historical visions prevailing in most of the academic literature on the subject.[3] Then there are the ways young people participate in the processes of cultural creation and circulation. This direction, far less explored, focuses on the influence of the youth world upon society as a whole and leads to the study of youth cultures, understood as an expression of the creative, not just imitative capacity of young people (Laaksonen et al., 2009; Feixa, 2012).

Beyond this, the objective of this Policy Report is to draw applied recommendations for leisure education coming from the analyses of the ethnographic and survey data sets focused on youth cultural activities and practices intending to take a transnational level perspective. Our recommendations are oriented toward cooperation schemes designed in line with evidence-based research on the actual needs of the young people, the necessity to increase youth participation in policymaking in non-formal education policies, and the orientation toward concrete topics of youth policies in line with the problems and needs of young people, as Göksel and Şenyuva (2016) propose as a general perspective.

The report, after a descriptive perspective of our methodology, is divided into four main parts. The first section discusses the production of "youth cultures" in the AMCs: this is the politics of youth cultures. We are trying to analyse what affects the current situation in the construction of youth cultures in the region. After that, the discussion moves toward a perspective centred on the activities of youth, that is, on the daily lives of young people as expressed through the fieldwork and through the survey data collection. The idea is to describe the most significant youth culture and leisure practices to consider them as the basis for implementing leisure educational policies. The next section is a description and analysis of youth policies in the region focused on leisure education. This section permits us to establish a contrast between policies' orientations and the experiences of leisure education, with the evaluation of some experiences the general objective of the fifth part. Finally, the description and analysis of some experiences of "peer socialisation" in the region permits us to establish the significance of this kind of pedagogical perspective, especially in marginalised environments, in accordance with our hypothesis. In this sense, the key variable in the analysis is the kind of standpoint given to the management of cultural practices and leisure education as analysed in the fifth section.

2. Methodological remarks

In this policy paper the age cohort has been established as 15–29 years old, in accordance with the SAHWA Project's methodological remarks (Concept Paper, 2014). The findings of this paper emerge from a dialogue between qualitative and quantitative data collected during the 2015–2016 period. The quantitative data collection is composed of five country surveys with the participation of 2000 young people in each country. Alongside this, the qualitative data has been collected by applying ethnographic techniques such as focus groups (FG), narrative interviews (NI), life stories (LS) and focused ethnographies (FE) as primary sources, but it includes researcher's interpretations of the data in some cases.[4]

Nevertheless, we cannot forget that youth as a life stage is a social construction that depends on cultural specificities, kinship orientations, social conditions and economic constraints in the region. As a Moroccan stakeholder remarks: "however many countries have different definitions: for Morocco, it's 18 to 30 years old; in Egypt it's 18 to 35, Bahrain, it's 18 to 40. The definition depends on when the person leaves home and becomes the head of household. Thus, the householder becomes the person that has a statute in the society and this is why defining the youth is very complicated" (MA_FG_3: 2). Accordingly, youth diversity in the region is methodologically achieved through the participation of more than 10,000 youths in the region with different social backgrounds, places of residence and genders to constitute a significant sample for the results of the Policy Report both in survey and ethnographic reports. Moreover, in the report other ethnographic data is considered, recompiled during the ethnographic visits to the five countries and that carried out in May 2016 in Morocco by Jose Sánchez García. During this fieldwork period, the researcher visited youth associations, clubs and other social work experiences and conducted interviews with both users and workers. Also, we have used the SAHWA National Case Studies as secondary data from a front-line interpretation carried out by national ethnographic research teams as suggestive lines of exploration for our transnational perspective.

Beyond this, it is our aim that the target group for the involvement of cultural and leisure policy measures are the young people discouraged and disaffected for economic, place of residence, educational or gender reasons. They are young men and women condemned to "navigate" the streets, especially those who are expelled from the formal education structures, those who are not in education, employment or training and those who do not participate in the labour force. This means to suggest that youth cultural policies

implemented by the different governments of the region tend to forget the youth of the cities and villages due to the fact that these policies are habitually devoted to urban middle classes and educated young people.

3. The politics of youth culture(s) in the AMCs

The individualising character of current societies determines a new category of subject and citizenship that implies greater responsibility of the individual in relation to their ability to access market offerings, knowingly capitalise on opportunities, and on their decisions depend the success or failure of the paths they choose. Similarly, young people, by their interstitial position between a past nearing completion and a future to develop, acquire an ambivalent position between adaptability and vulnerability to the social and cultural changes of contemporaneity, which has been defined as "a plurality bursting into two modulations": on the one hand, youth multiculturalism based on an identity search with the proliferation of cultural particularities (Balardini, 2000); and on the other, the consolidation of symbolic, hierarchical, authoritarian and exclusive forms of marginalisation (Wacquant, 2007). As Wendy Brown points out, "neoliberalism normalizes and challenges individuals as entrepreneurs in every sphere of life ... [and] characterizes individuals as rational, calculating creatures whose moral autonomy is measured by their ability to take care of themselves, this is, the ability to provide what is necessary for their own needs in the service of their own ambitions" (Brown, 2005: 43). These elaborations allow the establishment of taxonomic formulations presumably based on cultural studies that seek to "produce youth", that is, certain characteristics to delimit young people as a population over which to exercise a certain type of governability. As a population, young people appear as a group of "normalised" people (Sánchez and Hakim, 2014).

Nevertheless, youth in the AMCs do not form a homogenous social group. Under the name "youth" – under the presumed social identity of all those included in this age group – are grouped subjects and situations that have in common only age. This labelling is an attempt to "produce youth" by obviating their diversity of opinions, values, attitudes and consumption, to end up diluting class conflicts with generational conflicts, marginalising all those forms of being young opposed to the attempts to homogenise "youth". Thus the identification of a person as young and juvenile actions, values and all kinds of social

practices that are different become a source of praise or stigmatisation, depending on who judges what and for what purpose.

Both sides of this conceptualisation are embedded in the draft of the 2013 Egyptian Constitution in articles 82 and 244. Article 82 understands young people as a special population with their own necessities and explains: "the state guarantees the care of youth and young children, in addition to helping them discover their talents and developing their cultural, scientific, psychological, creative and physical abilities, encouraging them to engage in group and volunteer activity and enabling them to take part in public life". In article 244, youth is associated with another "problematic" kind of person: "The state grants youth, Christians, persons with disability and expatriate Egyptians appropriate representation in the manner specified by law". What kind of young people should be allowed to "discover their talents" and which ones treated as stigmatised individuals? If in some cases the labelling of some individuals as youngsters means a downgrading of their agency, in other cases, the same identification compares them with the prototypical youngsters of hegemonic discourses meant to produce policies for this kind of youth. At the same time, the youth that identifies itself with this prototype means a degree of rupture with traditional ties of solidarity, resources and life trajectories.

