



ELITE



ELITE GUEST

Dr. Ashraf EL Araboy

Former Minister of Planning, Follow-up and
Administrative Reform and President of the
National Planning Institute



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ELITE



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FEPS WELCOMES ITS NEW STUDENTS

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Prof. Ashraf El-Araby, former Minister of Planning and President of the National Planning Institute, hosted by ELITE

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY: CAROLIN SHERIF, CLARINDA CHERIF, MALAK ASHRAF, DESIGN: NERMIN NASSER

As our faculty's magazine Elite Have used to interview the brightest graduates and the highest scientific and practical statures of our faculty; this month we interviewed Dr. Ashraf El Said El Arabi, the president of the National Planning Institute and the former minister of Planning, Follow-up and Administrative Reform. Dr. Ashraf welcomed our invitation and hosted us in his office in the National Planning Institute and here are the details of the meeting.

How did your relationship with the Faculty of Economics and Political Science begin and why did you choose it?

First of all, I would like to express my happiness with this meeting, as well as the role and merit of the Faculty of Economics and Political Science in my life. After completing my secondary education in Port Said, I first joined the Faculty of Engineering, Suez University, but I did not feel that I belonged to the Faculty of Engineering, and therefore I moved to the Faculty of Economics and Political Science, and that was in 1988. Although the majority of those enrolled at that time were from the literary section and therefore they were considered the courses of the Department Statistics is the most difficult for them, but because I am a student in the Mathematical Sciences Division, I found it the easiest and closest to my heart. I remember well my great professor, Dr. Hussein Abdel Aziz, head of the Statistics Department at that time, who played an important role in perpetuating that love. So I felt like I was where I belong and loved. The reason for my transfer from the College of Engineering to the College of Economics is due to what many students face so far after completing secondary education, which is their desire to enroll in the highest colleges that fit the total they obtained more than the idea of enrolling in the most appropriate college for them.

How was your life as a student in the faculty and your most important activities?

I was one of the outstanding students during my educational career, but I also had many interests: sports, cultural, social...etc. During the faculty, I was the pioneer of the Renaissance family, and the supervisor of the family at that time was our professor, Dr. Gouda Abdel-Khaleq and we were doing many activities and I remember a great activity in which we hosted the heroes

of the famous series Raafat Al-Hagan, and it was showing at the time in the month of Ramadan. In addition to a number of trips, which have always been in exceptional circumstances, for example: We took a trip to Luxor and Aswan, coinciding with Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, and there were threats to strike the High Dam, and tourism was not at its best. I also joined the Students' Union and ran in the elections for the Social, Sports and Cultural Activities Committee in particular. But although I was very interested in activities, I was equally interested in studying. As I mentioned earlier, the sports courses in particular were the courses in which I got an excellent grade.

How was the relationship between you and the professors and who are the most that professors influenced you?

In fact, my teachers in the Faculty of Economics and Political Science are one of the most influential factors in the formation of my personality in general, and of course I mention them: Prof. Dr. Gouda Abdel-Khaleq, not only because he was the supervisor of the Renaissance family, but also because I was taught by him in some courses such as: Egypt's economics and the Middle East. Likewise, it had a great impact on me after studying, that is, in my practical life, because after graduation, I was heading in my professional path in a completely different direction from my current direction. At that time, the bank credit risk guarantee company was newly established, and that company specifically attracted the first college graduates. But Dr. Gouda Abdel-Khaleq advised me to go to research and that I am indeed a good researcher, so he advised me to work as an assistant researcher for Dr. Ismail Sabri Abdullah in the Third World Forum. Of course, Dr. Ismail is a scholar in the field of economics and planning in Egypt - and we have here at the Institute one of the halls named after him - and that forum was affiliated with the South Committee. And so was that forum, Dr. Muhammad Mahmoud al-Imam - and we have a hall in the institute in his name as well - and they were the first professors with whom practical life brought me together. And of course, Dr. Laila Al-Khawaja, and she was my supervisor on my master's thesis with Dr. Mona El-Baradei. Also from the professors who influenced me the most:



Dr. Hana Khair El-Din - may God have mercy on her - Dr. Naglaa Al-Ahwany and Dr. Samiha Fawzy. Of course, I remember Dr. Naglaa Al-Ahwani's discussion with me, and she was one of the jury members for my master's thesis. My relationship with the two professors later continued in the field of work. When I joined the ministry, Dr. Najla Al-Ahwany, Advisor to the Prime Minister, and until now we are both members of the Board of Directors of the Central Bank, and also Dr. Samiha Fawzy worked with her upon my return from the doctoral mission in the United States, within the framework of the government of Dr. Ahmed Nazif was d. Samiha at that time, First Assistant Minister of Industry, Engineer Rashid Muhammad Rashid. Dr. Samiha had a personality that combined science and knowledge, wit, decisiveness and seriousness. I also remember Dr. Ahmed Youssef from the Department of Political Science, who liked me in the Department of Political Science, in addition, of course, to Dr. Hazem Hosni.

You assumed the planning portfolio in light of exceptional political and economic circumstances from 2012 to 2017, how can you evaluate this important experience and the challenges you faced?

After I returned from my doctoral scholarship in mid-2004, and that mission was affiliated with the National Planning Institute, after I was appointed as a teaching assistant at the institute, and I owed that shift in my career path to Dr. Ismail Sabry, as he was the one who nominated me to Dr. Kamal Al-Ganzouri at that time. Dr. Ismail was an encyclopedist and knowledgeable to an impressive degree, and I remember that he used to write an article in Al-Ahali newspaper every Wednesday under the title "Words and Meanings" and he would ask me about my opinion, and I, of course, was impressed by that because I was still young and a recent graduate, but I remember his word in particular: You are my most important reader because you The first of them. Therefore, Dr. Ismail gave me great confidence in myself in the truth of the matter, and he had a rare library that was given to the Institute after his death, and I often went to it and read its books. Was Dr. Ismael is the one who introduced me to Dr. Kamal Al-Ganzouri to appoint me to the institute, and one of his goals was to join the mission, because of course the opportunity is greater in the institute due to the smaller number compared to universities.

The important thing is when I came back, as I said, I worked with an engineer. Rasheed and Dr. Samiha at the Ministry of Industry in addition to my work at the Institute. Then it followed that Dr. Majed Othman, who was the head of the Information and Decision Support Center in the Council of Ministers at the time - and we had worked together before on the first population report - and he also offered me to work with him in the center. It followed that Dr. Othman Mohamed Othman - and he was one of the members of the committee that appointed me to the institute in addition to his being the Minister of Planning at that time - offered me a job in the Ministry of Planning, so I became between teaching at the institute, the Faculty of Economics at Cairo University, the Information Center, the Ministry of Industry and the Ministry of Planning during that period. This period played an important role in introducing me to government work and also gave me confidence in myself. Then the next shift was that I was appointed Director of the Office of the Minister of Planning, Dr. Othman Muhammad Othman at the beginning of 2006.

