

Social Media Advocacy for SDG 5 in the Middle East: Insights from Egypt, Tunisia, and Jordan

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This article explores how government organizations in Egypt, Tunisia, and Jordan use Facebook (FB) to advocate for the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5). Guided by the Dragonfly Advocacy Model for evaluating social media advocacy and using CrowdTangle for FB content analysis, researchers analyzed advocacy efforts over eight and a half years, nearly midway through the planned implementation timeframe of the SDGs. Findings show that the SDG 5 targets most advocated by all three countries were those for women’s empowerment, eliminating violence, ending child marriage, and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). “Reproductive health,” “technology,” and “unpaid work” were among the lowest-mentioned terms. Videos, animation, and influencers were key factors contributing to the effectiveness of FB posts. Gender inequities identified in these Middle Eastern countries, like FGM, honor killings, and inheritance rights, stood in contrast with Western concerns about abortion rights, access to contraception, flexible work arrangements, and digital inclusion.

Leaving No One Behind is at the core of the Sustainable Development Agenda 2030 and its 17 goals (United Nations 2017). United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5) reads “Achieve Gender Equality and Empower All Women and Girls” (United Nations Website n.d.). Data regarding the achievement of SDG 5 on gender equality show that the progress achieved so far is inadequate and that unfortunately, it will remain an “unrealized goal for centuries to come” (UN Women 2022a). Although this may be the case, it should not stop government and civil society organizations from working hard toward realizing the goal, however long it takes, and using various tools and means to advocate for women’s rights and improve gender equality.

Some astounding figures showing the slow progress in realizing SDG 5 include the prediction that at least 286 years will be needed to globally implement the legal reforms that secure women’s rights and protect them from discrimination; that every 11 minutes one woman or girl is killed by a family member; and that in 2021 there were

1 out of every 5 women or girls, aged 20–24, who were married before the age of 18 (UN Women 2022a).

Governments in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region have assigned special institutions with the mandate of advocating for women’s issues. There is the Egyptian National Council for Women (ENCW), the Tunisian Ministry of Family, Women, Children, and Elderly Citizens (MFFES), and the Jordanian National Commission for Women’s Affairs (JNCW), to name a few examples of different types of government women advocacy organizations for women situated in three geographical areas of the MENA region: west, center, and east. In our current VUCA world, a term used to describe world areas characterized by volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity, the use of social media for advocacy purposes has become the norm, rather than the exception.

The purpose of this research is to explore how different government organizations in the MENA region, those mandated with the responsibility of advocating for women’s rights use social media (Facebook) to ad-

vocate for women's issues in line with the goals of SDG 5, its nine targets and 14 indicators. The main research questions are: 1) To what extent are the official women's rights institutions in the Middle East advocating for gender equality issues in line with SDG 5 by using their official FB pages? 2) To what extent are their FB advocacy efforts of good quality? Focusing on the three Middle Eastern countries of Egypt, Jordan, and Tunisia, the Facebook "CrowdTangle" tool was used to analyze FB posts by each of the government organizations responsible for advocating for women's issues and to determine the extent to which they are consistent with SDG 5 indicators. By employing the Dragonfly Advocacy model (see Aaker and Smith 2010 and UNDG Advocacy Model 2017), the researchers reflect on the quality of several overperforming posts.

The article next discusses the theoretical background and conceptual framework with an explanation of the Dragonfly Advocacy model. The literature review then covers studies around SDG 5 and the particularities of women's issues in the Middle East. This is followed by an explanation of the methodology and zooming in on the three case studies of Egypt, Tunisia, and Jordan and the government advocacy organization in each. In the Findings section, we present how the different government organizations in each of the countries posted on FB about the various SDG 5 targets. Finally, the last section covers the discussion and includes concluding remarks and policy recommendations.

The significance of the study lies in its ability to add to the literature on social equity in public administration. It lists the relatively unique issues faced by women in the Middle East through an in-depth analysis of the quantity and quality of FB posts by government organizations that are mandated with advocating for women's rights.

This research widens the horizon and increases the depth of analysis for the rising concern for social equity. Realizing the need for continued efforts in advocating for SDG 5 objectives, it provides practical advice on how to improve the quantity and quality of advocacy efforts.

Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks

Social Equity Theoretical Framework

The idea of advocating for gender equality and women empowerment, which is the crux of SDG 5, is related

to the wider aspiration of realizing social equity and leaving no one behind (United Nations 2017). A concern of social equity in public administration is fairness and asks questions about who the target beneficiaries of government services are, and to what extent public administration benefits different groups among those beneficiaries more than others (Frederickson 2010). As defined by the National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA) Social Equity Panel, social equity is: "the fair, just and equitable management of all institutions serving the public directly or by contract, and the fair, just and equitable distribution of public services, and implementation of public policy, and the commitment to promote fairness, justice, and equity in the formation of public policy" (Svara and Brunet 2005, 256). In the American Society of Public Administration (ASPA) revised code of ethics of 2013, it is mentioned that members of ASPA will commit to strengthening social equity and will: "treat all persons with fairness, justice, and equality and respect individual differences, rights, and freedoms. Promote affirmative action and other initiatives to reduce unfairness, injustice, and inequality in society" (ASPA 2013). This articulation of what social equity entails emphasizes the difference between equality and equity, wherein the first instance the concern is with providing everyone with the same services, and in the second instance there is extra effort to make sure the underprivileged are given an extra push.

