



Dynamics of youth engagement in Arab Mediterranean Countries: An analysis of SAHWA material

Henri Onodera, Bruno Lefort, Sofia Laine, Karim Maïche & Martta Myllylä

Finnish Youth Research Network (FYRN)

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FYRN team contributions

- SAHWA Policy Report: Towards more inclusive youth engagement in Arab-Mediterranean countries.
- SAHWA Policy Report: Breaking the triple marginalisation of youth? Mapping the future prospects of youth in Arab-Mediterranean countries.
- SAHWA Journal Article: Dynamics of engagement among youth in Arab-Mediterranean countries.



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Key themes and issues

- Complementing & challenging the (normative) notions of youth engagement
 - Formal and informal engagements
 - Passive and active disengagement
 - Multiple life spheres: Tensions and synergies
- Main youth concerns are connected to socioeconomic conditions and future life chances

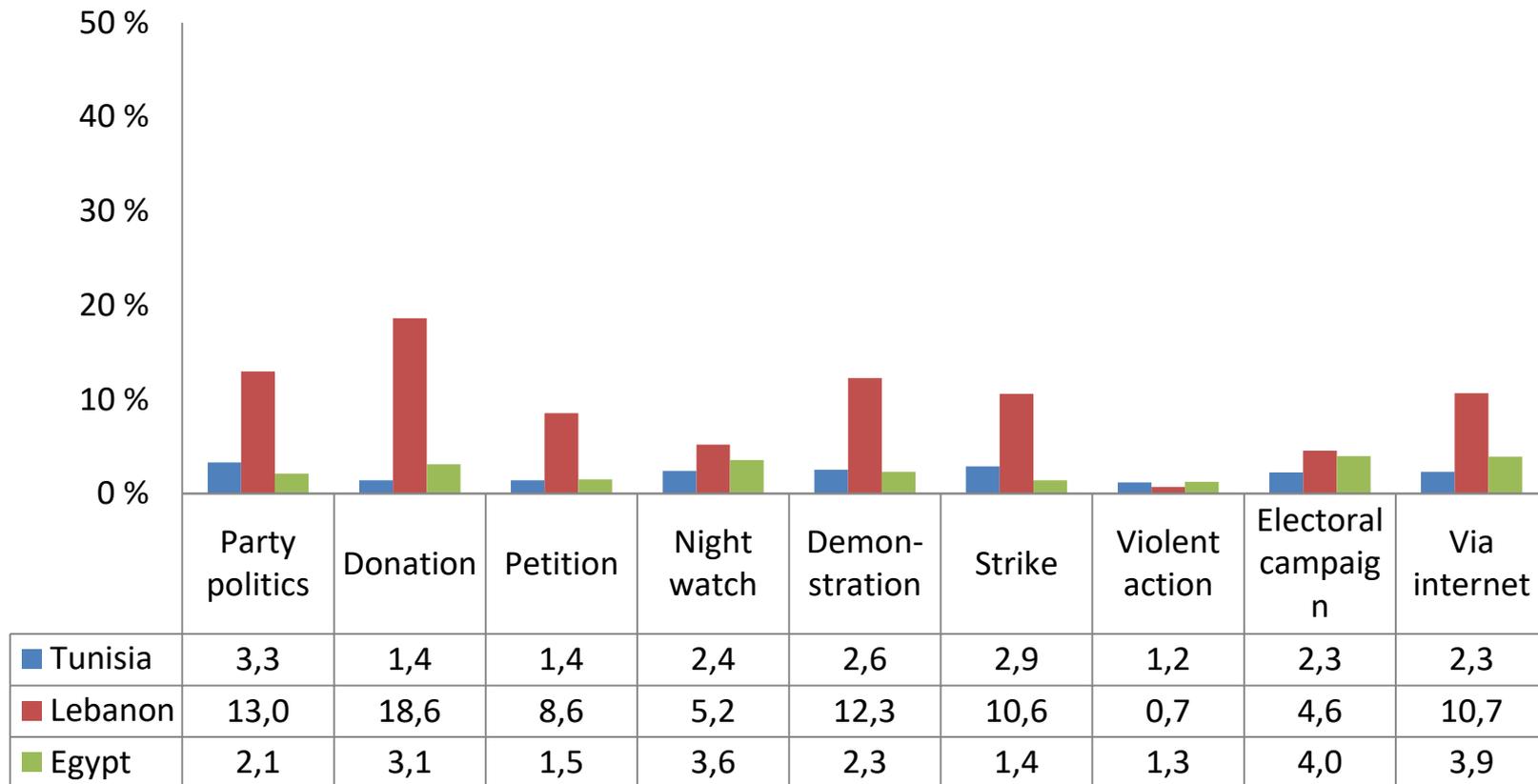


Formal and informal engagements

- Starting point: Alongside formal and institutional channels, venues, informal networks are the most widespread vehicles for participation
 - Tapping into the layers of social ties and mutual trust that thrive in the region, these networks fulfill a multitude of purposes and as such create positive and less risky incentives for participation
- (Alhamad 2008)