A good example is the ambiguous situation of young entrepreneurs in Morocco as explained in the ethnographic monography focused on this youth group. In a focus group held in Rabat, young entrepreneurs perceived themselves as agents of social change confronted with a more individualistic way of life, in contrast with the way of life of "ordinary young Moroccans". As a 23-year-old entrepreneur explained, "young people activities such as leisure, parties and so on stopped as soon as I started my business. I feel different from my former classmates when I see them posting fun experiences on Facebook or travelling to London or Marrakech on weekends. On Saturdays I work until 6 or 7 pm but my fulfilment is very high" (MA_FG_2: 17). Nevertheless, in the data collected, a certain resistance towards social institutions like the family, especially for young female entrepreneurs, contributes to a perception of marginalisation among them. "My sister resigned from her job, to work on her own, and she had to confront my parents. But quitting a salary-based job is unthinkable, it is considered as a financial suicide" explains a 22-year-old student (MA_FG_2: 12). In any case, it enables these young people to build their own representations, perceptions and ideas. One of the participants in the focus group remarked

on the feeling of freedom that is supposed to transform their self-perception: "It is a somehow freedom. I am free to communicate in a specific way, free of my travels, movements". A young man said: "Being an entrepreneur one can build his own idea of things, develop competencies … Being an entrepreneur means realising its own dreams, not someone else's" (MA_FG_2: 13). The self-perception as agents of social change is implicit in this sentence: "Now I have a mission in my school, I try to change students, to make them get out or their comfort zones, study, exams or wage-based jobs … There is a version of me before knowing entrepreneurship and another version after, even at a personal level and in the way I perceive and consider things" says our young entrepreneur (MA_FG_2: 14).

On the other side, the Algerian *hittistes* are considered a "problematic" youth culture.[5] The *hittiste*'s situation, which amounts to doing nothing, is undoubtedly the prelude to marginalisation (Corrigan, 1975). As a young individual in a socioeconomic situation without relationships with the institutions of training or work, the *hittiste*'s objective situation can be apprehended both as one of circumstances and as the result of a social trajectory. This is not a choice like that of the entrepreneurs; more, it is the result of a combination of the labour market situation, education inequalities and belonging to unstructured families. This situation is compounded by a lack of non-formal education resources in their residence areas. This is captured in the words of this young *hittiste*: "I was not chosen to be hittiste, nobody wants it, nobody wants to continue in this routine you see. All young people are in the same situation" (DZ_FE_1: 3). In this sense, their belonging to the group seems to respond to an individual need and a "youth culture" constructed in resistance to hegemonic discourses. "Navigating", working in the informal economy, "doing business", creating a *mahchach* – an urban empty space where youngsters "build" a place to meet, to play games, and where some of them make money. These social spaces accomplish an important function, which is the strengthening of social ties between them, activities that occupy them all day. But, as in the case of the entrepreneurs, the main rupture for them is with the family. As one *hittiste* remarks, "the relationship with my family is a tormented and troubled one. When I am not working, the house is considered as a hotel. All day you're out. It is rare when you get home for dinner. What do you hope to do when you come in? You do not do any work, you're taking back nothing at home. As long as we grow up we feel it more and more. When you navigate by selling something, such as a bird or a mobile phone you can afford to go home and assert your presence, but when there is no Tchipa (money earned

through the completion of any service) and although you're out, taking coffee" (DZ_FE_1:7).

Due to the fact that Moroccan entrepreneurs and Algerian *hittistes* are at opposite ends of the social spectrum, the effect of the valorisation of some attributes related to certain kinds of young people in the region such as entrepreneurs in Morocco as revealed by youth policies provokes the disempowerment of those young people who do not correspond to the identity characteristics of the prototype established by the hegemonic cultural discourses in the region, as embodied in the *hittistes*. This makes it possible to classify agencies with value and without value, the admissible and inadmissible, to improve some kind of policy rules that benefit and disfavour different youth agencies in the region beyond the social valorisation of youth practices.

Nevertheless, the cases of the young entrepreneurs in Morocco and the *hittistes* in Algeria reveal the existence of different processes of youth marginalisation in the AMCs, depending on the individual's position in the social space – a network of relationships of action and influence that influences the way young people construct their relationship to the environment and within the peer group – established through an imbrication and combination of economic circumstances, level of education, social position and cultural practices understood as symbolic capitals (Bourdieu, 2000). In young people's perception, respect for traditions and values contribute greatly to fostering their social inclusion, but the practice of the new performs is determined by the characteristics of the family. As a young Tunisian man explains, "Well! the father is the authority, and if youngsters feel that there is no authority, then ... especially when the youngsters lack consciousness until adolescence ... because nowadays young people, up to a certain age, still think in a way ... I don't know ... you see! Okay I think that strictness of the parents is the solution, my father helped me, I do not agree with people who object to the strictness of a father with his son, he shouts, I sincerely believe it is a good thing!" (TN_LS_1: 3). In this sense, there are some young people that tend to incline towards the new values and there are others that do not accept them. This general ambiguous tendency is marked in the responses to the question about the importance of tradition to young people, both male and female:

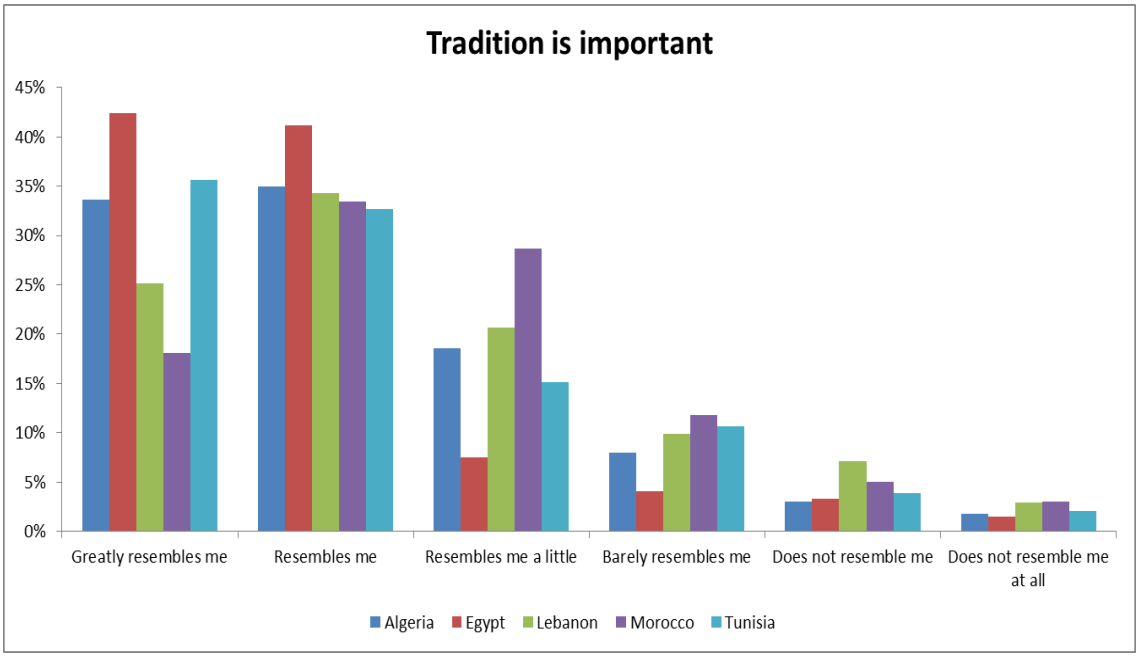

Figure 1. Source: SAHWA Youth Survey 2016.[6]