Early concern with equity in public administration is traced back to the Minnowbrook Conference in 1968 (Cepiku and Mastrodascio 2021). However, social equity is now considered one of the main pillars of public administration alongside effectiveness, efficiency, and economy (Berry-James et al. 2021). The remarkable increase in published scholarship about social equity started at the beginning of the 21st century and was labeled by Frederickson (2021) as "Thick Social Equity," in contrast to the much-limited literature produced earlier. This noted increase in published literature was confirmed by Cepiku and Mastrodascio (2021) who, after examining a set of 145 peer-reviewed articles discussing social equity in 69 different journals, found that at least two-thirds of the articles were published after 2010. Gooden (2015), examining how the concept of social equity was dealt with in articles published in *Public Administration Review* (PAR) over 75 years, noted that only 5% of the articles over that long period discussed

social equity, and that the majority of those articles were published after 1970. Frederickson (2021) pointed out a change in focus of social equity research that occurred over time, from a concentration on minority issues to a broader concern with the inequities between the haves and the have-nots, although minorities still predominantly fall in the have-nots category.

Although there is a good amount of published research about social equity in public administration, in practice the world has not resolved its social inequities, concerning income, race, gender, or other factors (Gooden 2023; World Economic Forum 2023). Blessett et al. (2019) discuss how social equity is well covered in public administration research and teaching, but inequities still persist in various policy areas in the United States. Gooden (2015) noted in her review that the largest percentage of articles on social equity focused on gender issues (36.1%), and although there were very worthy contributions explaining the inequities facing women and minorities in the public sector, she made a call for future studies to investigate why these inequities persist, and how they should be overcome. Moreover, Guy and McCandless (2020) ascertained that social equity initiatives require constant attention, vigilance, and advocacy since the rights of those groups suffer from inequity. An investigation of how governments in the Middle East advocate for SDG 5 in an attempt to reduce gender-based inequities is needed, our research shows.

The Dragonfly Advocacy Model

It is important to define what is meant by advocating for SDG 5 since this is the core subject of our research. The term advocacy may sometimes be used to refer to several notions, including lobbying, interest in changing policies, and/or a desire to influence or change specific positions by governments (Okura and Kaigo 2016). The definition of advocacy is also related to the active promotion of a cause or an issue (Meyers et al. 2011). The UN uses the term advocacy to mean many things, including the provision of accurate information about a specific issue, supporting evidence-based policies in government, and working with civil society and other actors to push them toward action (UNDG 2017).

In this article, the focus is on advocacy efforts by designated government organizations through using Facebook. We are operationalizing the term advocacy to refer to the posts by women's rights government organizations on their official

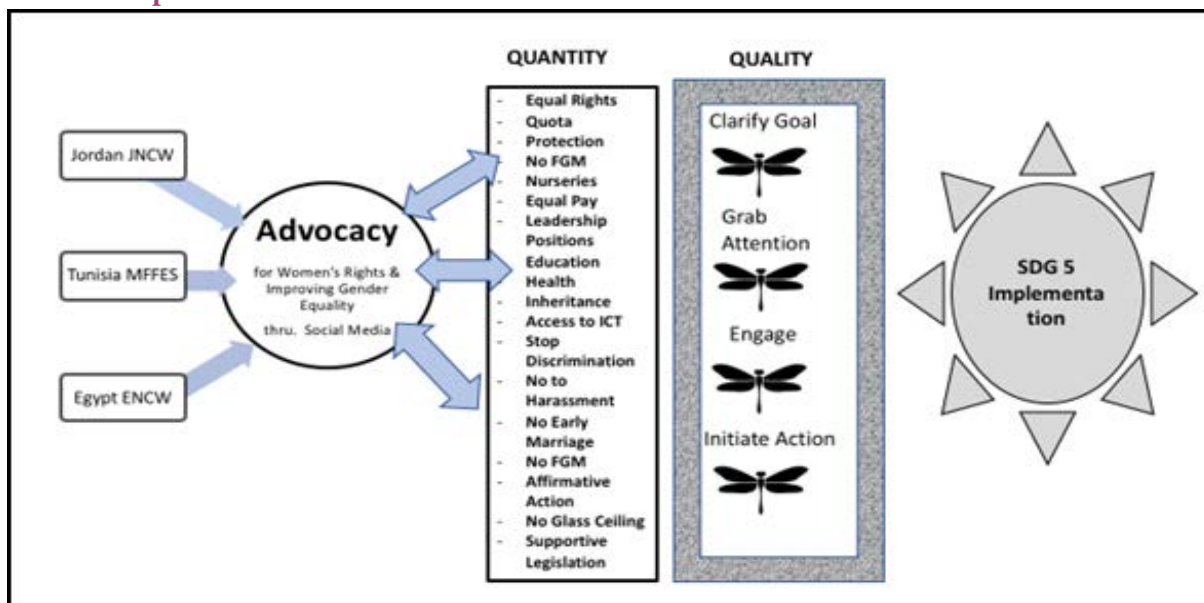
FB pages to create awareness about specific SDG 5 targets and indicators. The assumption is that the higher the performance of specific posts, in terms of likes, views, and overall reactions, the stronger the advocacy efforts. As for the assessment of the quality of the advocacy efforts, the Dragonfly Model is used.

It is important to note here that in 2023 Facebook had approximately 2.98 billion active users and was reported as the most-used social media network worldwide (Statista.com 2023). For the three countries under study, in Egypt there were an estimated 56.8 million users, making up nearly 51% of its population; in Jordan, there were an estimated 6.2 million users, making up 56% of the population; and in Tunisia, there were an estimated 8.7 million users, making up 72% of the total population (Statista.com 2023).