Figure 1. Participation in different political activities at least once during the last 12 months (%)



Source: SAHWA Youth Survey 2016



Figure 2. Experiences of the possibilities to play an active role and have a say (averages)

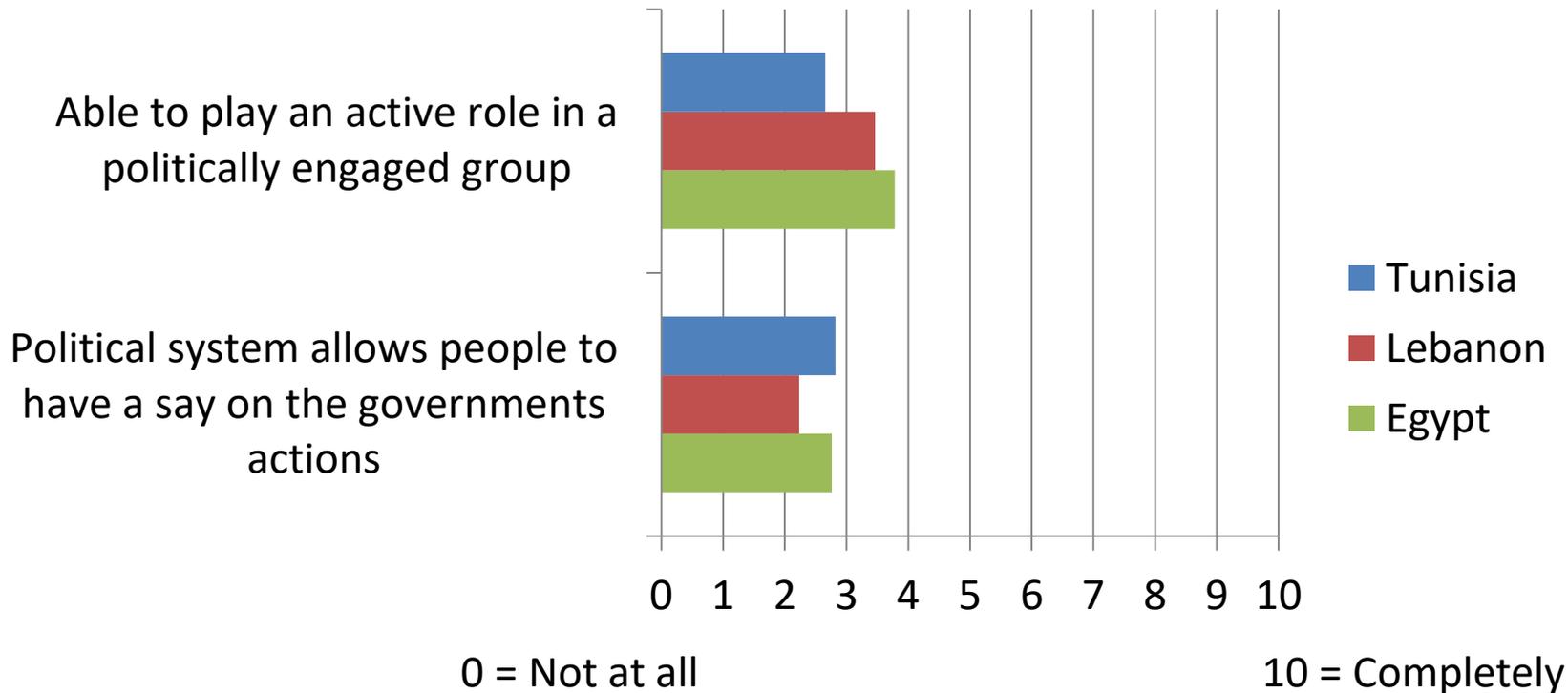
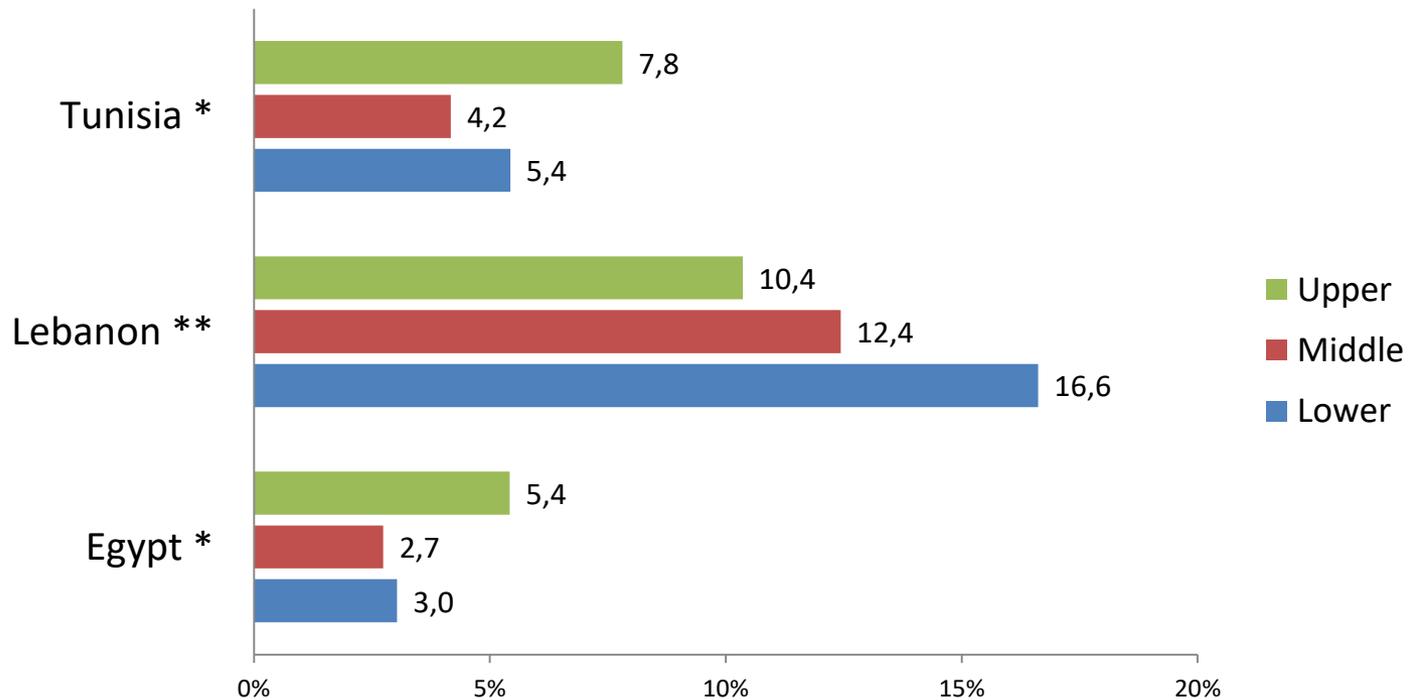