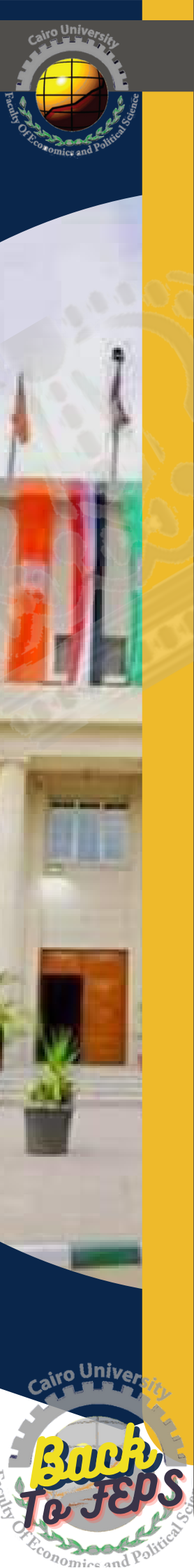
I remained in that position until the January 25 revolution, and at that time, Dr. Fayza Abul-Naga is the Minister of International Cooperation and I had the honor to work with her after the revolution, when the Ministries of International Cooperation and Planning were merged. After that, I traveled to Kuwait to work there for several months. And when I returned on vacation was the formation of a government d. Hisham Qandil and I talked to d. Fayza told me that she would nominate me to take over the ministry after her, and that was in August 2012. It was of course a difficult period, but I worked in the ministry until the ministerial reshuffle in May 2013. I was preparing for my return to Kuwait, but after that the June 30 revolution and the formation of the ministry of Dr. Hazem Al-Beblawi, I was informed of my choice as Minister of Planning again. So, of course, it is a nervous and different period, and I am already considered one of the few who headed ministries in several different regimes, not just periods. I served in the ministry under three presidents of the republic and four different heads of government. But I am very proud that, despite the multiplicity of systems and directions during which I assumed the ministry, I did not do any work in the ministry contrary to my convictions.

The name "planning" is always associated with the socialist era, and the institute and the ministry are remnants of that era. What are the new roles that the ministry and the institute play in order to play their role in our capitalist context?

Of course, this is one of the misconceptions, which is the link between planning and socialism, although we teach that even in the courses, which is the multiplicity of planning methods, there is central planning where the state plans and implements and the state owns all the companies and this central type no longer exists anywhere because of its failure even In countries currently classified as socialist countries.

We find that, on the contrary, the importance of planning increases in the light of the market economy, but it is indicative planning, where the state gives signals to the market, and it is a type of planning that requires the state to set clear goals and plans, such as those included in the Egypt Vision 2030 document. Then the question becomes how do the goals translate into actions? And that is by providing the market with those signals that we talked about. Thus, indicative planning tools are completely different from the other type. We actually find this in any capitalist country, even if there is no ministry, institute or official agency for planning, but the general plan of the state always exists, especially in light of the broad concept of development, which is no longer limited to economic indicators such as investment and others, but also includes society, environment and sustainable development.





Thus, indicative planning tools are completely different from the other type. We actually find this in any capitalist country, even if there is no ministry, institute or official agency for planning, but the general plan of the state always exists, especially in light of the broad concept of development, which is no longer limited to economic indicators such as investment and others, but also includes society, environment and sustainable development. Thus, the dimensions are multi-dimensional, intertwined, and require planning. So the permanent link between planning and socialism is a misconception and we always try to fix it on more than one occasion and highlight the importance of planning in the market economy and its various tools such as: incentives and the concept of the developmental state and support sectors with competitive industrial advantage, so the state's intervention is smart intervention.

Definitely the talk of the hour is the trend again towards floating the pound and borrowing from the International Monetary Fund. How do you evaluate this step and its consequences for the Egyptian economy?

Of course, we have gone through this step several times before. For any country to develop, there must be a state of political and security stability. We can say that Egypt was able to restore this stability to a large extent after the two revolutions. But the very important next step is to achieve economic stability (financial and monetary).

Any guarantee that the exchange rate, commodity prices, interest and investment policies are stable as well as tax policies. Hence, stability is the basis of any development.

The problem we are currently facing is that crises and periods of instability are becoming more and more frequent. Of course, the idea of globalization has contributed to this, as happened, for example, after the Ukrainian crisis. Today, we see what is happening in the global monetary market, the exchange rate, commodity prices, value chains and supply chains, and the changes and challenges that all of these processes are witnessing. What makes the state able to be satisfied with the support of the International Monetary Fund as a start and to continue the process without it later is the ability to carry out the necessary structural reforms. We recall the time when the late President Mubarak in 1981 held an economic conference aimed at determining the path between ~~openness and socialism~~



This is due to the necessity of carrying out many structural reforms, which are usually delayed in Egypt and in many developing countries in general. For example, we find that the Argentine State has so far not given up the support of the International Monetary Fund, because of the countries' rush to be satisfied with the initial results of reform programs with the Fund without completing the necessary steps for reform. After stability, the focus should be on improving the investment environment, supporting the productive and industrial sectors, reducing imports and increasing exports.

Therefore, the current crisis is summed up in the exchange rate crisis and the decline in reserves, and therefore negotiations are currently underway with the International Monetary Fund. However, despite the current challenges, opportunities also exist. We now find, for example, that with the deterioration of the exchange rate, our exports have become less expensive and therefore more competitive. But the problem lies in the fact that the positive effects of these opportunities are medium or long-term, while the cost is short-term, so we find the problem of inflation continues, and while the Central Bank seeks to contain it by raising the interest rate, this negatively affects investment, and this is of course the nature of the economy.



The global economy suffers from several crises, the impact of which was increased by the Ukrainian crisis and the steps of the US Federal Reserve towards raising the interest rate and the subsequent capital flight. How do you assess the scene of the global economy and its outcomes?