Two interesting advocacy models are used to guide the analysis of the FB advocacy efforts under study: the Dragonfly Model created by Aaker and Smith (2010) and the UNDG Advocacy Model (2017). The idea of the Dragonfly Model is to use four criteria in the assessment of the quality of social media advocacy efforts, and that is why the metaphor of a dragonfly, which has four wings, is used. These four criteria/wings include: the clarity and concreteness of the goal, the ability to grab attention in a loud and noisy environment, the ability to engage the audience, and the ability to drive the audience toward action by encouraging and pointing them toward something they can do about the issue at hand (Aaker and Smith 2010; Guevara 2011; Shata and Seelig 2021). Meanwhile, a UNDG (2017) report on practical advocacy guidance similarly discussed the importance of figuring out first the desired goals to achieve and/or change, then effectively communicating the messages, engaging the government organizations responsible for implementing the needed changes, and similarly engaging civil society and the public. Both models have inspired the research conceptual framework as seen in Figure 1.

In the Conceptual Framework, the three government organizations studied are seen as working on advocating for women's rights and improving gender equality through social media. Numerous issues are discussed on their FB pages related to the SDG targets, including calls for equal rights, stopping discrimination, removing glass ceilings, having supportive legislation, and so forth. The study tries to check the frequency of posts about the different SDG 5 advocacy terms by rel-

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework



Source: Authors' visualization inspired by the Dragonfly Model by Aaker and Smith (2010) and the UNDG Advocacy Guidance Report (2017).

evant government organizations as an indication of the quantity/strength of advocacy efforts and also checks a sample of the most performing posts for the quality of advocacy. The Dragonfly Model is the tool used for checking the quality of the advocacy posts and to what extent they are clear, capable of grabbing attention, engaging, and trying to initiate action.

Literature Review

How SDG 5 Was Discussed in the Literature

A plethora of published articles discuss and analyze SDG 5 from various perspectives. Sebestyen et al. (2020), upon examining 100 Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) that were developed by different countries from 2015–2018, report on their achievements of the SDGs. They noted that SDG 5 was the most discussed goal worldwide.

Durokifa (2021) examined the effect of COVID-19 on achieving SDG 5 in Africa by conducting a qualitative study and concluded that it had exacerbated inequities between men and women, and even reversed some of the achievements realized in that regard before the pandemic. Because of the pandemic, domestic violence against women was reported to have increased as

a result of lockdown measures; there was a regression in previously achieved progress in reducing early marriages, mainly due to economic hardships; more women lost their jobs; and even FGM increased when girls stayed out of school (Durokifa 2021).

Meanwhile, some authors chose to focus on specific aspects of women's empowerment and relate it to SDG 5. Hirsu et al. (2021), for example, focused on women in academia in Iran and the Philippines and what they were lacking in order to play a more vital role outside the confines of the lecture halls and be more engaged with society. To further empower women in academia, the authors recommended more flexibility in work arrangements, more training, and more professional support to be directed toward women (Hirsu et al. 2021). Pawluczuk et al. (2021) focus on how to bridge the digital divide and get more women and girls to use information and communication technology that meets their needs. They call for more transparency in evaluating the gender digital inclusion programs and training delivered to women and girls to maximize the benefits of these programs (Pawluczuk et al. 2021).

More recently, articles discussing gender-specific issues in different country contexts have added SDG 5 to their titles. Examples abound. Bilal et al. (2022) inves-

tigate enabling factors for women's entrepreneurial activities in Oman as a way toward achieving SDG 5 and emphasizing the importance of social networks. Louis et al. (2021) discuss the barriers to achieving SDG 5 in a specific district in Zimbabwe and how these barriers are linked to political, cultural, and religious factors. In Brazil, McIlwaine et al. (2023) point out the importance of having more open discussions and data sharing related to gender-based violence in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro in order to meet SDG 5 and specifically target SDG 5.2.

Others such as Sen (2019) focus on the role feminist organizations had in advocating for SDG 5 and how they tried to influence the global agenda, and the institutions responsible, such as UN Women; how they succeeded in having an SDG focusing on women's issues; and on integrating gender and women's issues across many other SDG goals. However, there is still more advocacy work to be done to ensure effective implementation of SDG 5 and its different indicators (Sen 2019).

Women's Rights in the Middle East: Setting the Context

Although women experience inequality in different parts of the world, the gap between men's and women's rights in the Middle East is especially visible and pronounced (Kelly and Breslin 2010). Interesting findings point out that the issues concerning women, and women's rights groups in the Middle East were sometimes perceived as different from those issues dealt with in the Western world. Al Rawi (2014), after analyzing nearly 20,000 FB posts by online women's movements in several Arab countries during and after the Arab Spring uprisings, concluded that the main issues of concern were women's freedom, their equality with men, and how they are perceived by Islam and by society. Al Rawi (2014) contrasted these issues with other dominant issues in Western media, like contraception and abortion.

Other scholars argue that women's issues in the Middle East may not be fundamentally different from those encountered elsewhere (Çavdar 2022). The discussion is not about the type of issues facing women in the Middle East and how different they are from those prevalent in the West, but rather about the intensity levels and the factors leading up to them. Kazemikhasragh et al. (2022) provide evidence that women in the Middle East suffer from a lower level of financial inclusion compared to other world regions. Meanwhile, Kisa et al. (2023)

discuss factors leading to domestic violence against women in the Middle East and point out that there are more similarities than differences between regions. They recommend mass media campaigns to create awareness among women regarding their legal rights.