Figure 3. The share of participative persons in each social class (%)



Source: SAHWA Youth Survey 2016



Passive and active disengagements

- Simultaneous qualitative differences (Erik & Amnå 2012)
- Vignettes from Sahwa material:
- *...the state is wrong and politics means “leave me alone”, and fears some, “I cannot understand, I tried but I couldn’t”. The young people don’t care about political events. Youngsters think that politics is a hidden game “We see only what they want us to see. The important things they don’t show them to us “ (ALGERIA)*
- *Everyone talks about integration or the involvement of young people in decision making, but how many young people are actually involved in these decisions? Isn’t this category of youth exploited in the production of certain policies? Regarding the forms of participation, we can observe some of them along the axis of Kenitra, Marrakech until Agadir. But there are other regions where young people are not involved at all and they choose non involvement. Is it a political choice? [---] They choose to stay at the coffee corner, smoking quietly, watching the sea, they have other concerns. (MOROCCO)*





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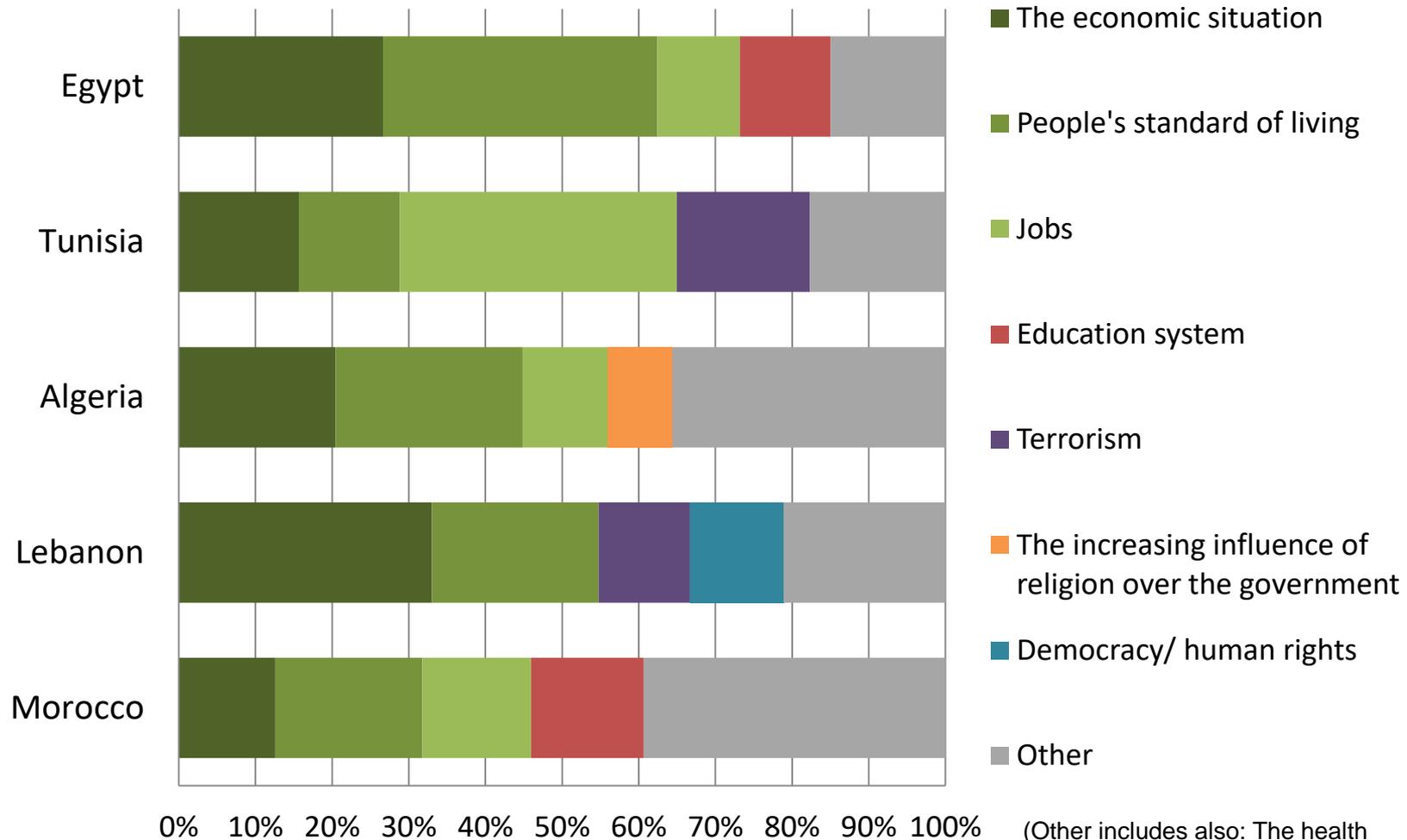
“Civic engagement” vs. other concerns

- “Resala” was accessible for me during college when I used to live in “Beni – Suef” governorate. “Salwa” adds that “Resala” is also available in her hometown of Menya but it is far away from where she lives. Salwa adds that when she used to work in “Resala” she used to help a group of blind people. She dedicated herself once a week to sit down and read them a book while they sat down and thought it through. Other activities that “Resala” offered while Salwa helped there was the process of collecting old or used clothes and washing them and preparing them, then distributing them on the most needy. Salwa dictates that helping out in “Resala” created a sense of responsibility and self-worth for Salwa. After finishing college, Salwa wanted to actually work and stopped approaching charity organizations where she used to help out.