As we know all the forecasts and reports show the reality of the unfavorable global scene of the decline in the growth rate and the general slowdown in the global economy, and we certainly expect its impact on the Suez Canal and tourism. The problem lies in the fact that this slowdown is accompanied by inflation, which is a state of stagflation, as we have learned in economics. As for the interest rate hike by the US Federal Reserve, it is expected and announced for some time, and this was reflected in reducing liquidity in addition to raising the cost of loans. Therefore, in the coming period, we must focus on strengthening the ability of Arab economies to withstand crises, by strengthening the economy and increasing its capacity for self-sufficiency, in addition to relying on the region in what is known as regional value chains. These chains are based on the exchange of interests at the present time rather than the idea of togetherness as it was in the past. So opportunities lie in the midst of challenges, and this is where the value of planning and expectations stand out.



Finally, what advice would you like to give our students?

The main advice is to have a dream, fight for it, and believe in your abilities. Ambition, hope and confidence are necessary tools. I stress over and over on self-learning, which is much easier than ever. As well as the need to be informed and open to different activities and cultures, and that is why I mentioned that I personally did not stop at studying only, and I remember what my professor, Dr. Laila Al-Khawaja, told me before I traveled on the mission, which is that I was not sent on that mission to obtain a certificate only, but for what is more important, which is that I travel to experience a community and culture. I also advise them to accept criticism and consider it aimed at personal development, and to take advantage of the opportunity to be in the Faculty of Economics and Political Science in particular, as well as the state initiatives for young people, in order to enrich their knowledge and skills. Work and experience with the aim of excellence is essential.



TRANSLATED BY NADA MOHAMED



I WANT MY DOLL

PROF. HANAN M. ALY, FEPS VICE DEAN FOR EDUCATION AND STUDENTS' AFFAIRS

On a cold autumn day, while the trees quietly succumb to their leaves, the sun slowly sets, the weather is getting ready to get cloudy, and the birds eagerly prepare to leave their nests,

I was sleeping in my room, so I heard my father and mother talking in a low voice, then I started hearing their voice getting louder little by little, which I was not used to before, and suddenly my mother started wailing,

I had nothing to do , I was confused about my matter and I fell in my thoughts ..

I don't understand why my mom is crying like that?! There must have been a major issue...

My grandmother may have passed away..or my mother may have been fired from her work...

While I was thinking, my father opened my room and walked towards me without greeting me in the morning as he used to, and kissed me and hugged me tightly and cried.. I did not understand.. I said gently: What makes you cry, Dad?

He quickly wiped the tears from his eyes, and said: I will travel to another city, and be away from you for a while,

So I was troubled, sad, and afraid, and before I could say anything, he said to me: I want you to obey your mother, and not to disobey her order.

Here my mother entered the room with pain in her heart, sadness on her face, and tears in her eyes.

And I asked him: does not you get emotional? Does your decision change? Does not you follow your intuition?

She added, "Look at your five-year-old daughter. Will you leave us here alone?" Will you leave us afraid? Do you..

My father interrupted her, saying: Enough.. He lowered his head, after his face became covered with tears.

My mother, begging him, said: Do you remember.. We left our city, our families and our friends, and we came here two years ago to move the headquarters of the company in which you work,

And she added: Have you forgotten that I have hardly found a job here, and live under the threat of being laid off?

He said sadly: I cannot bear to sit here idly by.. and to let the enemy occupy my country..

To injure and kill.. to destroy and exterminate..

She looked at him with pain in her heart, and said: There is an army trained in carrying arms, which will defend our country, eliminate our enemy, and preserve our glory.

He said to her, wondering: Have you not seen how the enemy forces entered so many cities? Did you not hear about the wounded and dead? Did you not think that our defense of the border cities prevented them from incurring and reaching us here?

She said with tears in her eyes: What should my daughter and I do if something happened to you?

He interrupted her and hugged me and my mother, saying: If I die, I will be a martyr who defended his homeland, and if survived, I will only return victorious.



He said, grabbed his bag, and ran out.

I ran after him and he didn't catch up.. I tried to catch him but I couldn't.. I called but it didn't work..

I sat crying saying: Dad.. come back dad.. I love you dad.. I will wait for you dad..

Here, my mother stopped her tears, tried to show her composure, and embraced me tenderly, saying: Come on, my love, we prepare breakfast, and then we play with the doll.

The days passed gloomy, between the news of the incursion of the enemy forces.. and the fall of cities into his hands, the number of dead and wounded increased..

My mother and I were depressed. and we were awaiting for the news of my father. and we hoped for his safe return..

One day we heard a loud thump, my mother ran towards me reassuringly, and hugged me saying: It seems that the enemy has entered our city, to diminish our comfort, disturb our sleep, and steal our dreams.

She added, "We must leave immediately to a far safer place... I obeyed her as my father commanded me, got dressed, and arranged my room,

I found my mother preparing some food, and preparing two bags, one in which she puts my clothes, and a larger one in which she puts her clothes.

And she gave me my little bag, and said: Carry it behind your back, as you were when you went to school,

I found it heavier than before, so she said: I put a lot of food and water in it, because we will be on the road for a long time, before we reach a place where there is food and drink.

So I did, and I found my mother carrying my bag of clothes, and going down the stairs, and crossed the street holding me with one hand and carrying the bag in the other hand, and she sat me in the small garden opposite our house, and put the bag next to me, and

she said: Stay here and don't move, I will go home to get my bag, until we leave immediately..

I watched her run fast, and as soon as I entered the house, until I heard the sound of a plane approaching, I raised my eyes to the sky and found it directly above me, it stopped.. I was afraid.. I was terrified..

I thought for a moment to run, so I remembered my mother's request to stay and not move, and it was only a few seconds, until I heard a huge explosion..

I touched my body with both hands, not believing that I was still alive, I opened my eyes, and looked towards my house..

How horrible I saw.. the house collapsed and leveled to the ground, I wept bitterly.. I screamed hard.. I called out hardly.

I kept calling: Mom... Mom...

She don't hear me, she don't see me anymore

I thought to go.. I had to find her.. and smell her scent.. and fall into her arms..

But I was afraid by the raging fires and the rising smoke.

I stayed in my place a lot.. I didn't know how many nights and how many days they followed me..

No one sees me.. no one likes me.. no one takes care of me..

While I was sitting like this, I heard the voices of men coming, and I felt frightened, and I thought that my city had fallen, and the enemy was coming to take it, and killed the survivors or captured them.

I sat down, closed my eyes, and hid my head between my hand,

But I knew that they were among the soldiers of my country, and they came stationed in the garden, to confront the enemy forces,

I asked them about my father, and they assured me that he might be in another city repelling aggression like them.

Here, one of them volunteered to hand me over at one point, so that I could be deported with many women and children to the borders of another country, and I was about to go with him, but I looked at my house.. so I remembered, and said: My doll..