Rizzo and Ryan (2019), in their recently edited book about gender in the Middle East, introduce a set of issues related to women. The issues include sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), a strive toward political empowerment, changes in marriage and divorce patterns, the impact of migration on women, and women's cyber-activism (Rizzo and Ryan 2019). It should be noted that, despite the fact that most Arab countries in the Middle East region have ratified the Convention for the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), many violations still occur (El-Masri 2012). Examples of such violations include forced marriages and female genital mutilation. The main reasons for these continued violations partially date back to cultural issues, and are partially attributed to the weakness of the CEDAW as a legal instrument that allows nation-states to ratify it while making reservations. For example, the CEDAW article number 2, which calls upon states to change their constitutions and laws to ensure no discrimination against women, was rejected by many Arab countries including Egypt, Syria, Morocco, UAE, and others (El-Masri 2012). An important point related to the impact of cultural factors on how discrimination is practiced against women in the Middle East, Koburtay et al. (2023) explain how it is often the misinterpretation of Islamic values, and not Islam, that holds women leaders back.

Some of the striking gender issues in the Middle East region that are discussed include female genital mutilation, honor killings, and early marriage. Yount et al. (2020) report on how nearly 90% of girls in Egypt experience female genital mutilation although the practice is clearly identified as a violation of human rights. AlQahtani et al. (2023) discuss honor killings in the East Mediterranean region at large, how they are under-reported, and how a combination of social and cultural factors is usually behind this phenomenon whereby a family may decide to kill their own daughter if she is accused of having intimate sexual relations outside marriage. Both Jordan and Egypt are mentioned as areas for honor killings. Elnakib et al. (2022) analyze how child marriage, defined as under the age of 18, and although

criminalized by law, continues to be practiced in many parts of Egypt, especially in rural areas.

Women's Rights Advocacy in the Middle East

An important point to heed before discussing women's rights and advocacy efforts in the Middle East is that there is a lot of diversity involved and that it is not a homogeneous region (Moghadam 2013). Moreover, it is not only government agencies that advocate for women's rights in the Middle East, but also civil society organizations. Movements and coalitions play an important role. The list of national and regional nongovernmental women's rights organizations operating in the Middle East is lengthy. Examples of active entities include The Center of Egyptian Women Legal Assistance (CEWLA), KAFA Enough Violence and Exploitation in Lebanon, the Organization of Women's Freedom in Iraq (OWFI), the Arab Women Organization in Jordan (AWO), and the Arab Women's Leadership Institute (AWLI), the latter supporting Arab Women through the MENA region (Advocacy Assembly 2018).

The Use of Social Media to Impact Women's Rights in the Middle East

Different perspectives arise in the literature about the effectiveness of social media in advocating for women's rights issues in the Middle East. Alhajri and Piece (2022) talk about how Saudi women use social media accounts to advocate for more freedom and rebellion against the male guardianship system in place, but they use fake accounts in doing so for fear of societal shame. Saleh (2018) commends a social media-based movement in Egypt, called *HarassMap*, which works on combatting sexual harassment practiced against women on the streets through creating awareness and encouraging reporting by victims. Korayem (2013), in investigating

the changes witnessed in the Egyptian women's movement following the January 25, 2011 revolution, notes how several coalitions of nongovernmental organizations were formed, and how new social media-based movements were initiated, each focusing on advocating for specific issues. Although the newer movements are perceived as effective, Korayem calls on them to further improve their advocacy efforts by relying on more evidence-based messaging, engaging in strategic long-term planning of their advocacy efforts, and using simplified and repeated messages. Meanwhile, Abdlgalil (2018), after examining how three different governmental and nongovernmental women's rights organizations in Egypt, Lebanon, and Tunisia use Facebook to advocate for women's issues, found their content needing further enrichment. The use of social media as an advocacy tool for women's rights in the Middle East is a relatively new practice and not all efforts are similarly appreciated.

Methodology

The methodology used started with desk research and document analysis to investigate the existing institutional structures in government responsible for advocating for women's rights. The focus was on the three Middle Eastern countries: Egypt, Tunisia, and Jordan. Through the FB tool CrowdTangle, FB posts on the official pages of the three selected government organizations were analyzed. CrowdTangle is a tool made available by Facebook for academics to help them with the content analysis of large numbers of FB posts in the public domain. CrowdTangle is not used for the analysis of private FB posts. Check Table 1 for links to the three official FB pages under study.

The aim was to determine what issues had been

Table 1. Facebook Pages for Government Organizations in the Countries Mandated to Advocate for Women's Issues

Country	Government Organizations	Facebook Page
Egypt	National Council for Women	https://www.facebook.com/ncwegyptpage
Jordan	The Jordanian National Commission for Women	https://www.facebook.com/women.jo
Tunisia	Ministry of Women, Family, Childhood, and Seniors	https://www.facebook.com/Ministere.Famille.Femme.Enfance.Seniors

