



UN-ESCWA

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# Bridging the Urban Divide in the ESCWA Region: Towards Inclusive Cities

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# **The Urban Divide in the ESCWA Region**

# The Urban Divide in the ESCWA Region

- Is multi-dimensional: spatial, social, economic, political and cultural
- Existent at various spatial scales:
  - **Regional scale** (between the cities of the various countries);
  - **National and sub-national scale** (between the provinces cities of one country and between urban/ rural areas); and
  - **City scale** (between the different quarters and social groups of the same cities, but mainly between formal and informal economies and formal and informal areas).

# The Urban Divide in the ESCWA Region

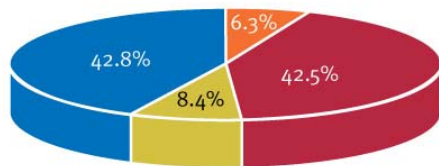
- Involves multiple forms of polarizations, mainly (but not only):
  1. Polarization in terms of income
  2. Polarization in ability to access urban advantages
  3. Socio-spatial polarization

# 1. Polarization in Terms of Income

## Regional income disparities are vast

Figure 5-2 a

Distribution of regional GDP:  
by country group, 2007

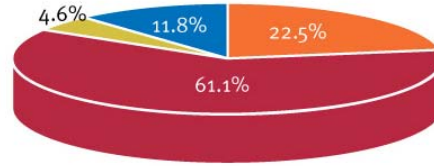


■ High income  
■ Upper middle income  
■ Lower middle income  
■ Low income

Source: UNDP/AHDR calculations based on IMF 2007; World Bank 2008.

Figure 5-2 b

Distribution of regional population:  
by country group, 2007



■ High income  
■ Upper middle income  
■ Lower middle income  
■ Low income

Source: UNDP/AHDR calculations based on IMF 2007; World Bank 2008.

- The GDP of high and upper middle income countries is 51.2% of regional GDP and their population is 16.4% of region's population.
- The GDP of low and lower income countries is 48.8% of region's total and their population is 83.6% of region's total.

## 1. Polarization in Terms of Income

- Economic disparities are a main reason behind the important trans-national migratory flows (both legal and illegal) from poorer countries towards richer countries.
- In many countries however there is a huge income gap between the various groups of the urban population.

## 1. Polarization in Terms of Income

- Social exclusion and the income gap have increased in most Arab countries over the past two decades, even if they show moderate Gini coefficients:

Egypt: **0.320** (2004/5)