EGYPT



Figure 4. “The biggest problem in my country” reported by 15-29-years-olds, showing four most selected answers per country (%)



(Other includes also: The health system, Corruption, Morals in society, Housing, Criminality and drugs)



Life-spheres of everyday life:

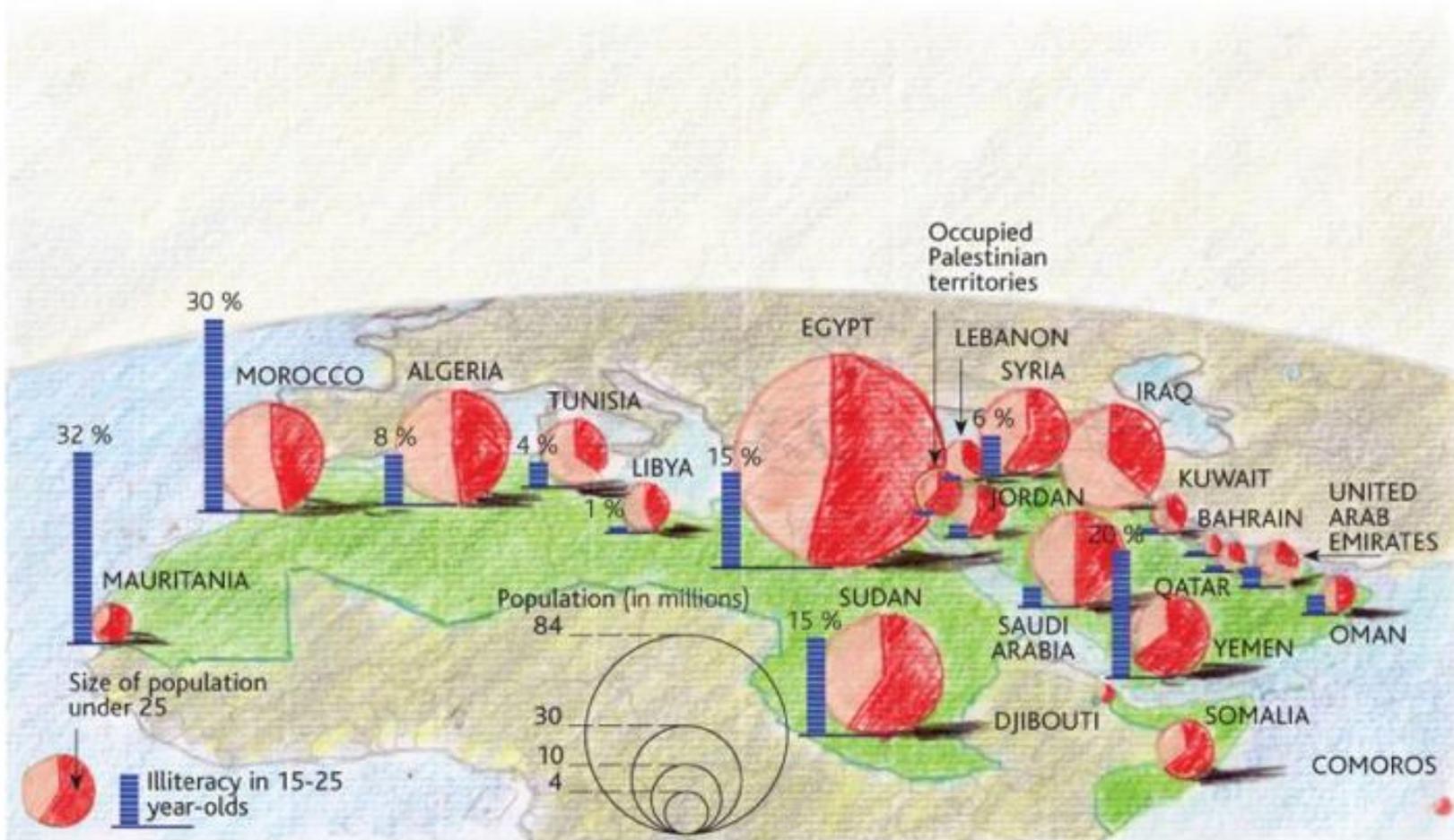
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Synergies and tensions

- Life-spheres as experiential domains of everyday life, including: family, education, (un)employment, friendship/leisure, marriage/romance and 'civic engagement'
- Passy & Ciugni (2000): "...the more the life-spheres are interlocked, or better yet, intertwined with a given political issue and the stronger this connection, the higher are the chances that such an issue will become a crucial element in the construction of the self, and as a result, the higher the chances that their political commitment will stabilize, leading to sustained participation."





National proportions of young people among general populations and respective illiteracy rates