Table 2. SDG 5 Targets, Indicators, and CrowdTangle Search Terms

SDG 5 Targets	SDG 5 Indicators	CrowdTangle Search Terms
5.1. End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere.	5.1.1. Whether or not legal frameworks are in place to promote, enforce, and monitor equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sex.	Discrimination* In Arabic: <i>Tamyeez</i>
5.2. Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation.	5.2.1. Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to physical, sexual, or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by form of violence, and by age.	Violence The Violence In Arabic: <i>Onf- El-Onf</i>
	5.2.2. Proportion of women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to sexual violence by persons other than an intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by age and place of occurrence.	Rape Harassment In Arabic: <i>Ightisab -Tabaroush</i>
5.3. Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage, and female genital mutilation.	5.3.1. Proportion of women aged 20–24 years who were married or in a union before age 15 and before age 18.	Early Marriage Child Marriage In Arabic: <i>Zawag Moubaker – Zawag Atfaal</i>
	5.3.2. Proportion of girls and women aged 15–49 years who have undergone female genital mutilation.	Female Genital Mutilation In Arabic: <i>Khetan Al-Inath</i>
5.4. Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure, and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate.	5.4.1. Proportion of time spent on unpaid domestic and care work, by sex, age, and location.	Unpaid Work In Arabic: <i>Amal bedoun Moqabel – Amal Gheir Madfoua El Agr</i>
5.5. Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic, and public life.	5.5.1. Proportion of seats held by women in (a) national parliaments and (b) local governments.	Lack of Representation of Women in Parliament – Representation-Leadership In Arabic: <i>Adam Tamtheel ElMaraa Fi El-Parlaman – Tamtheel – Qayadeya</i>
	5.5.2. Proportion of women in managerial positions.	Glass Ceiling In Arabic: <i>Al-Saqf Al-Zougagi</i>
5.6. Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences.	5.6.1. Proportion of women aged 15–49 years who make their own informed decisions regarding sexual relations, contraceptive use, and reproductive health care.	Childbearing Family Planning In Arabic: <i>Al-Ingab – Tanzeem Al-Ousra</i>
	5.6.2. Number of countries with laws and regulations that guarantee full and equal access to women and men aged 15 years and older to sexual and reproductive health care, information, and education.	Reproductive Health In Arabic: <i>Al Seha Al Ingabeya</i>

SDG 5 Targets	SDG 5 Indicators	CrowdTangle Search Terms
5.A. Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance, and natural resources, in accordance with national laws.	5.A.1. (a) Proportion of total agricultural population with ownership or secure rights over agricultural land, by sex; and (b) share of women among owners or rights-bearers of agricultural land, by type of tenure.	Inheritance** In Arabic: <i>Al-Mirath</i>
	5.A.2. Proportion of countries where the legal framework (including customary law) guarantees women's equal rights to land ownership and/or control.	Lack of Land Ownership In Arabic: <i>Adam Tamalok El-Ard</i>
5.B. Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women.	5.B.1. Proportion of individuals who own a mobile telephone, by sex.	Lack of Mobile Phone Ownership –No Usage of Technology –Technology Illiteracy –No Internet Access In Arabic: <i>Adam Melkeyat Telephone Mahmoul – Adam Istikhdam El-Technologia – AlGabl El-Technologia – Adam Wogoud Internet</i>
5.C. Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels.	5.C.1. Proportion of countries with systems to track and make public allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment.	No Equal Opportunities –Obsolete Laws –Unenforced Laws –Equality In Arabic: <i>Adam Wogood Qanoon litakafou El-foras – Qawaneen Baleya – Qawaneen Gheir Motab-aqa – Mousawa</i>

Source: SDG 5 Targets and Indicators as cited in: UN Women 2022a. Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The Gender Snapshot 2022. https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-09/Progress-on-the-sustainable-development-goals-the-gender-snap-shot-2022-en_0.pdf; United Nations. n.d. Sustainable Development Goals: Goal 5: Gender Equality. <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/gender-equality/>

Notes: *Since SDG 5.C. is all about gender equality, we relied on the term “discrimination” to analyze SDG 5.1., especially when no other keywords were found besides “equality” that were perceived as matching with SDG 5.C.

** It is worth mentioning that the choice of the keyword “inheritance” not “ownership” is more related to the context of the target in all three countries. Egypt, Jordan, and Tunisia do not prevent women from the right of ownership as it is a right guaranteed by the constitution in the three countries. Using “Inheritance” made more sense because preventing women from gaining their rightful inheritance, not ownership in general, is a social norm/tradition.

discussed by responsible government organizations on their FB pages from 2015 to 2023. This is treated as an indication of the extent of awareness created for the diverse problems women encounter in individual countries, what similarities exist, what differences there are, and what the quality of the advocacy tools are. The content analysis was guided by looking for keywords that reflected the SDG 5 targets and indicators. Table 2 provides a detailed clarification of what search terms were used for each of the different SDG 5 targets and indicators. Since we are examining three Middle Eastern/Arab government organizations, the search was done in the

Arabic language. The researchers looked for all different forms of the words in Arabic, as adding one or two letters as a suffix or prefix may make a difference in spelling, but may still indicate concern with the same topic. For the purpose of reporting the findings, the search words were translated into English and included in the table along with the Arabic terms.

The selected time frame for the study marked the period since the ratification of the SDGs on January 1, 2015, up to June 1, 2023, a period of nearly eight and a half years, roughly midway through the targeted time frame for the hoped-for full achievement of the SDGs.

In using CrowdTangle, the researchers managed to check different search terms that are perceived as reflecting the different government organizations' attention to SDG 5 and the nine targets and 14 indicators. The search took place in the three countries under study on the official FB pages of the main government organization taking the lead in formulating policies related to women's rights. The content of the FB pages was checked for the search terms, and "overperforming posts" were identified. Overperforming posts are those that have received the most interaction in terms of comments, likes, and views, by surpassing the page average for four years. Next, the content and type of the overperforming posts, relevant to each SDG 5 indicator, were qualitatively analyzed. Interesting insights were gleaned from the comparison, including what issues gained the most attention, to what extent they were in conformance with SDG 5 targets and indicators, and what advocacy tools were most popular and effective across the three countries.