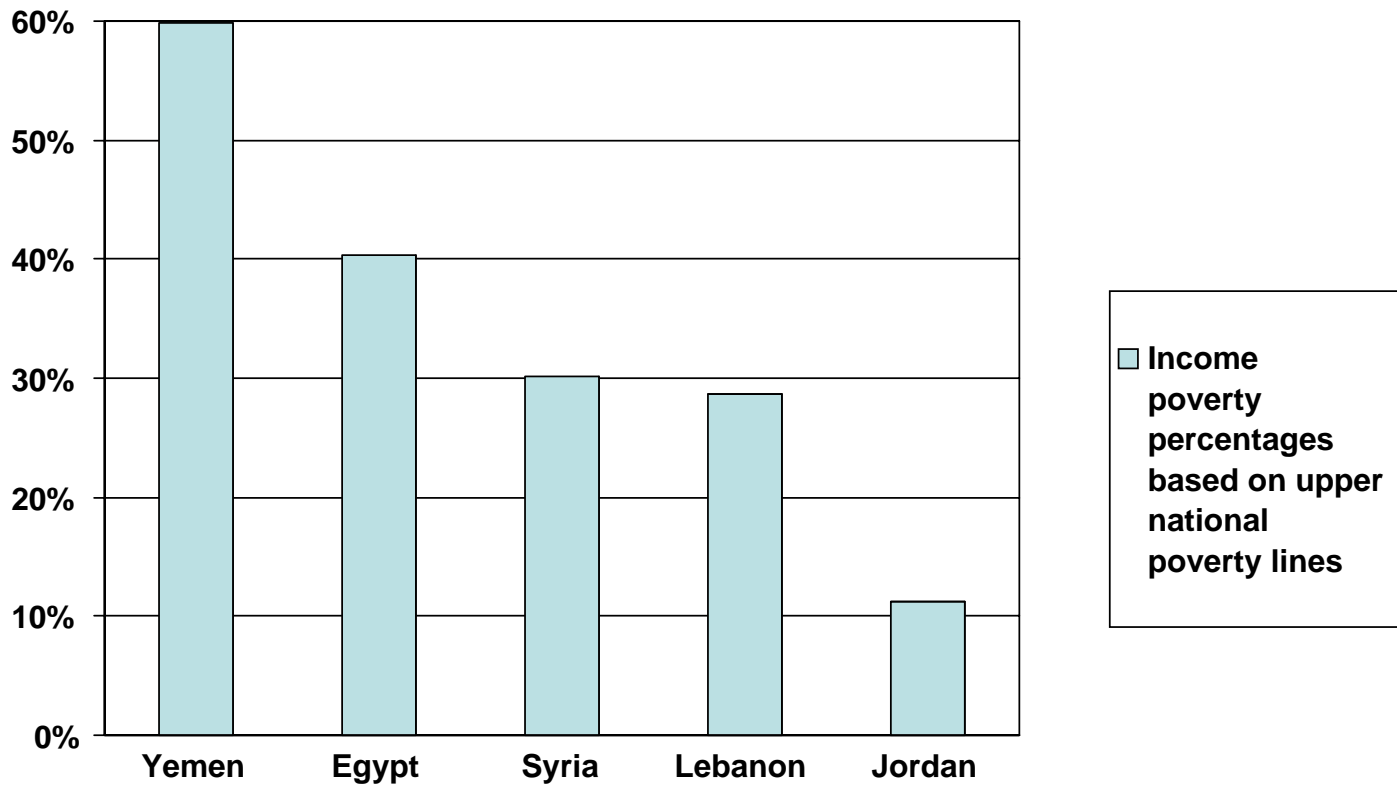
Jordan: **0.359** (2002)

Lebanon: **0.360** (2005)

Syria: **0.375** (2004)

Yemen: **0.366** (2005)

# 1. Polarization in Terms of Income





# 1. Polarization in Terms of Income

**Table 5-6**

**The incidence of poverty at the national upper poverty line, 9 Arab countries, 2000-2006**

	Survey year	Poverty line	Poverty rate	Population (million)	# of the poor (million)
Egypt	2004/5	PPP \$2.7 per day	40.93	72.8	29.8
Syria	2003/4	NUPL	30.1	18.3	5.5
Lebanon	2004/5	NUPL	28.6	4	1.1
Jordan	2006	PPP \$2.7 per day	11.33	5.5	0.6
Morocco	2000	PPP \$2.7 per day	39.65	28.4	11.3
Tunisia	2000	PPP \$2.7 per day	23.76	9.56	2.3
MIC			36.52	138.56	50.60
Yemen	2005	PPP \$2.43 per day	59.95	21.1	12.6
Djibouti	2002	PPP \$2.43 per day	52.6	0.76	0.4
Mauritania	2000	PPP \$2.43 per day	53.95	2.5	1.3
LDC			59.10	24.36	14.40
Total			39.90	162.92	65.00

Source: World Bank 2008.