Here he said: What doll? There they will give you beautiful dolls..

I said as I started to cry: I want my doll.. my father bought it for me.. and my mother sewed her clothes.. and played with it with my grandmother..

He said disapprovingly: What is the benefit of a doll in these circumstances? He added: "Come on, hurry up...the enemy forces are on the boarders of the city..."

I said while clinging to the ground refusing to leave: If the mother dies, the father is lost, the house is destroyed, and the homeland is usurped, look for me for my doll...



FEPS WELCOME WEEK

introducing Activities of the Women's Studies Unit

Yasmine Aladdin, FEPS Political Science Teaching assistant

Every year, our dear college receives hundreds of the best students in Egypt, who are interested in the topics of economics, political science and statistics. And In order for our new students to be able to integrate easily into the college community, our faculty holds at the beginning of each academic year a week to welcome new students, in which they are introduced to the various dimensions of study in the faculty and offers an explanation of the activities in it.

An important example of such activities is the Women's Studies Unit in FEPS .At one of the week's sessions, Yasmine Aladdin, Political Science Teaching Assistant and Researcher at the Women's Studies Unit, presented the history of the Women's Studies Unit and the importance of the FEPS Professional Master's Degree in "Gender and Development" as the first Master's in a national university combining the practical and professional aspect and opening it up to all students, researchers and experts from all discipline to contribute to gender-sensitive scientific studies.

BDS



FREEDOM
JUSTICE
EQUALITY



BDS MOVEMENT: BOYCOTTING ZIONISM AND SUPPORTING PALESTINE

Mariam Ismail, Level 3 - Political science
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“If not us, who? If not now, when?” we often hear these words by people in leading positions as an incentive to work. While they might or might not motivate you personally, it was this concept that made Palestinian civil society launch in 2005 what is now widely recognized as a qualitatively different phase in the global struggle for Palestinian freedom, justice, and self-determination against a ruthless, powerful system of oppression that enjoys impunity. In a historic moment of collective consciousness, the Palestinian civil society issued the Call for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) against Israel until it fully complies with its obligations under international law. More than 170 Palestinian civil society groups called upon international civil society organizations and people of conscience all over the world to impose broad boycotts and implement divestment initiatives against Israel similar to those applied to South Africa in the apartheid era. Since 2008, the BDS movement has been led by the largest coalition of Palestinian civil society organizations inside historic Palestine and in exile, the BDS National Committee (BNC).

To grasp more the idea of BDS, let's take the name word by word and explain its implication. First, “**Boycotts**” involve withdrawing support from Israel's apartheid regime, complicit Israeli sporting, cultural and academic institutions, and from all Israeli and international companies engaged in violations of Palestinian human rights

This is the level where individuals anywhere in the world can take actions to stop supporting any institutions or companies supporting Israel. A great example of this was during the May 2021 Gaza bombardments when many simple individuals in their countries conducted research to know what are the products and companies supporting Israel and then boycotted them and invited all their friends and surrounding to do so.

Second, “**Divestment**” campaigns urge banks, local councils, churches, pension funds and universities to withdraw investments from the State of Israel and all Israeli and international companies that sustain Israeli apartheid. A recent example of divestment is the American company “Ben and Jerry's ice cream” who decided to withdraw all their products from Israel and the occupied territories of Palestine. The company went to the extent of suing their mother company “Unilever” when it forced them to keep their sales in Israel.

Lastly, “**Sanctions**” campaigns pressure governments to fulfil their legal obligations to end Israeli apartheid, and not aid or assist its maintenance, by banning business with illegal Israeli settlements, ending military trade and free-trade agreements, as well as suspending Israel's membership in international forums such as UN bodies and FIFA. Some governments have responded to public pressure by taking limited forms of sanctions against Israel or steps to ensure they do not contribute to its crimes.



The million dollar question here is: does BDS have real impact? Instead of going through all of the movement's achievements and successes, let's take a look at Israel's actions toward them. Israel is providing financial aid to international organizations working against the BDS movement through the Ministry of Strategic Affairs, amounting to NIS 5.7 million (as of 2019). They also closed 30 bank accounts of organizations affiliated with the BDS movement on the pretext of close relations between them and armed Palestinian organizations such as Hamas. And to top it all, the director of "Human Rights Watch" was expelled from Israel by a court decision for his support of the boycott movement. Allow me to answer my question with another question: if BDS isn't effective, why go to all this lengths to stop it?

Nowadays, the Israeli restrictions aren't the only thing making it harder to support BDS. In the past month, there was two main stories concerning companies supporting Israel. Firstly, BDS expressed its opposition towards Google involvement with Israel. It all begin when an article from "The Intercept" confirmed that Google is offering advanced artificial intelligence and machine-learning capabilities to the Israeli government through its controversial "Project Nimbus" contract. This project was announced by the Israeli Finance Ministry in April 2021 for a \$1.2 billion cloud computing system jointly built by Google and Amazon. Many of the capabilities outlined in the technologies offered by Google could easily augment Israel's ability to survey people and process vast stores of data. The Israeli state has for decades benefited from the country's thriving research and development sector, to police and control Palestinians.

In 2021, the Washington Post reported on the existence of "Blue Wolf", a secret military program aimed at monitoring Palestinians through a network of facial recognition-enabled smartphones and cameras. As for Google, they briefed the Israeli government on using what's known as sentiment detection, an increasingly controversial and discredited form of machine learning. Google claims that its systems can discern inner feelings from one's face and statements, a technique commonly rejected for lack of scientific basis. One Nimbus presentation showed the "Faces, facial landmarks, emotions" detection capabilities of Google's Cloud Vision API, an image analysis toolset. The presentation then offered a demonstration using the enormous grinning face sculpture at the entrance of Sydney's Luna Park. Google was only able to assess that the famous amusement park is an amusement park with 64 percent certainty. Google workers who reviewed the documents said they were concerned by their employer's sale of these technologies to Israel, fearing both their inaccuracy and how they might be used for surveillance or other militarized purposes. In September, the Jewish Diaspora in Tech (a group launched by Jewish employees in Google) released a series of testimonies from 15 Google employees in opposition to what they see as anti-Palestinian bias within the company. Six Google workers and several Palestinian rights activists and academics held a press conference at one of Google's San Francisco offices, and the activists hosted a multi-city protest organized under #NoTechForApartheid.