Advocating for SDG 5 is explored on the different FB pages by examining the frequency of mention of different keywords perceived as conveying the main theme of each of the SDG 5 targets and indicators. The authors started by comparing the number of mentions of key search words over the eight in a half years since the implementation of the SDGs in each of the three countries, to check the intensity of the FB advocacy efforts. Next, we checked in greater depth the most interactive/performing post on each country's FB page and analyzed its quality according to the Dragonfly model. Limitations related to this methodology are identified in the Limitations section at the end of this article.

Advocacy for SDG 5 by Government Organizations

Three Case Studies

This study chose three Arab Middle Eastern countries—Egypt, Jordan, and Tunisia—for further exploration of their SDG 5 accomplishments and advocacy efforts. The justification for the choice of the three countries has to do with several reasons. All three nations have government organizations in place mandated with protecting and advocating for women's rights. All three governmental organizations in question have official active FB pages that can be used in our analysis of their advocacy efforts. And, all three are ranked toward the bottom of the Global Gender Gap Index 2023 rankings, with Jor-

dan ranking 126, Tunisia 128, and Egypt 134 out of a total of 146 countries ranked (World Economic Forum 2023). Despite these similarities, the three countries are geographically dispersed in the Middle East region, with Egypt centered in the middle, Tunisia in the West side of Africa, and Jordan lying to the northeast of Egypt in the Asian continent. Egypt and Tunisia are republics, while Jordan is a monarchy. All three countries were affected by the Arab Spring uprisings starting in 2011, which swept through the Arab World, and led to a regime change in both Tunisia and Egypt, but not in Jordan.

A quick look at the performance of each of the three countries about their successful overall achievement of the SDGs, compared to other countries around the world, shows that they fall approximately in the middle range of the Overall SDG Rank. Egypt ranks 87, Jordan 80, and Tunisia 69 out of 163 countries (Sachs et al. 2020). As for their reported performance related to SDG 5, both Egypt and Tunisia are reported as meeting significant challenges, while Jordan is meeting major challenges. While Jordan and Tunisia's patterns of improvement show stagnation, Egypt's scores show moderate improvement, but Egypt is still not expected to attain the goal (Sachs et al. 2022). Table 3 provides more details about the performance of the three countries in the overall achievement of the SDGs and in achieving SDG 5. There is much room for improvement and therefore a need for stronger SDG 5 advocacy efforts, among other things.

Official Institutional Organizational Structure for Fostering and Protecting Women's Rights

This section provides background information about the three governmental institutions responsible for fostering women's rights in the countries studied. These institutions are the Egyptian National Council for Women (ENCW), the Tunisian Ministry of Women, Family, Childhood, and Seniors (MFFES), and the Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW).

Egypt: The Egyptian National Council for Women (ENCW)

ENCW was established by a presidential decree in the year 2000 (Egyptian Presidential Decree 90/2000). The presidential decree affirmed that the ENCW will report directly to the president of the Republic with a number of clearly articulated mandates. The most important of these mandates were: proposing policies

Table 3. Performance of the Three Countries in Overall Achievement of the SDGs and in Achieving SDG5

	Egypt	Jordan	Tunisia
Overall SDG Rank	87/163	80/163	69/163
SDG Index Score	68.7	69.4	70.7
SDG Gender Equality	Significant challenges remain. Score moderately improving, insufficient to attain goal.	Major challenges remain. Score stagnating or increasing at less than 50% of required rate.	Significant challenges remain. Score stagnating or increasing at less than 50% of required rate.
Indicators			
Demand for family planning satisfied by modern methods (% of females aged 15–49)	SDG achieved	Major challenges remain	Significant challenges remain
	Trend information unavailable	Decreasing	Trend Information Unavailable
Ratio of female to male mean years of education received	Significant challenges remain	Challenges remain	Significant challenges remain
	Moderately improving	On track or maintaining SDG achievement	Stagnating
Ratio of female to male labor force participation rate	Major challenges remain	Major challenges remain	Major challenges remain
	Information Unavailable	Decreasing	Stagnating
Seats held by women in national parliament	Significant challenges remain	Major challenges remain	Significant challenges remain
	On track or maintaining SDG achievement	Decreasing	Decreasing

Source: Compiled by the authors from the Sustainable Development Report website based on Sachs et al. (2022).

Notes: Major challenges remain indicates that performance is decreasing; significant challenges remain indicates that performance is stagnating; challenges remain indicates that performance is moderately increasing (Sachs et al. 2020).

for women's development, their economic and political empowerment, and their inclusion in development plans. ENCW was also mandated with formulating a national plan for women's development; this included resolving the problems they face; monitoring and evaluating women-related policies; representing women in all international fora; establishing a documentation center to collect all information, data, studies, and research pertaining to women, and conducting studies in that field; organizing training workshops for creating awareness about the role of women in society, and their rights and responsibilities; and issuing bulletins and publications related to the ENCW objectives and mandates (Egyptian Presidential Decree 90/2000).

In 2015, ENCW issued the National Strategy for Combating Violence Against Women 2015–2020. This is a detailed, nearly two-hundred-page document covering four pillars related to proactivity, protection, inter-

ventions, and legal pursuit related to combating violence against women. It has executive action plans and clear performance indicators (ENCW 2015). The preamble mentioned that among the reasons for issuing the strategy were the new forms of violence directed toward women and girls in Egyptian society that “required a societal awakening to combat” (ENCW 2015, 8). The increased violence against women and girls, especially in the form of harassment on the streets, had to do with the period of political turbulence that Egypt went through from 2011 to 2014.