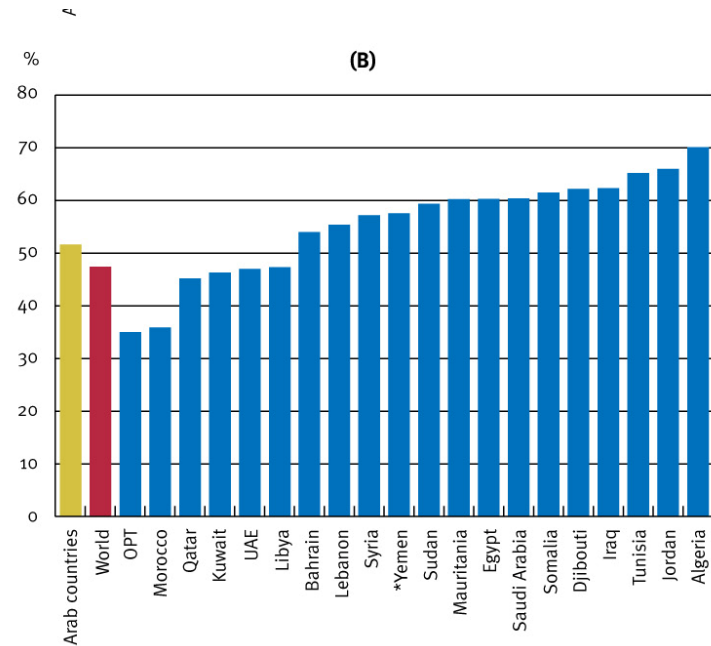
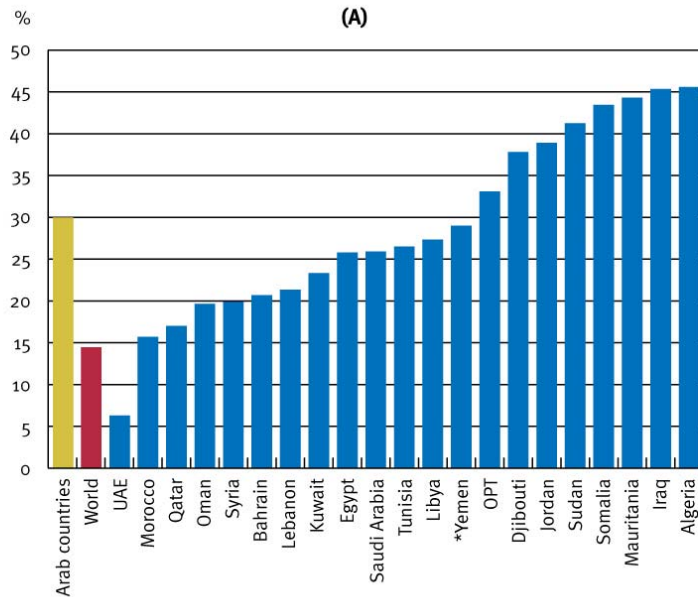
## **2. Polarization in Ability to Access Urban Services & Opportunities**

- The “urban advantage” is not available to all
- Typically, it is the urban poor and foreign migrant workers and refugees suffer from the highest degree of exclusion and inequality
- Women and youth are often excluded from urban opportunities, especially access to employment.

## 2. Polarization in Ability to Access Urban Services & Opportunities

Figure 5-6

(A) Unemployment rate among Arab youth and (B) share of Arab youth in total unemployment (%), in the year 2005/2006



Source: ALO 2008 (in Arabic).

\* Data source for Yemen from the World Bank and the Social Fund for Development, 2009.

According to ALO 2005/2006 estimates, the unemployment rates among the youth of the Arab region is nearly double that in the world at large (30% compared to 14%). Female unemployment rates are also remarkably higher than similar rates in other world regions.