Secondly, a few weeks ago Marvel announced that Israeli superhero Sabra will appear in the next Captain America movie. The comic Sabra was introduced in the 80s, showing a superhero who is often depicted wearing an Israeli flag costume and has a deeply racist, anti-Muslim origin story that dehumanize Palestinians. Sabra superpowers were created in order to serve the Mossad. By day, Sabra is also a police officer with Israeli military training. In her first act as a superhero, Sabra battles the Hulk who picks up the body of a Palestinian child who was killed. It's not until the Hulk gives an emotional speech that Sabra sees the child as a human. The comic refers to Palestinians only as Arabs, a trope used by Israel to erase Palestinian identity and existence. It also relies on racist caricatures of Muslims throughout the story. Instead of righting its wrongs, Marvel is choosing to revive a racist character that dehumanizes Palestinians while Palestinians are still suffering under Israeli oppression daily. Also, we have to highlight that the superhero is named after the Sabra refugee camp in Lebanon, the same refugee camp where Israel massacred Palestinians in 1982 after they closed all exits to make sure no Palestinian could escape. While this seems trivial next to google technologies, the entertainment's company fanbase constitutes 64% of adults aging 18-34 years old in the whole world, and 54% adults in the world have watched all their movies and series. This numbers date back to 2018, which means before the streaming of Avengers: Endgame, the rest of the Spiderman trilogy and the launch of phase 4 which have all received really favorable ratings and opinions and marvel have been the topic of many trends lately. Not to mention, that they also have younger viewers aging 8-18 years old.

If an entertainment company with such huge number of viewers, launches a new Israeli superhero feeding the idea that Israelis are brave superheroes to children and youth all around the world, it will definitely impact international support towards Palestine and Palestinians. Israelis aren't superhorse, they shouldn't be glorified in any way. Israelis are oppressors and they should only be shown as such.

The question here isn't about Google or Marvel, it's about the reasons behind our support to BDS as a movement and a concept. Why are we, as simple individuals, willing to go to such lengths, and making our lives harder by boycotting certain products and brands? There is two answers to this question. The first is that you as an individual have witnessed the Israeli oppression firsthand and therefore find it outrageous to support this colonial power in any way. Which means that you are a Palestinian whether living in Palestine or a refugee in any other country, both face daily difficulties caused by Israel in the first place. The second, and the more common, is that you participate in this act by compassion and support for the cause just like how you would participate in protests, share posts about Israeli crimes or try to raise awareness about the cause. Indeed, boycotting requires an extra amount of compassion and strength especially if the product you have to boycott is one you frequently use. The second case is more ambiguous. Compassion can't be measured, we can perform psychological test or experiments to tell if a person is compassionate or not, but we can't tell to what extent is this person compassionate. Even the test results can change over time, you can become more or less compassionate with accumulated experiences.

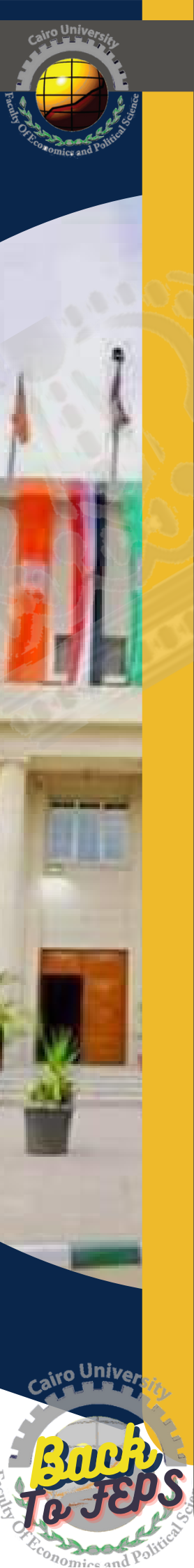


And there is always the question of ambiguous correlation, is the person boycotting per compassion or is he boycotting because he has to live up to the social perception of himself as a compassionate person? Well here is the thing, we don't know. And it is this kind of ambiguity that renders the second group weaker and doubtful, for example if BDS launches a campaign against Google how many will be actually willing to just switch to Safari or Microsoft edge or any other browser? Well, we can't be sure but personally I don't think they will be a lot. And I'm not saying this to blame, at the end of the day every person does what he can, and a small action is better than none. But the difficulty of the action and our willingness to go through with it despite the difficulty brings up a question of faith and belief. Do we really believe that our actions are making a difference? Do we really believe that the Israeli retaliation in form of bombardments means we are affecting them? Do we really believe that activism on social media is making Palestinians' voice more heard? Are we really capable as individuals of impacting governments and making them acts? Will there ever be a real solution that isn't just a settling one? Do we really believe it when we say "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free"?

Every time we take an action as simple as sharing a post we dismiss all the doubtful question for a simple reason: hope. The thing about boycotting is that it might seem like a simple personal choice but in fact it is heavily impacted by society as well. Just like most day-to-day actions, we are taking decision that is influenced by group pressure and societal conformity more than we think. When it comes to reality, you can probably succumb to your friends' pressure to go watch the latest Marvel movie together.

Or, you can buy those Puma shorts because you like them way better than any other brand. Or, buy the HP laptop instead of any other brand because it has better features and price. Even, I at this exact moment am uploading this article using a Google browser, and after I finish I will probably open my Google drive or check my Gmail because simply I'm used to it. And while we do all that we say to ourselves "it doesn't matter anyway if I'm the only person taking action". Well, that is true. But you know what else is true? The first lesson of adulthood: if you don't do it yourself, no one will do it for you. Just like how once you grow up, you learn that you have to pay your bills, wash the dishes and clean the house because simply no one will do it for you. If YOU don't take actions for the sake of the cause that YOU support, no one will do it for you. Maybe we are not living under blockade or face daily oppression, but even those who support Palestine from afar struggle mentally with the doubts and endless questions. Every time we see a post about a new crime to humanity, we are filled with rage and helplessness and the first thing that comes to mind is "if this is how I feel from here, then how does it feel like to be there in the middle of it all?". So let this be your reminder to take action, think about what we can do from your position (as an individual, an institution or even a responsible) and do it without overthinking it. And remember it's all about belief, faith and hope.





Western Cinema , Gender Debate and Correctness

AHMED TAHA

The film industry is one of the most influential sectors in our modern society. Comedy films and series make us laugh, psychological thrillers help us see the world from a different perspective, and historical films play a role in understanding our roots and where we come from.. Thus every film or television work reflects Part of society and changes some opinions.

Like anything in our lives, this industry has become a double-edged weapon, a mean of spreading repulsive trends to many societies.

1- support homosexuality

This support has spread greatly recently, as it is no longer limited to famous platforms such as Netflix and HBO, but the matter has evolved to include platforms for showing children's works such as Disney, and the company's CEO explicitly announced that her goal by the end of the year is to make at least half of the new cartoon characters in the works Coming from gay and transgender people in conjunction with changing the identity of some of the old personalities we used to know.