As a result, one of the most important social institutions for producing "normativised" youth in the region is the family. Parent culture, despite its name implying one's immediate mother and father, can be considered as broader cultural networks defined by ethnic and class identities in which youth cultures are developed. The rules of behaviour and values of the groups of origin can act as the reference points for young people to conform with or to rebel against. In this sense, family appears as an adult control institution that marks the production of youth cultures (Feixa, 1998). "The family is still trying to preserve tradition, but in large cities it is difficult. On the inside we try to preserve things and outside ..." says a young participant in the Zaccar (Djelfa, Algeria) focus group (DZ_FG_1: 8). Other participants point out that "in general families still preserve values in Djelfa, for example the position [of] the old in the family, respect, relationships with neighbours, we don't accept also gender mixity, el *hidjab*, but among young people there is retreat in moral values, especially in terms of respect between the two sexes ... girls cannot go out into the street without harassment" (DZ_FG_8: 12). A 25-year-old woman describes the significance of family for young women in Canastel (Oran, Algeria), "when you have brothers you must serve them". As the report remarks, "her father is the decision-maker at home and often gives the right for females by males, and imposes his decisions, which must be implemented. Brothers do not have any say as long as the father is the one who governs at home"; and she remarks "I

never insist when I don't get what I asked for" (DZ_LS_1: 3). The tension with parents also appears among Moroccan young entrepreneurs, especially young women. In fact, according to a young woman entrepreneur from Morocco this generational gap is related to two different ways of life, the entrepreneurial and the "conservative" of her parents. As a young Moroccan man explains "I do not communicate much with my parents, they know I am both an entrepreneur and a student, but they do not have any idea of what exactly I am doing. For them I might as well be doing nothing … They would not understand it" (MA_LS_3: 11). In any case, family continues to be a significant social institution in the area. Their attitude to youth actions is significant for understanding the valorisation or refutation of youth cultural practices.

Consequently, for diverse reasons coming from hegemonic, parental or traditional discourses, young people in Arab Mediterranean countries are placed on the "margins" of society for several reasons. The notion of "marginality" refers to a state of poverty, deprivation and subordination, but it can be extended to include the economically well off when they are marginalised from the political sphere and the domains of lifestyle including a traditional space for youth as leisure consumption practices (see Figure 3). Besides the economic, infrastructural and governance difficulties, as Saad remarks, we may consider two kinds of marginalisation process related to the adult-centrism of Arab societies: cultural and social marginality (Saad, 2012: 98). Cultural marginality, well expressed in the words of a young rapper from the south of the Tunisian capital, "you sing mezwed, or you stay home! The people going to festivals are of the old school, is it was possible, they would invite Oum Khalthoum and Abdel El Halim in their tombs to come and sing in 2015 festivals!" (TN_FE_2: 10).[7]

These processes of marginalisation complicate not only the access to leisure consumption activities but also the access to and the production of different cultural devices, which are influenced by social limitations based on attributes associated with young people. Between these social categories of power, we may take into consideration gender, sexual orientation, place of residence, political orientation, class, ethnic, parental background or educational differences. In any case, for several youths in the region, "the problem is not the lack of structure, it is again a culture issue ... We're not used to this type of entertainment, since we were young the only leisure is football, but if the new generation is adapting to this new leisure's" (DZ_FG_1: 11).

4. Youth cultures in practice in the AMCs

Nevertheless, the marginalised position of young people in relation to culture does not impede their engagement and participation in informal cultural activities and practices, vastly rooted in local environments. Beyond the problems analysed above of using their leisure time in cultural consumption markets, young people of the region have different strategies to fill these absences. As explained in one focused ethnography, "What makes Bab El Had the place to go is the capacity of its young workers to track the swift novelties in the globalised world of cultural industries and make them available to their customers. Its constant connexion to goods and devices coming from multinationals like Hollywood, Microsoft, Apple, Google and YouTube is twofold. The first, which is the most dominant, comprises international pirated films, CDs, programmes and other technical wires and chips" (MA_FE_3: 12). Other youths such as Tunisian rappers manage their career to live from rap, "currently, it is a money earner! When I sing at a concert, I claim money because the producer makes a lot of money! I am not naïve; I need money to register my songs, to live! Because, if there was a market to sell CDs, clips, advertisements, things would be better, you can get nowhere without money" (TN_FE_1: 7).

Depending on their different social capital backgrounds, youth groups find innovative and creative ways and spaces to produce and distribute innovative cultural goods such as street art, theatre pieces, cinema, music, etc. In these strategies, the relationship with the peer group is the key to understanding the agencies of the young people in the region. Also, we cannot forget that contemporary Arab young people are affected by the influence of global cultures that face entirely new forms of socialisation, where they find no prototypes in previous generations. As a young Algerian pointed out: "The cultural invasion, it is a reality, there are many things, television, internet, information is spread from one person to another, it is not like before. Now you look and you assimilate, not like with a letter, it is not the same" (DZ_FG_6: 8).

This situation justifies the need to move toward a perspective centred on the agency of Arab Mediterranean youth. They are, implicitly, reclaiming the right to be young, fluctuating between the traditional and the modern, the family and the peer group, the informal and the formal, the desire to be young and the interest in becoming adult. In this continuous, ubiquitous, inextricable and tangled youth, both men and women are constructing their own manner of dealing with current challenges. That is, they are producing cultures, "youth

cultures", in a dialectical process of social articulation with adult cultures and social institutions including parental cultures – understood as hegemonic cultures – reflecting the distribution of cultural power at the wider society level.

Young people in the AMCs are children of the globalisation of their ability to know and appropriate the opportunities offered by the information society, incorporating and inventing new cultural practices. But, at the same time, the changes in the structural conditions towards socioeconomic insecurity impact greatly on their aspirations, expectations and opportunities to plan future trajectories, creating various situations of disorientation and difficulties resolving their problems. Moreover, in any case, for understanding the creation of youth cultures in the AMCs the importance of religion in leisure activities among the respondents to the SAHWA survey may be taken into consideration. As one young Tunisian woman explains, "religion for us is a taboo subject, you listen and you obey, it is not to be discussed. Even in high school, the teacher of religious education requires you to learn and do not discuss ... when these people come, they find the power to convince, taking advantage of this lack of culture ... eh! Yes! Even though our religion is always tolerant, our problem is lack of discussion!" (TN_FG_4). In any case, this doesn't mean that young people should be consider especially religious. On the contrary, they are living in an environment where acting according to religious rules – sometimes confused with traditional habits – is necessary to achieve social integration and recognition.