## 2. Polarization in Ability to Access Urban Services & Opportunities

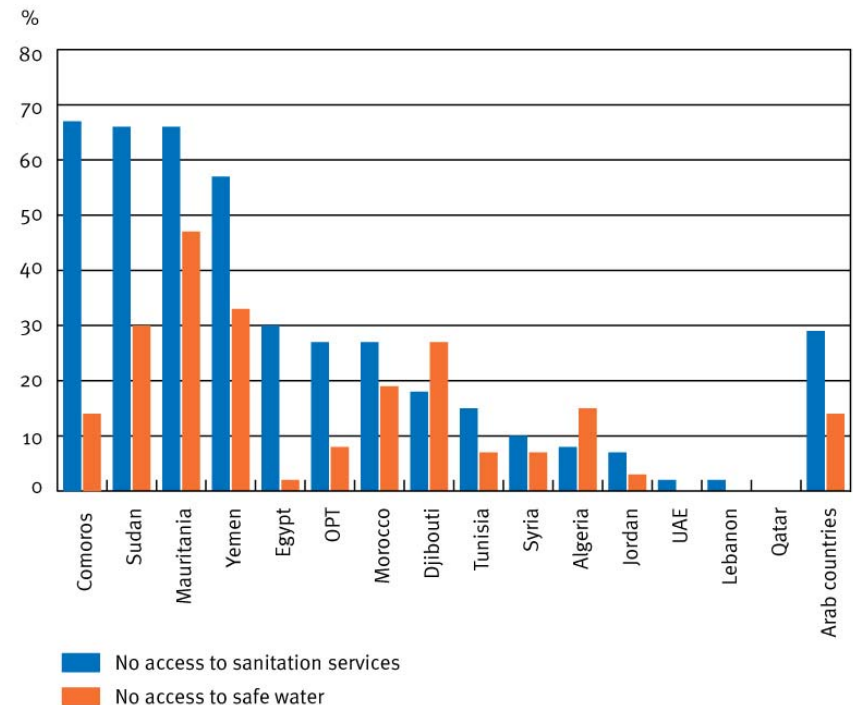
### Slum population as a percentage of urban

Sudan	86%
Oman	61%
Palestine	60%
Iraq	57%
Lebanon	50%
Egypt	40%
Saudi Arabia	20%
Jordan	16%
Syria	10%

Source: Key Global Indicators | United Nations Statistics Division, UN-HABITAT/MDG (2001 estimates)

Figure 2-7

Percentage of population without access to safe water and sanitation services, 15 Arab countries, 2007



Source: UNDP 2007.