Besides that, Disney also put its touches on

Marvel's recent business, because of which most of the company's newly exported business was banned in many countries, especially in the Middle East.

2- Strange Attempts to Show Ethnic Support

It is indisputable that racism and bullying are rejected in all religious beliefs. A normal person does not care about being the main hero of a work with dark skin or from the yellow Mongolian dynasty, etc..... Rather, he enjoys working without paying attention to any details of his belief in the non-discrimination between people, But what made us address this trend is the implementation of that support in a way that led to ridicule and even became questionable and with a questionable impression, why do they do it in this particular way?!

Some companies have begun to produce live versions of old cartoon films in completely different shapes and features, for example, The little mermaid, coming in 2023.

There has been a lot of criticism since the release of the promotional advertisement for the movie, and it even came to ridicule about the choice of the

main actress, which is completely different from the cartoon version.

The readers of the novels also noticed that and criticized some of the works that described their characters in a form and physical specifications that appeared opposite to what those characters appeared when converting the novel into a series. Another famous and obvious example of this is the change of the character Snake eyes that we saw in part of the famous series G.I.Joes as a Caucasian boy with blond hair to transform in the movie the main character later to an Asian person. So the issue became questionable and tends to be certain that it is not support but rather gratification aimed at profit, when in reality the matter is still different and there are many crimes and problems that occur just because one person differs from another in his religion, color and form. So watch what your young relatives and children watch and raise them with respect for everyone and non-discrimination.





IN THE CONTEXT OF ECONOMIC GLOBALIZATION, HOW DOES THE RISE IN THE AMERICAN INTEREST RATE INFLUENCE THE GLOBAL ECONOMY ?

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Market of goods & services

As already mentioned, the decision to raise the key interest rate is taken by the FED to combat the increased inflation which had reached 8.5% in July this year. In September, we saw inflation fall to 8.3%; but unfortunately, according to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, housing, food and even car prices continued to rise. In other words, lower inflation is due to lower oil prices, not lower living costs. Economists believe that the United States is the world's largest economy, showing only a few signs of slowing demand. In the short term, rising interest rates do not abruptly reduce inflation, but rather lead to lower consumption. That is to say, consumers, trying to benefit from the increase in policy rates, are beginning to increase their savings and reduce their spending. This forced slowdown in consumption may weigh on the US economy, raising fears of a "recession" or a "stagflation". This slowdown is very harmful economically and will be felt in the labour market.

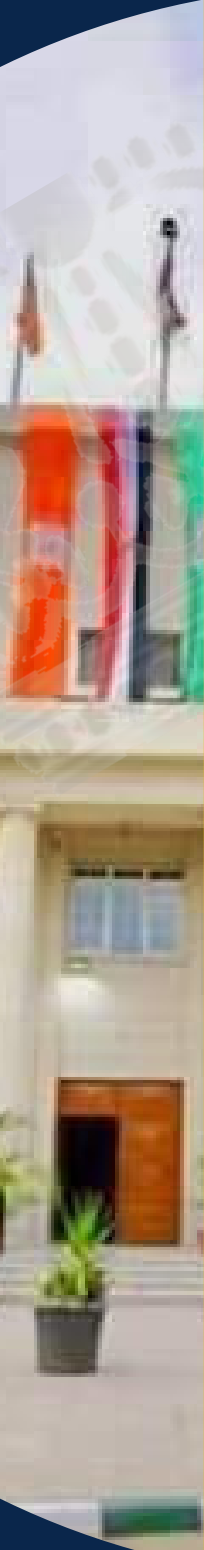
Labour market

Probably, this drop in consumption negatively influences corporate profits. These companies, like any capitalist entity aiming to increase their profits and minimize their costs, will therefore reduce their demand for jobs or even lay off a few workers; this will cause unemployment to rise again.

In the face of increased inflation in the United States, the Federal Reserve (FED) keeps increasing the key interest rate, which is generally the overnight interest rate set by a country's central bank to regulate economic activity. According to "Le Point", the French weekly news magazine, this increase was the largest increase since 1994. In the context of economic globalization, where the world is highly connected through international trade, foreign investment and supply chains, This increase influences not only the American economic condition but the global economy as a whole. As Jacques Chirac said, "globalization is a new face of human adventure". We will therefore know the impact of the increase in the FED key rate on the global economy in general in the context of this new human adventure in three different aspects. The first aspect will focus on the American economic situation. The second aspect will focus on the rest of the world. In a second place, the condition of world exchanges and the price of oil will be presented. Finally, we develop the economic health of developed and developing countries.

The condition of the American market

In order to explain the American economic situation, we will present three markets of great importance: the goods and services market, the labour market and finally the market of funds. Through this explanation, we can analyze the economic condition of both the producer and the consumer. That will give us more or less a complete view of the American market.



Similarly, this can contribute to lower wages; since the labour supply will be greater than the demand. High interest loans will stop entrepreneurs from launching a new project. This reduces competition within the market; This lack of competition will have a double effect; Initially, because of market instability, innovation will be more or less reduced. That is to say, the presence of innovative products on the market will be avoided. Secondly, there will be no job creation. This will always be translated into a decrease in American production and productivity; contributing more inflation.

Market of funds

The impact of this increase on “big financial” was very significant. The largest U.S. banks are expected to record windfall profits on loans, benefiting from higher Federal Reserve interest rates as they prepare for a potential recession. As reported in the US magazine “Financial Times”, analysts expect “JPMorgan Chase”, “Bank of America” and “Citigroup” to see growth in net interest income - the difference between what banks pay on deposits and what they earn on loans and other assets. Banks tend to take advantage of higher rates because they are able to increase loan fees faster than they are increasing deposits. The risk of a growing recession arises in the context of a slowdown in investment banking activity, particularly in equity markets. On average, “JPMorgan”, “BofA”, “Citi Group”, “Goldman Sachs” and “Morgan Stanley” are expected to record a 40% drop in investment banking fees, according to estimates compiled by Bloomberg. Analysts also predict that the overall revenues of these banks will fall on average by about 4.6%

Global stock exchanges and oil prices

Global stock exchanges

Global stock exchanges are slowing down sharply after US inflation. Investors believe that the FED has no choice but to raise its rates sharply. They promote high returns that are not risky, so they put their money in the bank. Also, some of them keep their distance from risky investments until they are sure that the FED will raise interest rates another time; thus they will understand the monetary policy of the FED.