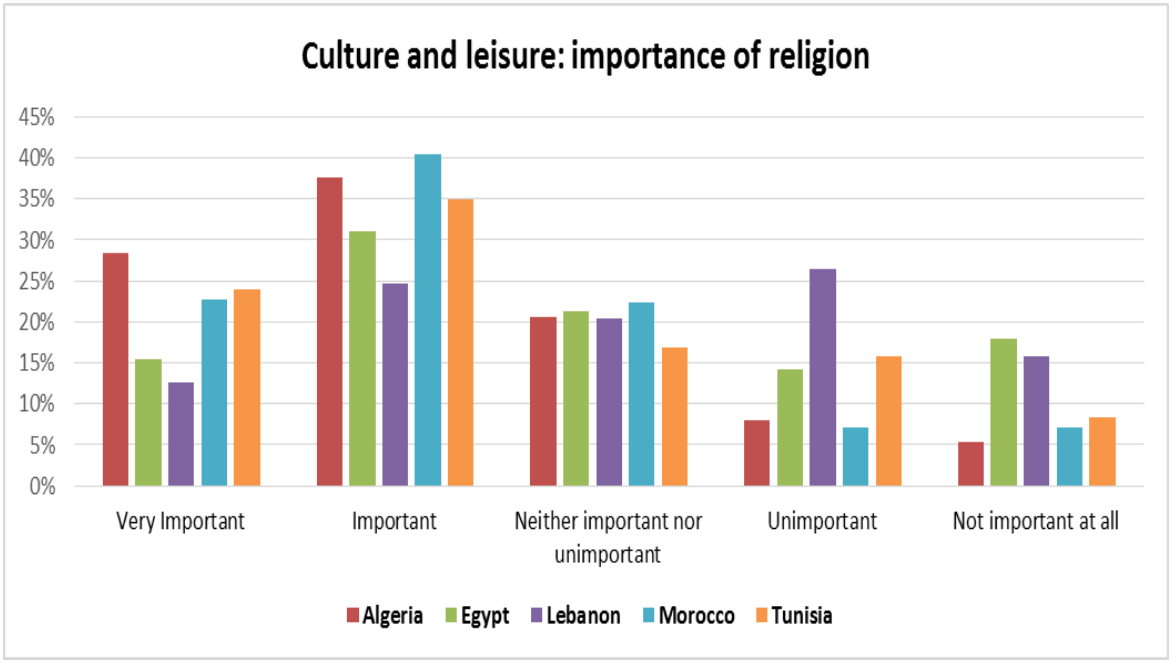

Figure 2. Source: SAHWA Youth Survey 2016.

On the other hand, looking at the answers on the use of leisure time in the SAHWA survey compared with the graph of cultural consumption practices – traditionally assumed to be youth practices in Western cultures – the leisure time of young women and men in the area are related, mainly, to group activities and social relationships. The uses of the internet are also directly related with sociability practices: 64% said they use the web to browse social networks and 57% to chat with friends. In the case of leisure industries such as the cinema, theatre, concerts, clubs, sports spectacles or exhibitions, various types of difficulties make youth cultural consumption virtually non-existent. Lack of economic autonomy, labour difficulties and financial responsibilities with the family are the most significant reasons to access entertainment culture among youths without forgetting that their access is obstructed by deficient access to mobility, infrastructural deficiencies and governance issues.

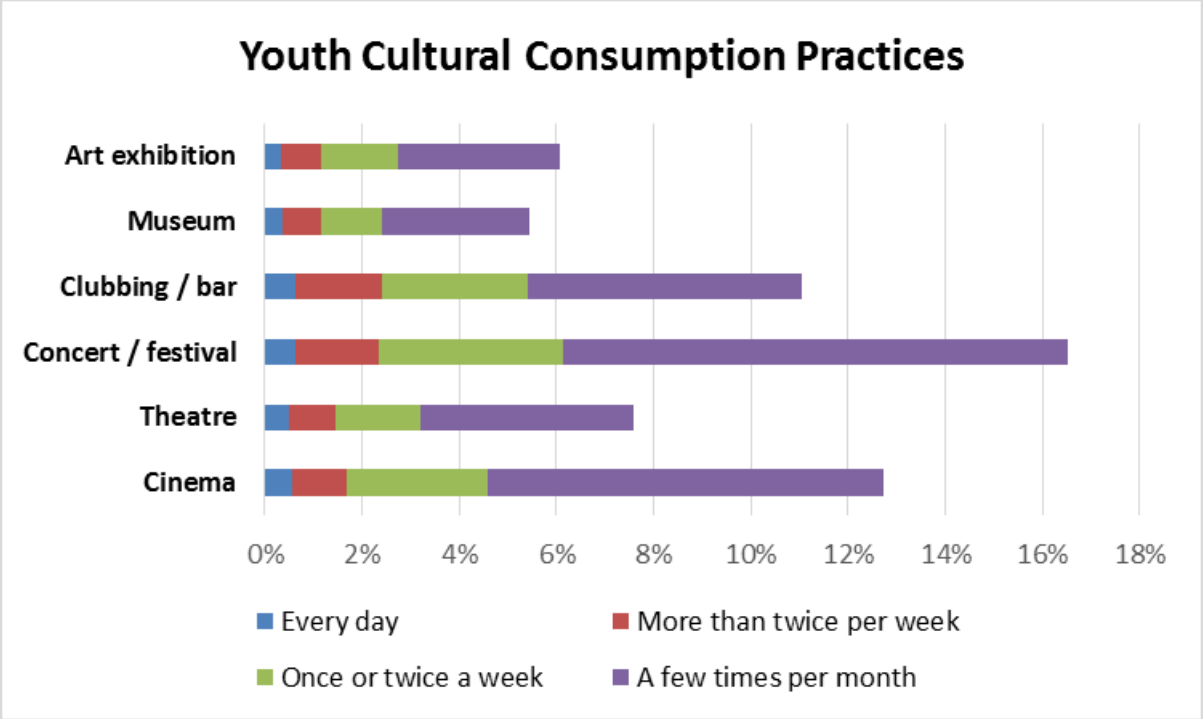

Figure 3. Source: SAHWA Youth Survey 2016.