In addition to the National Strategy for Combating Violence Against Women, in 2017 the ENCW issued the National Strategy for the Empowerment of Egyptian Women 2030 (ENCW 2017). The strategy has four main pillars: 1) political empowerment and leadership promotion, 2) economic empowerment, 3) social empowerment, and 4) protection. Each of the pillars has specific goals, objectives, and quantifiable indicators

to be reached by the year 2030, plus a list of needed interventions and strategies to achieve the different goals (ENCW 2017). The strategy is well-prepared but has been criticized as having goals that are way too optimistic. Although desirable, reducing the illiteracy of Egyptian women, ages 20–29 years from 12% in 2014 to 0 % in 2030, is seemingly too ambitious (El Baradei 2018).

Submitting the Voluntary National Report (VNR) regarding achievement of the SDGs, including SDG 5, may be part of the advocacy efforts by the government. The latest VNR report by Egypt mentions that “Egypt has made a significant leap in women empowerment and gender equality over the past decade” (MoPED 2021, 36). For example, progress has been achieved in terms of increasing the percentage of seats held by women in parliament, reaching 27% in the House of Representatives and 13.3% in the Senate in 2021; and progress has been achieved in reducing the percentage of women unemployment, from 21.4% in 2018 to 17.7% in 2020. However, among the notable continuing challenges were the practice of female genitalia mutilation and the high percentage of women working in the informal sector, where in 2019–2020, nearly 41% of females’ total non-agricultural employment was in the informal sector (MoPED 2021). The problem with the informal sector is that it is lacking in job security and the working conditions are suboptimal.

Tunisia: Ministry of Women, Family, Childhood, and Seniors (MFFES)

MFFES in Tunisia is the ministry responsible for women’s issues, but as is apparent in its title, women’s issues are bundled with family, children, and senior citizens as well. It is different than in the case of Egypt and Jordan in that it is a ministry and not a commission or council. MFFES—originally Ministry of Women and Family Issues—was renamed after 2011, just after the Arab Spring revolution which had its first spark in Tunisia. The mandate of the ministry as related to women includes participating in formulating women-related public policies, working on integrating women in development, overseeing the implementation of government plans and programs related to women, ensuring that measures are in place to protect women’s rights, supporting nonprofit organizations that favor women, ensuring equal opportunities for women, and encouraging private initiatives that serve women (Devex 2023).

Despite the great achievements related to women’s rights in Tunisia, compared to other Arab nations, such as their criminalization of polygamy, and the requirement for all divorces to happen in court, no national strategy for women was identified. MFFES has an interactive website titled “All United Against Violence” that provides legal information and statistics about gender equality and the prevention of violence against women (Council of Europe 2021).

Tunisia managed to submit a VNR in 2021 (Republique Tunisienne 2021). Their VNR is more detailed than was submitted by either Egypt or Jordan. Some of the main achievements realized by Tunisia in implementing SDG 5 include a drop in the number of women who consider physical violence by the husband as justified, from 30.3% in 2012 to 14.9% in 2018 (United Nations Tunisia 2021). Some of the challenges remaining include the decrease in the number of women representatives in the National Assembly from 31% in 2014 to only 22% in 2019.

Jordan: Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW)

JNCW was established in 1992 by a prime ministerial decree. It is presided over by Princess Basma Bint Talal from the royal ruling family. The decree of establishment considered JNCW as the reference point for all official bodies and the representative of the Jordanian kingdom in all matters related to women’s affairs and activities. Its main mandates include integrating women’s issues and priorities in the national strategies, policies, legislation, plans, and budgets; monitoring issues of discrimination against women; evaluating and following up on what gets implemented to realize women’s equality and equal opportunity; advocating and mobilizing for women’s issues and creating awareness regarding the importance of women’s roles and their participation in realizing national sustainable development (JNCW 2020). It is noticeable that the mandates of JNCW clearly mention its role in advocating for women’s issues.

Similar to ENCW, JNCW has a published National Strategy for Women 2020–2025 with the title “Justice and Equality for Inclusive Development” (JNCW 2020). It identifies four main strategic goals that cover 1) having women and girls enjoy economic, political, and human rights free from discrimination; 2) allowing women and girls to lead a life free from all sorts of violence; 3) having society adopt positive gender norms and attitudes that

support women’s empowerment, and 4) the goal of enabling institutions and policies that support gender equality and women’s empowerment (JNCW 2020). The strategy is well prepared with clear performance indicators and identification of needed interventions at all levels.

In Jordan, a VNR was submitted for 2022. About SDG 5, the report mentions, “Jordan grants SDG 5 special attention and devoted great effort over the past years to bridging the gender gap” (MoPIC 2022, 76). Progress was reported on several fronts including the percentage of seats held by women in national parliament and local governments. However, many challenges were identified, including the continued low economic participation by women and the fact that many women work in the informal agricultural sector without sufficient job security (MoPIC 2022).

Findings

In this section, using CrowdTangle, we present the findings of our exploration of the three selected official FB pages for the three women’s rights organizations in the countries under study.

SDG 5.1: End All Forms of Discrimination Against All Women and Girls Everywhere

In Figure 2 we note that the keywords indicating “discrimination” were most frequent on Jordan’s page. Since Jordan’s FB page mentions discrimination more than Egypt and Tunisia, it is perceived as a sign of more intensive advocacy efforts against discrimination. To check the quality of the advocacy efforts, we look at the most interactive posts in each of the three countries. Figure 3 shows the number of interactions for the highest-performing post related to discrimination in each of the countries.