## 2. Polarization in Ability to Access Urban Services & Opportunities

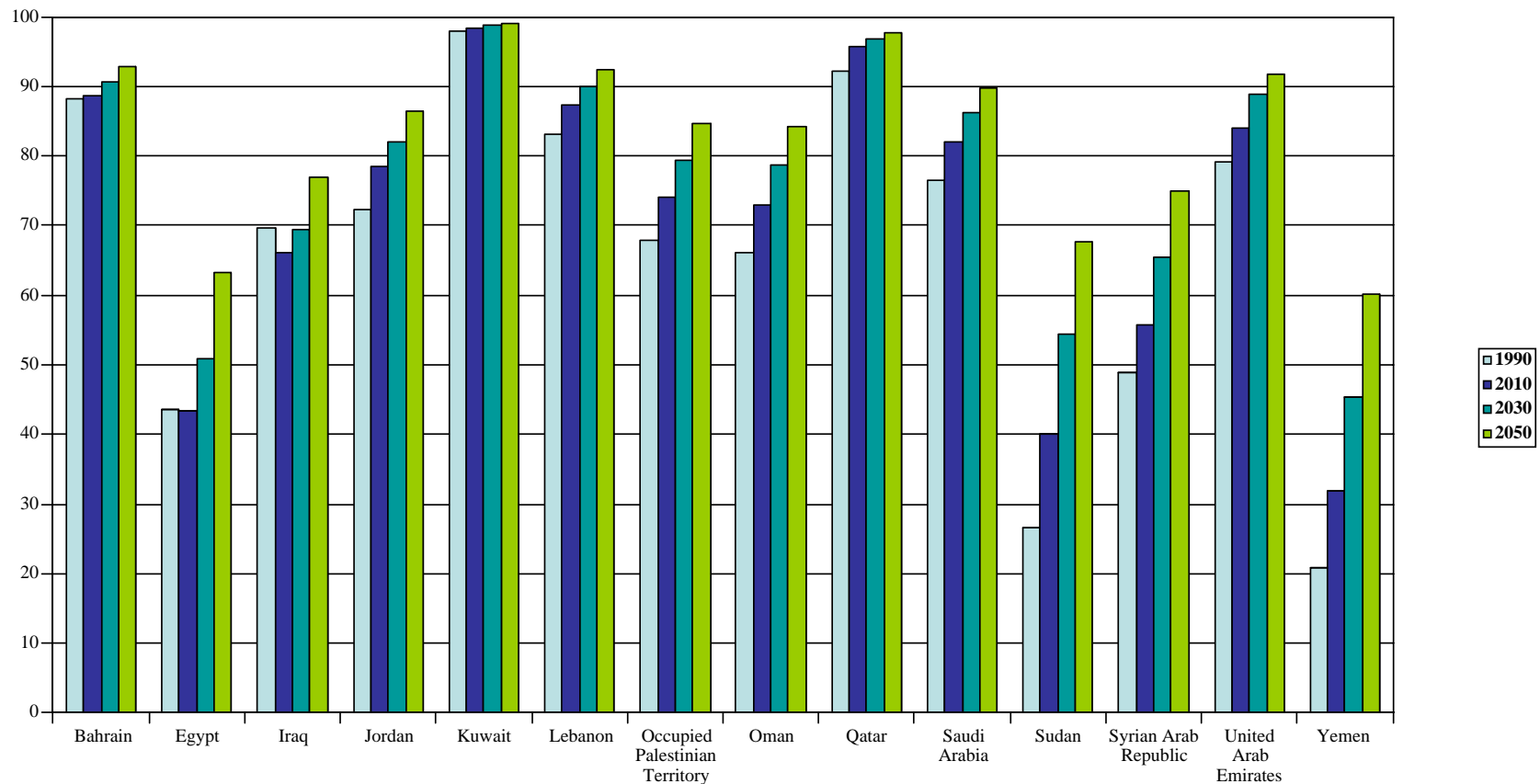
**Estimated % of population with improved access to urban services (2006)**

	Sudan	Jordan	Egypt	Yemen	Oman	Syria	Iraq	Bahrain	Kuwait	Lebanon	Qatar	Saudi Arabia	UAE
Improved sanitation	40	71	77	89	98	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Improved drinking water	50	98	97	74	41	94	67	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: ESCWA

## 2. Polarization in Ability to Access Urban Services & Opportunities

Urban population as a percentage of total population



### **3. Socio-Spatial Polarization**

- Population growth and economic forces are transforming the spatial and social landscapes of many countries and cities in the ESCWA region.
- Uncontrolled growth and uneven development are however leading to different forms of partitioning of the physical and social space

### **3. Socio-Spatial Polarization**

- Inadequate urban management is broadening urban and social divisions and placing not only the poor and vulnerable groups, but also middle-income groups at a greater disadvantage.
- The increased competition between cities is amplifying uneven urban development patterns “allowing capital to play one local or regional or national class configuration off against others.”



# **Bridging the Urban Divide**

## Bridging the Urban Divide

- Bridging the urban divide requires central and local governments to address several interrelated demographic, economic and financial challenges, social, urban environmental challenges and political and institutional challenges.
- This requires context-specific responses to increased demands for: (i) affordable housing; (ii) basic services and infrastructure (water, sanitation, electricity, solid waste management, roads, etc.), (iii) education and health services, (iv) decent and fair employment, (v) environmental protection, and (vi) good urban governance.

# The Scope of our Meeting

Our meeting will focus on the spatial dimension of the urban divide and the kind of **spatial development intervention taking place in the region at the national, city, and district (or neighbourhood) scales** vis-à-vis strategies aimed at inclusive urbanization, social equity and economic balance.

# Objectives of the Meeting

- To discuss the main urban challenges facing the cities of the region
- To present and share experiences in spatial planning and inclusive development
- To elaborate general lessons and recommendations towards more inclusive urban policy formulation and implementation