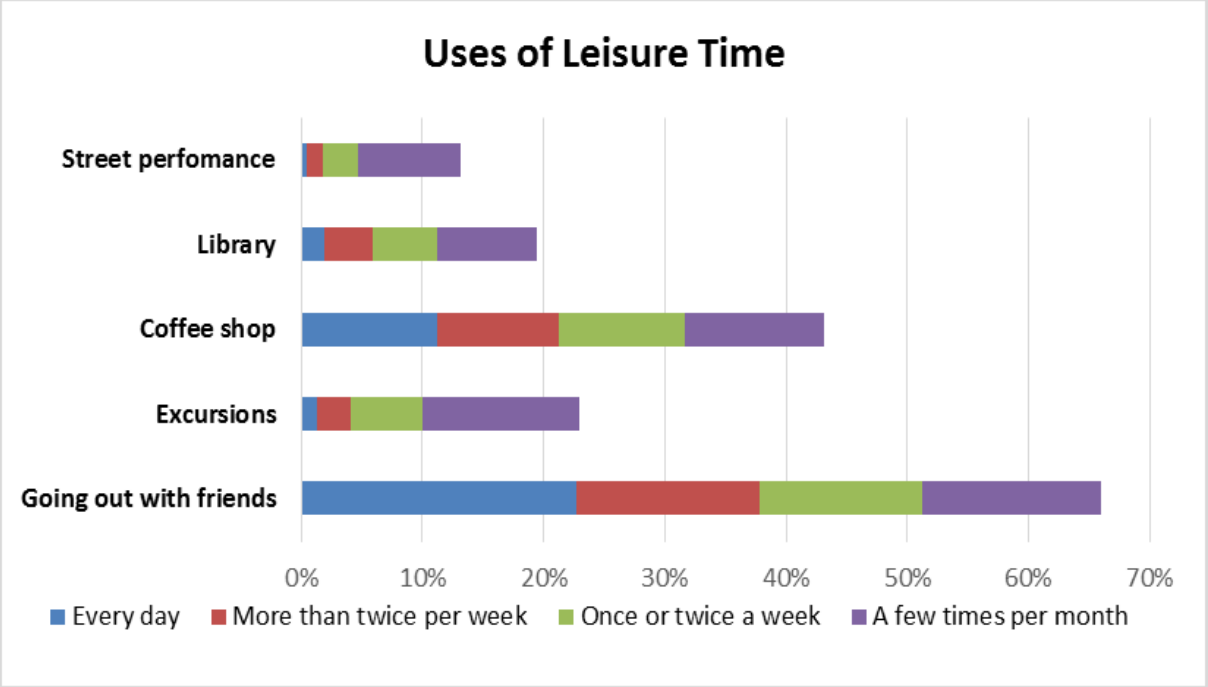

Figure 4. Source: SAHWA Youth Survey 2016.

Despite the pessimism that pervades the youth statements, both male and female, when they talk about current events or the socio-cultural environment, their comments are characterised by ambition, open-mindedness, creativity and dynamism. It is difficult to say whether young people express an image of themselves to conquer, or if they describe what they believe to be their experiences. In any case, if you look at the question on the significance of creativity, the results offer no doubt. Young people, both male and female, recognise this important skill for developing their personality and achieving their aspirations.

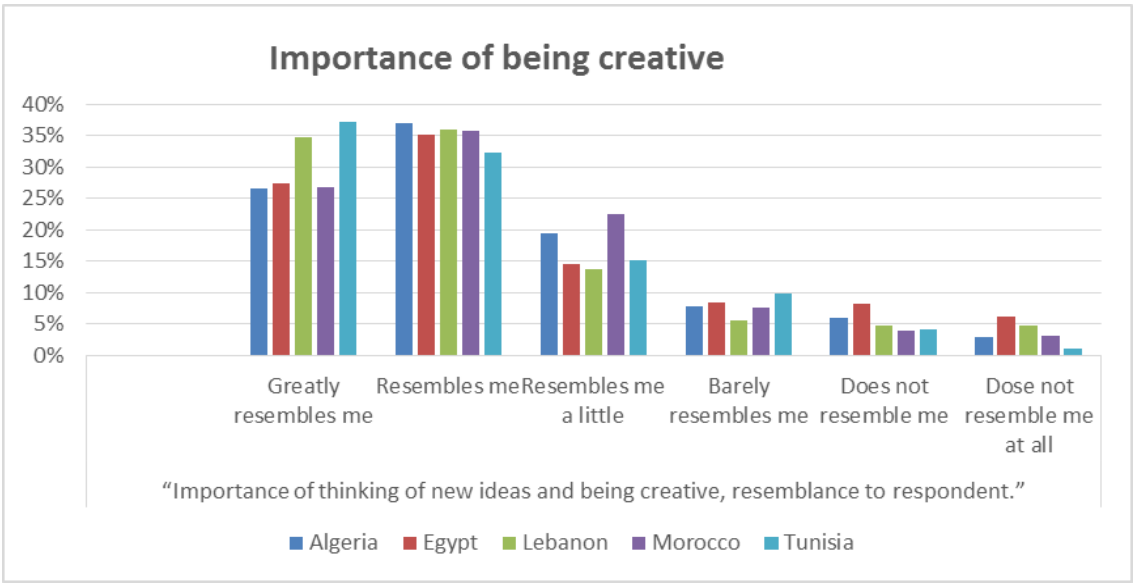

Figure 5. Source: SAHWA Youth Survey 2016.

Playing football with friends, rap, theatre, blogs and graffiti are the main activities in which young people express themselves freely, although they regret that this is at small personal scale due to tradition or larger institutions. These activities could be seen as a starting point for improving the capabilities and skills of young people when these are recognised as a form of knowledge to transmit to the peer group in educational spaces different from formal educational spaces.

5. Youth cultural policies in the AMCs: leisure activities and non-formal education

The experience that young people acquire, especially in the context of non-institutional spaces such as the street, the neighbourhood, the market or the café, as collected in SAHWA data, is the foundation of youth agency to solve the difficulties accessing and appropriating cultural devices. Due to the youth tendencies toward social relations, creativity and solidarity, the policies in the field of culture should take into consideration these abilities and capabilities of young women and men. In the next section, we will gather the voices of young people involved in non-formal education, both as users and members, through their participation in youth associations, NGOs or charitable associations. The data prove that when a young person meets other young people in these spaces, he/she identifies with certain behaviours and values that are different from those of adults and produces specific cultural forms and practices related to their "generation" as an understanding of their role in society.

The five countries in which the research has been conducted have developed youth policies or are in the process of formulating them. As a consequence of unrest in the region, policymakers are identifying opportunities to harness the capabilities and knowledge young people develop in their cultural practices, leisure time and social work. Unfortunately, the youth cultural policies in the region continue to adopt a top-down orientation and present low rates of participation and engagement of young people in the national programmes and associations. Most of the efforts of the governments in the region are connected to entrepreneurship programmes and public institutions. The idea is that by helping young Arabs to be entrepreneurs it may be possible to fight against terrorism; this is promoting the integration of Arab economies with Western economies through a neoliberal market model. It is a rhetoric expressed not only by Western politicians but also by the local elites represented in groups such as the Young Arab Leaders (Soukarieh, 2012). The creation of

different public institutions such as the Global Entrepreneurship Network Algeria and the Moroccan Center for Innovation and Social Entrepreneurship dedicated to finding entrepreneurial and innovative solutions to social challenge are good examples of the policy orientations toward the improvement of a youth economic and political elite that has forgotten excluded youth populations.[8] The orientation of the policies toward economic aspects forgets the need for the personal development of young people if they can participate in cultural creation and sports. It is necessary to imagine rich, high-quality free time to have an impact on the number of excluded young people. On this matter, the state and the local and regional authorities will be able to do nothing without the action of the associations and the young people themselves (Rarrbo, 2009).