In this perspective, the global stock market has experienced some phases of volatility and also indices are starting to contract. It was published in “L'Écho” on September 21 that in the United States, Le Dow Jones lost 1.70%, Nasdaq fell 1.79% and the S&P 500 fell 1.71%. On Wall Street, high policy rates also tend to weigh on equities, especially the more expensive technology sector. According to the French magazine “Les affaires”, it was published on 22 September that in Asia, the Tokyo Stock Exchange closed down 1.36%. In Hong Kong, the Hang Seng index also fell by 1.52%. In London, the FTSE 100 dropped 36.15 points (-0.50%) to 7,201.49 points. In Paris, the CAC 40 yielded 70.29 points (-1.17%) to 5,961.04 points. In Frankfurt, the DAX yielded 151.68 points (-1.19%) to 12,615.47 points. This shows us that all stock exchanges on a global scale are influenced by FED decisions. In other words, the American recession will be exported to the world because of economic globalization.

Drop of oil prices

Since the United States is a great country influencing international prices; its demand for oil, due to any event, influences its price. As already mentioned, oil prices were declining as a consequence of negative expectations about the global growth outlook. For example, Brent barrel from the North Sea for delivery in November lost 1.66% to 90.47 dollars. The US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) barrel for delivery in October fell from 2.13% to \$83.90 as reported in the French magazine “Le Revenu” on September 20. Positive for a slowdown in prices, oil prices fell by more than 3%, affected by recession fears. There was also a statement from the U.S. Department of Energy that the replenishment of U.S. strategic oil reserves is not likely to begin until late 2023.



Impact of this increase on developed and developing countries

Developed countries

When the FED interest rate is high, US banks tend to borrow less money from each other. So the cost of borrowing will be higher, so expenses will be minimized. This leads to the dollar gaining value against other currencies “appreciating”. American exports will therefore be less important. This gives other developed countries the chance to dominate the international market and be more competitive; since their currencies are now considered weak before the dollar. As a result, their goods will be less expensive compared to American goods. Major economies are therefore expected to mark GDP growth. But this will not apply to the United Kingdom, the European countries or Canada. In the UK, the Bank of England is expected to raise rates even though it expects the economy to stagnate over the next two years. The overall situation is that the economic problem will worsen next year than it was before the pandemic,' said Thomas Pugh, economist at RSM UK, a tax and advisory firm. In Europe, the European Central Bank “ECB” raised its key interest rate by 0.75 points. It follows in the footsteps of the Fed and the Bank of Canada. The reason behind the ECB’s rate hike is simple: for Council members, inflation was extremely high in August; it was 9.1% although it must be only 2%. Since the global context was already inflationary, all countries are trying to lower this inflation rate by raising key interest rates. So we can deduce that the American economic condition did not impact the developed countries in a significant way, since they had taken decisions more or less similar to those of the FED.

Impact of this increase on developing countries

Internationally, emerging and developing countries could also be impacted by US monetary policy. The increase in American interest rates could, first of all, lead to the flight of capital from those countries to the United States, which is exactly what happened in Egypt. This would lead the central banks of these countries to raise their own key interest rates and thus suffer the risk of penalizing their own economies by entering a recession stage.

Then, some emerging countries may experience financing difficulties. Since the debt of these countries is often expressed in dollars with an increased value, countries will therefore have repayment problems. It has become more difficult to maintain a good level of liquidity or even solvency. According to the World Bank, nearly a third of the foreign debt of the poorest countries has been contracted at variable rates. In a context of rising interest rates, defaults, similar to that recorded by Sri Lanka in April, could occur. Similarly, countries dependent on imports of mainly American foreign products will have a major problem when the dollar rises. The monetary value of these imported goods or services will be greater than before. In short, developing countries will be negatively affected by these decisions. According to the United Nations, in Africa, the slowdown in external demand of the European Union - its leading trading partner, accounting for about 33 percent of Africa's exports - and the decline in monetary and financial support hamper economic growth. In the context of high debt and high borrowing costs, many Governments seek bilateral and multilateral aid to finance public investments. There is increasing pressure to cut spending or increase taxes in many countries. Risks to regional security and local stability increase with increased frustration over inflation, job shortages, and economic mismanagement. In short, developing countries will be adversely affected by these decisions.

Obviously, the rise in key interest rates in the context of globalization is changing a lot in the global economy. When an international economy and value chains are present, any national event in a large country will change the entire economic scene and influence the entire global economy. Globalization has not made the economy a bad thing, even though it has changed the rules of game. This economic change should not be seen only on its negative side; Obviously, globalization has many advantages. With globalization, the utility of the consumer is increased by the presence of large numbers of products of different variety and quality. This therefore contributed to the increase in its standard of living. Even producers and firms have been able to expand their activities by reaching markets in different countries. These companies have had fairly significant growth rates. That is why we can deduce that all countries have an interest in being part of economic globalization. No doubt, those who do not integrate economically, miss a certain chance of development.





'Digital Immortality technology' ... How could we live forever ?!

MAYAR SABER - LEVEL FOUR - POLITICAL SCIENCE

"No one lives forever" it is a fact that we already believe in, but currently while watching science fiction films and series, you can easily find out that some of them are concentrated around one idea, which is digital immortality, not a long time ago, nobody took the idea seriously beyond research and discussion.

But recently, technicians are working through several means to avoid death, including uploading the human brain to a computer, and this could happen through what is known as digital immortality, which is defined as the process of creating copies of people's thoughts and feeling after their death, not just creating fixed copies. Rather, sophisticated digital entities that can run companies or even influence global events, learn and adapt. One of those techniques is a program called 'Augmented Eternity' which will be able to transmit memories from your life and answer questions on certain topics, such as your political opinions, based on stored information and data.

The Wall Street Journal has published an article noting that several startups anticipate a growing demand for digital characters, including Replika, an app that learns to copy a person in the form of a Chatbot, and Hereafter AI, which records life stories of the people and uses it to create copies put on a smart speaker. Indeed, Microsoft has taken a pioneering step and obtained a patent for the use of chatbots to embody historical figures and actual people. These digital characters take many forms, from chatbots to mobile robots that react and speak like real human beings all of this is based on artificial intelligence techniques that build these robots and train them to interact with people. Indeed, hologram performances by departed artists and musicians were already done in several events.

