

Assignment 1: The Middle East in 2015 and Beyond

When we think of the Middle East, there is a flood of emotions and thoughts that are brought to the forefront. Analyzing these are pinnacle to better understanding how the Middle East came to be in the predicament it is in, as well as further expanding our knowledge of the areas history, culture, and future. Paul Salem shows us what trends are important and what is likely to drive the future of Middle East.

One such trend, the “Youth Bulge”, is a ramification of the population growing older in the area. We can see a similar trend in America and I believe this would be a strong driver in the Middle East becoming more peaceful. When we look to America for an example, we can see the social issues that once plagued us being out-voted by the younger generations, things like Gay and Women rights will be a thing of the past thanks to this. I can see a similar trend occurring throughout the Middle East – arcane laws will be reevaluated and foreign policy reshaped. This similarly ties into the Women and Black empowerment trends.

Another trend that is explicitly talked about is moderate unemployment growth paired with sever unemployment. This trend seems to cross many of the trends listed, making it a larger driver of things to come. It’s interesting to see that the economy is growing and yet jobs are not being created, I look forward to learning more how this is happening. Salem seems to think it is a lack of diversification in the markets, relying too heavily on oil and gas, or unable to branch the country in other economic directions.

Finally, the Sunni-Shi’i Divide, what I is one of the most misunderstood areas of the Middle East. The conflict is widespread, affecting many countries in the region and doesn’t seem to be slowing. It seems the key player here is Iran, and until they bring resolution to the international and domestic relations causing this dived, it will only get worse. Perhaps as the generations grows, religion will become more decoupled from government, allowing the region to be run without prejudice of times past, or perhaps religion is a cornerstone of the Middle East and will never go away.