In Morocco non-formal education and youth work is dedicated to leisure, which also includes formal activities such as technology and computer courses and language and literacy courses. According to Floris, in 2009, "there are currently 440 such associations which host many clubs dealing with music, cinema, literature and sport" (Floris, 2009: 7) and the situation is not much better nowadays. In a focus group one of the stakeholders described the current situation: "I can tell, from my experience when I joined the department of youth at [the] Ministry, that the budgets allocated to youth never changed since 2009. And who manages the youth in this country? Youth are managed by everyone (sports, health, etc.) and this is the problem. We have a Ministry of Youth and Sports, but the strategy is that we need first to separate youth from sports, and then create a cross body that involves everyone with a clear vision of youth, like that youth will be managed by one structure. When I was in charge of youth, we had very limited field of action, the annual financial support the Ministry of Youth grants youth national organizations (of political parties) was 20,000DH. At the same time, we can observe the State support to the ultras, so we can understand that there is a will to direct young people to other interests than politics. The question is as follows: are we in a political system that sustains and supports the youth participation or not?" (MA_FG_4: 5). Non-formal education initiatives are supported by several national and international private foundations without connection to governmental programmes. The Shemsy School of Circus in the poor neighbourhood of Kasbah des Gnaouas in Sale, Morocco, is a good example. The school has included more than 400 young boys and girls during last ten years with the support of embassies, economic enterprises and elite families as patrons of the foundation. The social project works as integral non-formal educational orientation that allows young people to learn circus

techniques. It is a challenge to the everyday situation of the youths of the area who only seem to expect cheaper drugs, unemployment, prostitution and crime. As a young women user of the school explains "when I introduce myself to other guys, I get the impression that I'm showing what I can do that I'm like them and now I see myself almost flying, doing complicated acrobatic exercises on the web" (interview with Jose Sánchez). The young artists are now role models for other young people like them offering the possibility to escape their social exclusion. Nevertheless, like other initiatives in Morocco, the project is unknown to the Ministry of Youth and Sports, as one of the officers in the Institute National de la Jeunesse et la Democratie recognised in a personal conversation in May 2015 in their headquarters in the Agdal neighbourhood of Rabat. In their activities they engage about 2000 youths in round tables and "celebrity" encounters (mainly businessmen, actors and sports celebrities) that discuss issues proposed by the organisation. At the same time, the official recognised the difficulties for their institution due to funding problems, the lack of a general strategy on youth and the worries and fears of politicians toward youth populations.

In Tunisia, the Ministry of Youth, Sports, Women and Families is responsible for the implementation of youth policies and non-formal education services through centralised administrative units and a network of youth centres. Like other countries in the region, the ministry focuses mainly on the sports sector while the cultural programmes and youth centres are overlooked and suffer from fragmented coverage, ambiguity and overlapping roles. After 2011, "an explosion of spontaneous movements succeeds which we have all witnessed in the aftermath of the revolution: groups of young musicians, theatre groups, etc. have emerged, but failing in taking institutional or structured care, these spontaneous expressions have vanished in the noise of sterile political debates" (TN_FG_1: 9) explains a stakeholder. In conclusion, non-formal education is not completely recognised by the state and by the society in Tunisia. In the administration, myriad youth policy strategies are found. These policies are devoted to the education, health and housing sectors, and the work of the informal sector. On the other hand, the effort to improve cultural and sports infrastructures during the last years of the Ben Ali presidency offered an opportunity to form associative work networks and NGOs. In this sense, the creation in 2002 of the National Youth Observatory has been very helpful in changing governance from a "problem"-oriented perspective of youth to a more inclusive and positive view of youth cultures. But, consistent with the top-down perspective, a lack of interest in the informal sector seems to change these initiatives into an extension of school (Floris, 2009).

In Algeria, "most observers would answer that there is no youth policy in Algeria" as Rarrbo recognises (Rarrbo, 2009: 29). As a result, in Algeria there are no programmes with a comprehensive and "positive" perspective on young people. The high number of urban riots started by young people in some Algerian cities justifies the view of the youth as a "danger" generally adopted by the state. Youth policies are governed by a general strategy that tries to involve unemployment, vocational training, drug prevention, non-formal education and sports but without coordinating the efforts. Another important issue is the low level of engagement and participation of youths in associations, clubs and organisations due to the top-down orientation of the youth policies. Nevertheless, as a stakeholder affirms, "the question of the leisure activities is really a very important aspect in the life of a human being, in particular at the children and also the young people. Because most of the time, we are interested in the teaching, in the training, in the employment, but much less in the question of the leisure activities" (DZ_FG_9: 8). Public investment in the spaces of leisure activities is very weak. A specialist on youth declared: "the insertion by the leisure activities does not exist. It is one of the best channels to insert the young people into the society. We marginalized the leisure activities. As long as we have negative attitudes on the leisure activities, we cannot speak about social integration established well towards the youth. The social integration means giving a place to the young person in the society, giving him a status. This status builds up itself from the early childhood" (DZ_FG_9: 9). They consider that government has a weak interest in leisure activities, which they consider to be a fundamental factor for the well-being of young people and the population in general, so the issue has a political dimension due to the absence of a leisure activity policy. During the conversation, the participant stressed four major problems: 1) the non-existence of a study on the needs of young people; 2) the activities led in the youth structures are of the classic system – there is an absence of programmes adapted to the current changes; 3) the absence of means prevents these structures playing their role; and 4) the lack of training of the animators. As another stakeholder explains, "the young people are not many in youth clubs, because the young people do not find the environment there for which they look, they prefer to go to the café" (DZ_FG_9: 8), especially in poor neighbourhoods and rural areas as in the case of Zaccar in Djelfa Province where the youth centre does not work. In the focus group conducted there, youths, mainly men, stressed the difficulty of spending their leisure time beyond cafés because there are no youth associations and they remarked that young people especially need encouragement and assistance from the state to organise activities that

benefit them. (DZ_FG_4: 13–14). Especially significant in Algeria is the lack of youth leisure infrastructures especially in rural areas. In Zaccar (Djelfa) the youth centre was created recently, but it does not work, because there are no youth associations. In this regard, young people in the area demand the assistance of the state to organise activities (DZ_FG_4: 14).

In Egypt, several authors remark upon how youth policies and non-formal education focus on the young urban middle class (Sika, 2016) and civic education. In the last years of Mubarak, there was an upsurge in the number of youth leadership developmental programmes managed by the National Youth Council and NGOs scaling up the non-formal education programmes. Moreover, the growth of media tools used by young people to communicate with other young people, whether through magazines or, more recently, in electronic formats is testimony to this revival of youth civic engagement, especially among the middle and upper classes. All the same, despite the leadership of young people during the 2011 uprising, the number of youth organisations is small. Youth organisations face limited funding, poorly qualified staff, and difficulty attracting unpaid volunteers, as expressed in one of SAHWA's focus groups. This situation has been consolidated during the different successive governments since the 25th January 2011 revolution, without taking advantage of the informal youth groups concerned with cultural and environmental activities. Analysing the SAHWA data, both qualitative and quantitative, young people in Egypt understand non-formal education activities as mainly charitable practices according with the orientation proposed in the constitution (see above) of youth as a "disabled" population. This is the case of the Science and Faith Association based in Imbaba that is devoted to improving the educational skills of young kids, vocational training to widows and, at the same time, organises different recreational activities for the users. From this example, there are two main findings: 1) the significance of religious associations in the country, as a member of the association stresses, "until now, the religious profile of our society is so obvious, when there is motivation from the side of the mosques, or from any other religious places, people get attracted"; and 2) a lack of interest from the government in leisure education (EG_FG_1).