Certainly, this idea did not go unnoticed by Elon Musk, who expressed his admiration for the idea of the immortality of consciousness in artificial bodies and stated: "If your bodies died biologically, you can load it into a new entity." The Russian billionaire "Dmitriy Itkov" spends millions of dollars to put his data, all his ideas, and his mind on a 3D robot, to finish manufacturing it in 2045 to work after his death and keep him alive forever. Such inventions are similar to those seen in the sci-fi series "Black Mirror" The startup company 'Netcom', for example, believes that humans will be able to digitalize their consciousness within the next century. But such modern technologies that open the door to eternal life carry with them much of religious, ethical, and philosophical issues, which issued a wide controversy among moral philosophers and others, one of them is the philosopher and bioethicist John Harris who doubts the ability of even the most rational person to live in a hypothetical version of himself. He adds: "We are creatures of flesh and blood, and it is hard to imagine that we can exist in a non-physical situation." In fact, these issues of digitization may also lead to widening social inequality, according to many experts, like "Nidaal Qasoum" a professor at the American University of Sharjah, who thought that only the richest class of people can afford to "digitalize" themselves. This creates a frightening prospect of the appearance of one class that contains technologically advanced humans. The worst-case scenario that may happen is the argument of some technologists that uploading our memories and consciousness to devices could put us in front of the danger of having our brains hacked and our actions controlled by digital hacks.

So.. Will we ever be able to stop the one thing that cannot be avoided in life... which is death?!



Gun Control in the USA: Will it ever happen?

The second amendment of the United States' constitution is by far one of the most disputed ones to ever exist, since it constitutionally protects gun possessions, and it goes as follows:

"A well-regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed."

Although that amendment was necessarily put in place in order to ensure public safety, it has certainly backfired. In this age and day, the United States has the highest homicide-by-firearm rate among developed countries. The situation is so bad that, in fact, the mass shootings are so common that the great majority of them go unreported by major media sources; The ones that just so happen to be significant or horrible enough make the final cut.

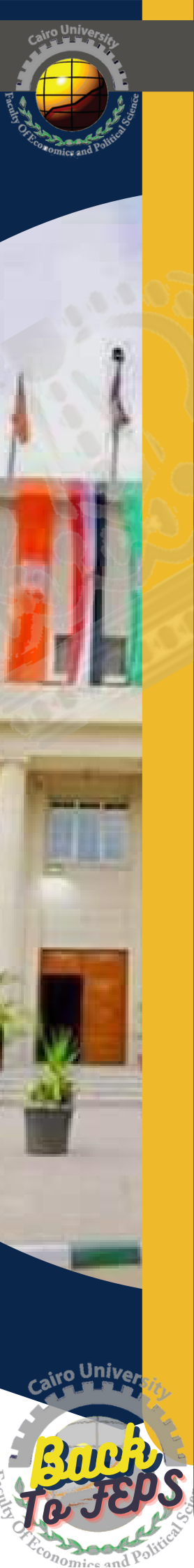
The legal age for a US citizen to purchase a gun ranges between 18 and 21 across the different states, making it quite accessible for the vast majority. Accordingly, to a recent study carried out in 2021 found that the biggest

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per capita number of weapons in the world is found in the United States, whereas there are 120.5 guns for every 100 residents. And that's only taking into account the "legal" gun purchases, as the illegal market of guns is a whole other crisis of its own.

During the last decade, the United States have witnessed mass shootings like never before, especially ones targeting schools; For instance, 288 school shooting took place in the period between 2009 and 2018, with 47 incidents just in 2018 alone.





However, a whole new version of US mass shootings emerged during 2022, which is ones in hospitals! 2 incidents of hospitals shooting sprees were recorded in June and September of this year, which is just bizarre. On the other hand, general gun violence incidents, as a result of the loose laws in the country, occur on a daily basis.



Feeling unsafe in your school, hospital, street, and even homes, is what prompted millions of Americans to call out immediate gun control over the states. Protests and social media campaigns demanding stricter gun laws have been a personal priority for many. A study carried out during April 2021 revealed that roughly half of the US citizens, 52% to be exact, favor imposing stricter gun laws. 81% of the Democratic party has also expressed the same demands, as per the same study.



On the contrast, the other half of the population still support the second amendment; As a matter of fact, some of them even call for looser laws, claiming they always need to stay one step ahead and protect themselves. Another strong claim from their side is that they believe that gun ownership deters crime rather than increase it, despite the statistics that say otherwise; In other words, they believe the situation would've somehow been much worse if it weren't for the second amendment. The majority of the Republicans party stands in favor of this view.

The US president, Joe Biden, dropped a bombshell tweet in late September, announcing the possible movement towards gun control in the states. Although it's not the first time a similar statement has been made, may this time be actually any different?





The Reality of Artistic Swimming

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A combination of the strength and power of weightlifters, the lung capacity of endurance and long-distance swimming athletes, the flexibility of ballerinas and gymnasts, the jumping heights of trampolinists, and most importantly the ear of a musician. Beyond demanding, yet graceful: I present to you artistic swimming.

Artistic swimming, formerly known as synchronised swimming, is a sport requiring endurance, strength, flexibility, and a sense of rhythm and art, proving to be one of the most physically draining Olympic sports.

A performance, or rather called a routine in artistic swimmers, is a series of complex, dynamic, creative, and acrobatic movements accompanied by music, performed by a number of swimmers in a synchronised manner, or more often than not in a solo routine. Swimmers can perform, as mentioned, alone, as duets, or in most cases, in teams of 4-8 swimmers, and are expected to follow the same choreography throughout their swim throughs. One very consistent goal, however, about the game is that swimmers always aim to be as synchronised and as high as possible, whether that be upside down with their legs up, or with their heads normally above water, or whilst lifting one another in acrobatic elements.

The criteria to join is rather simple, only requiring athletes to have a background in swimming, and not even at a professional level. A plus is joining from a very young age, as young as 6 years old, because given the complications of the sport, athletes joining later than that tend to fall behind and struggle with catching up.

While there are a range of regulations and technicalities required for specific routines, the common rules of artistic swimming include not touching the bottom of the pool, no goggles during the competition swims, sticking to the prescribed routine timing, and no inappropriate costumes or jewellery. And because swimmers are also critiqued on presentation and impression, maintaining eye contact with the judges plays a huge role in reflecting their professionalism and confidence, thus they can't surface from the water squinting and rubbing their eyes.

To prep for competitions, athletes train a minimum of 4 hour per training session from a very young age in off seasons, and up to 10 hours in competition seasons. Training sessions include strength training, endurance training, acrobatics and gymnastics training, flexibility, and needless to be mentioned, swimming and pool training, all divided throughout the week and thoroughly programmed to ensure athletes are hitting the expected targets and peaking by competition.

So, the sport is indeed basically just dancing in the water, yet there is so much more to it than what meets the naked eye!