Finally, in Lebanon, it is difficult to find strategies or youth policies beyond those related to education and the labour market. The lack of cultural clubs and non-formal education places Lebanese youth in a marginalised position in terms of access to culture and non-formal

education (Rarrbo, 2009). For instance, during the ethnographic fieldwork, the Lebanese team mapped the cultural associations located in the Ain El Remmaneh area of Beirut and the found only one youth association and three sports clubs and cultural centres for a neighbourhood of about 10,000 inhabitants. Alongside the interviews and focus group discussions, several young respondents emphasised the difficulties of improving the creative capabilities, skills and competences learned in informal activities. Due to the high rates of high school drop-out and the demands of youth graduates and students of social work for practical training to gain work experience, more youth cultural centres in the hearts of the neighbourhoods could help answer both needs. These centres can be an extension of the street and not an extension of the school. Nevertheless, a young male participant in a Tunisian focus group denounced the lack of interest on the part of the Ministry of Culture, "policy makers, who must come here, he said, 'to see young people, to have an idea about their needs, their ambitions ...' but there's none of this!" (TN_FG_2: 5). But associative work is not without its problems either. Students denounce the resistance of the administration of their establishment to cultural and sporting activities. According to them, it is difficult to create clubs because students face barriers when they are forced to take time off to participate in organised activities elsewhere. As a main conclusion, youth access, participation and production of leisure activities and leisure education are not priorities on the policy agendas to be implemented in next years in the region.

6. Experiencing non-formal education and "peer socialisation" in the AMCs

Despite the fact that the number of young people involved in youth associations is lower than 17% (SAHWA Youth Survey 2016), the sense of companionship, creativity and the uses of leisure time by young people in the AMCs permits us to assert that there is great potential for implementing policies to facilitate the creation of youth associations devoted to leisure education, in accordance to the data obtained on the uses of leisure time (see Figure 4) and the ethnographic examples of youth agencies. Beyond other reasons, the lack of confidence in the governments' management, the top-down management orientation of these infrastructures along with the ignorance about youth programmes, both national and international, could be mentioned as highly problematic for the success of youth policies in general, and non-formal education and cultural services, in particular.

In any case, from the data collected emerge individual and social welfares for youths enrolled as users or trainers in youth associations, NGOs or other social work institutions. In several focus group discussions in Egypt, most participants expressed that the civic engagement and social work of young people in very localised spaces in neighbourhoods facilitate the youth taking an active role in the community, helping each other in different ways. As one participant comments, "civic engagement meant understanding the society around me, opening up to different skills and things in the society that I would have never known in other uneducated, poor classes" (EG_FG_4: 7). They believe that these non-formal education institutions have a very important role in society; they work closely with people and are aware of their problems, sometimes more than the government because they deal with all the social classes. Their role is most important with marginalised groups such as illiterate women and the handicapped. The objective of this kind of association is to provide skills development courses to improve their living standards, help and consultancy services to open small businesses, special vocational training and different recreational activities. Nonetheless, the pedagogical approaches of this kind of association do not take into account the relational and emotional aspects in the process of late incorporation into the educational system, obviating the need to promote equal educational opportunities through greater support for the social status of the excluded young people in the region.

The most interesting and successful youth associations with social projects to engage youth populations are directly related to "peer socialisation" programmes. The pedagogical perspective of peer socialisation considers young people to be the main protagonist of the action. From a participatory approach, in these educational spaces young people contribute through their own experience and their competences to the transmission of knowledge that will be shared among the group of equals, being themselves football coaches, dance teachers and producers of their own music and songs. Likewise, the young person's sense of belonging to the community is promoted through learning and solidarity activities as a process of "integrating empowerment at the individual and community level" (Jennings, 2006) that allows a positive view of the young subject. Their agencies and constructive forms are recognised and not blocked. In these spaces, the professional's role is communicating and connecting with the community through an integral and dual work (of young people and professionals) towards actions aimed at changing the image of the neighbourhood.

To understand the social benefits of this kind of cultural centre in the region, we have two good examples in Morocco and Tunisia. Firstly, in Sidi Moumin, an informal quarter on the outskirts of Casablanca, the Cultural Centre financed by USAid and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation is implementing this kind of educational perspective. The young people, both men and women, involved in the association manage the activities, training courses, financial administration and run the association by themselves. Therefore, the social capital obtained by the peer group during these activities is recognised as a strategy of mutual aid for young people who frequent the centre, understood as a place to "find oneself" when at difficult stages of life, as expressed by some of the boys interviewed: "If you feel good about yourself begin to find myself and also it helps you to become a better person … you're realizing what you really need in your life, you begin to realize yourself" (an 18-year-old male user).[9] It is, therefore, a space where youth "undressing of its layers", "breaking labels", "strengthen your self-esteem" or "grow as a person" and, moreover, "to strength the bonds with others who are in similar situations" stress the tutors and users of the centre. As an educator informs us, young people from the neighbourhood often live in situations of increased pressure in the school and in the social context, which lowers their self-esteem and they sometimes lose all ability to make decisions about their future or their responsibilities in an environment that offers them little. In these cases, the centre becomes an important moral and emotional support to these young people: "most people here have been through it, so to speak. We've been through it. Welcome you, help you "emotionally", say "Hey is not because it is not worth. Better change it", and they are helping you slowly" (a 21-year-old female user).

And in Tunisia, the Ibn Khaldoun House of Youth offers a space of conviviality, as a young Tunisian man explains "there are friends, we know everyone here, we like the Director who respects us ... After all, we have a lot of free time" (TN_FG_1: 4), but "we don't only like to spend time here! We also love to benefit; we like to find a cultural activity which helps to develop our skills to be able to take it to another level..." (TN_FG_1: 3). The activities performed by young people seem to have one role: removing negative energy. The youths are the beneficiaries of the free environment of centre that permits relationships between the two sexes to flourish regardless of the strictness of the traditional view of the gender relations. The youth club offers internships and training in order to open the way for the improvement of youth skills learned in informal spaces as values to their integration in the economic and social network. Nevertheless, an important barrier is that those who attend

more often are not aware of the role of the house of youth; they do not take the activities too seriously, but for a Tunisian young man "the lack of equipment is the main handicap that prevents the house of youth to play its role. For the rap club, luckily the essentials exist, but the cinema club, for example, is run with a single camera, there is nothing so that a theatre or dance club would be created" (TN_LS_1: 9). The "peer group" socialisation inculcated in these centres facilitates the change of the instrumental pragmatic role of the youth associations towards an understanding that the association is a place where one learns to think about his/her situation, his/her problem and his/her environment in a different way, to act more effectively.

In a safe and welcoming environment like Sidi Moumin Centre or the Ibn Khaldoun House of Youth, young people take advantage of the space they are offered, and thus create the necessary link with the entity and the professionals through mutual recognition oriented towards equity in power shared with adults. In these experiences young people are recognised as adults when a horizontal relationship is created, there is no educator above them. This process moves away from an interaction based on adulthood that seeks adult control, an adult-centric perspective in which "social practices support the representation of adults as a finished model that is aimed at fulfilling social tasks and productivity by young people" (Krauskopf, 2000: 124). The centres are spaces where young people feel welcomed, respected and supported, and where they can express their creativity, their opinions and ideas in decision-making processes, and also learn from mistakes. Therefore, the role of the educator is as "facilitator", "guide" or "social-emotional reference" (Jennings et al., 2006) and at the same time, they exert influence regarding the monitoring of attitudes, behaviours and activities.

Peer socialisation empowerment is generated at different levels, since all the variables that configure it are interconnected and mutually dependent, involving heterogeneous processes of social action and results, both individually and at the collective level (Jennings, 2006). Therefore, empowerment requires control over available resources at different levels and with different degrees of acquisition of individual and social competences and skills that empower "personal agency" towards change processes (Jennings, 2006). Youth cultural centres should promote the autonomy of young people with a comprehensive socio-educational approach in a dynamic relationship with the family context, the educational field and the community environment, enhance self-esteem and personal motivation through co-

management of projects and resources, and encourage individual and collective co-responsibility through a gradual process of transfer of responsibility (Jennings, 2006). Thus, skills and competences are developed from an alternative leisure model in which young subjects are producers and not simply consumers of resources in leisure time education. A hybrid model from which emerges the figure of the "prosumer", that is, young people that at the same time consume and produce cultural artefacts and activities. As one trainer at Sidi Moumin Cultural Centre explains, "one of the things that work well is the whole issue of empowerment, developing roles of responsibility, leading groups, leading actions, leading tasks. A young man or woman really wants to be an adult, a young man is already an adult" (a 21-year old woman).

7. Final considerations

The orientation of cultural policies in the region reveals a growing interest in the economic dimension of youth cultural practices mainly as consumers. This focus forgets significant aspects of the youth cultural activities for individual development and acquiring skills and capabilities. Public policies for youth cultural practices in the region are geared towards institutionalising their own structures. So much so that the growth of the cultural structures experienced in recent years in the region, with the increase in public budgets and serious problems answering young people's demands, makes the maintenance of this system unaffordable. The model in which youth cultural policies and leisure education provision is managed by public bodies has proven to be insufficient, undynamic and reproduces the management deficits of public administrations. On the whole, the policy approaches do not take into account the relational and emotional aspects of the process of individual construction and obviate the need to promote equal opportunities through greater support for the social status of the young people involved in cultural practices.

Consequently, youth cultural policies should focus on ensuring the active participation of all young people in the cultural sphere and explore the ways to help them realise their full potential as citizens. Thus, the role of government is to provide "packages of opportunity" for young people, propelling a performative agency and placing young people at the centre of the planning, decision-making and management of the youth associations. This implies a change of approach, as the governance of youth cultural policies in the region has been subjugated to a perspective dominated by the "bounded agency" of youth by social

requirements (Evans, 2002), with the objective that youth cultural practices fit with those requirements. There is room and need for different approaches. An alternative to the current system would consist of providing incentives for the creation of cultural centres and youth and neighbourhood associations able to act as leisure educational spaces with two main goals. First, to gain access to cultural practices, learning and teaching from their own experiences, applying a peer socialisation perspective. And second, to offer job opportunities and training for undergraduate and graduate students. To do so, the public administrations of the region but also the EU should take into account the need to:

1. Change the policy orientation from institutional top-down governance to a bottom-up strategy and ensure better conditions for the provision of cultural and non-formal education services.

2. Understand leisure learning as a comprehensive issue, with young people's involvement in youth organisations as workers, volunteers or leaders in a youth club. This provides a young person with valuable life skills that cannot be taught through the formal education system.

3. Achieve the active participation of young people in the creation of these spaces of sociability, cultural creation and non-formal learning. These centres can be self-managed by young people, which would ultimately open up new spaces for youth participation and would indirectly strengthen youth public policies.

4. During the discussion a more differentiated target group for the policy measures has been identified to involve leisure educational policies. Given the extensive number of discouraged young people, specific policies targeting these segments should be implemented. One of the major priorities should be to accommodate the needs of young women, those who are not in education, employment or training (NEETs) and those who do not/cannot participate in the labour force. Besides the educated young people, those with less education and experience should also be targeted. A serious focus on rural young people is a must.

5. Youth policies and cultural policies should be based on the principle of subsidiarity, that is, the priority of the local level in the implementation of these policies. Only when this level is insufficient should it be expanded to the national and international.

EU policies can work to facilitate the synergies between governments, youth workers, private cultural companies and young people – what is called the "magical triangle" (Oliart and Feixa, 2012). The objective is that young people, individually or organised into groups, become the main beneficiaries, both as users and creators of the leisure education spaces, and as professionals responsible for intervening in the world of young people. When these exchanges are numerous, fertile or positive, the result is to strengthen the areas of youth participation and strengthen youth public policies. When these exchanges are scarce, sterile or negative, young people go from being the subject to the object, becoming invisible or disappearing symbolically and physically from the centre of the stage.

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Endnotes

1. See: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=447Vx3Qj9KM. Life stories interviews are a complement to the written life stories recorded as part of SAHWA Ethnographic Fieldwork. These interviews were conducted throughout 2015 in five countries: Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia.
2. SAHWA is a project fund by the European Community's Seventh Framework Programme FP7/2007-2013 (www.sahwa.eu). This research project brought together researchers from both shores of Mediterranean, belonging to 15 research institutions. The data used in this paper was collected during the period 2014-2016 in Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt and Lebanon implementing both qualitative and quantitative methods.
3. The concept of adult-centrism refers to relations of dominance between age classes – and what is assigned to each as social expectation – that have been brewing throughout history, with roots, mutations and economic, cultural and political updates that have been installed in the social imaginary, affecting its material and symbolic reproduction (Duarte, 2012).
4. All the quotes from the Policy Report follow the SAHWA quotation agreement. Thus DZ_FG_1 means Algeria_Focus Group 1. The two first capital letters signify the country; the third and fourth letter is the research source from where the quote comes.
5. *Hittiste* is the name given to young men without work, who, it is perceived, lean against a wall all the time and in some cases occupy the vacant places scattered in their neighbourhood in order to spend most of their time there.
6. The data for all the graphs was obtained by taking the sum of all answers to the different questions in the SAHWA Survey. The weight of the different populations of the countries in the total population of the area is not considered.
7. Mezwed is a genre of popular traditional music based on North African Amazigh scale rhythms. Originally it was the music of the countryside and the working classes and it is often played at weddings and parties. It has its own particular dances in which people may enter a trance-like state.
8. See: Shababpedia entry http://www.shababpedia.org/wiki/Entrepreneurship_Summer_School_Algeria) and the SAHWA Policy Report *Raising the capacities of young entrepreneurs in Arab countries: Best practices and recommendations* by Amina Ziane-Cherif of the ANIMA Investment Network (http://www.sahwa.eu/NEWS/SAHWA-s-Policy- Paper-on-entrepreneurship-in-AMCs-now-online
9. The fieldwork on Sidi Moumin Cultural Centre was collected by Jose Sánchez García in May 2016.

الصحوة
Sahwa

Researching
Arab Mediterranean Youth:
Towards a New Social Contract

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