Figure 2. SDG 5.1 Total Mention of Keywords Indicating Discrimination in Each of the Three Countries Under Study

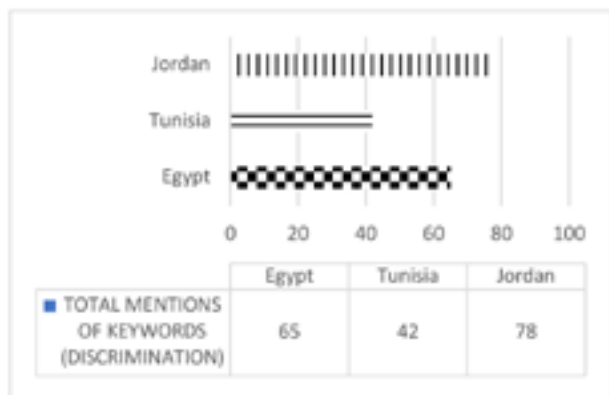
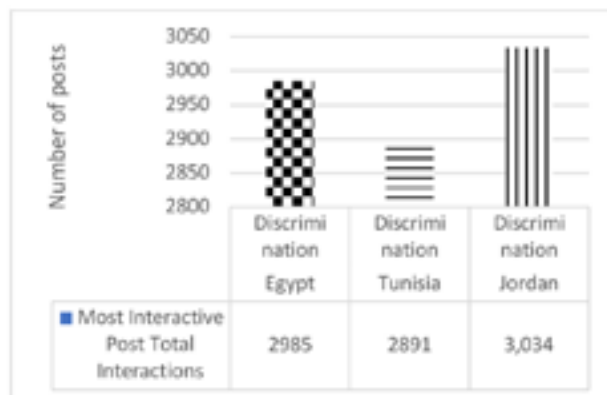


Figure 3. Analysis of the Most Interactive Post Related to SDG 5.1 on Discrimination



In Egypt, for Target 5.1, the most interactive post with the keyword “discrimination” was published in June 2022, about the candidacy of Maya Morsy, Head of The National Council of Women, to the Committee on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (CEDAW 2023–2026). The post was a picture accompanied by the announcement of the candidacy, along with a brief introduction about CEDAW (see Figure 4). The total number of interactions of the post was 2,985.

Using the Dragonfly model, we found that the message from the post was clear. It did engage the audience. It might have succeeded in creating awareness about CEDAW and about the leadership role of the ENCW, but it failed to have a call for action.

Figure 4. Most Interactive Post Target 5.1 in Egypt: Maya Morsy Head of ENCW Announcing Her Joining CEDAW Committee



In Tunisia, the most interactive post with the keyword “discrimination” was about a violent incident toward a group of children in a nursery. The ministry concerned with women’s affairs is also concerned with family, children, and senior citizens.

In Jordan, the most interactive post with the keyword “discrimination” was in January 2017. The post was a call for action from the JNCW, asking the public to sign a petition to stop the killing of women and girls, also known as honor crimes (Figure 5). The petition came after a famous incident of the killing of a young daughter who was suspected of being in a relationship with a man by her family. The post got 3,034 total interactions. Building on the Dragonfly model, we can see that the message was clear, and it grabbed the attention of the page followers. It also portrayed the importance of driving the audience into action by asking them to sign the petition. Compared to the previous highest-performing posts on discrimination in Egypt and Tunisia, this is perceived as the one with the highest

Figure 5. Most Interactive Post Target 5.1 in Jordan: Petition Against Honor Killings



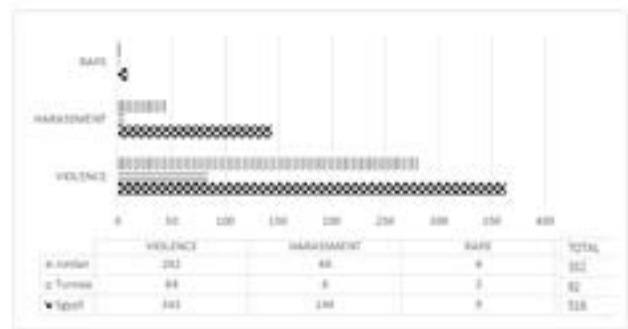
Note: The caption in Arabic reads: “Stop the Crimes of Killing Women and Girls.”

level of advocacy.

SDG 5.2: Elimination of All Forms of Violence Against Women

For SDG 5 Target 5.2, we check the frequency of mention of three keywords: “violence,” “rape,” and “harassment,” which indicate the level of concern by the different government organizations with eliminating all forms of violence against women. Although “rape” is constituted as a form of violence according to the UN’s Women’s Organization (UN Women), it might be one of the very few forms of violence against women that is criminalized by law in the three countries under study.

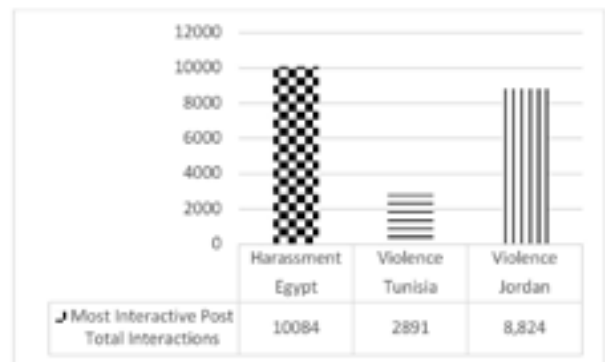
Figure 6. SDG 5.2 Number of Mentions of Different Keywords Indicating Violence in the Three Countries



This is why it was highlighted in this target rather than just referred to as a form of violence.

Figure 6 shows a breakdown of the number of mentions of each word—violence, harassment, and rape—that indicate violence in each of the three countries. Egypt had the highest number of mentions for each of the words compared to Jordan and Tunisia. All three forms of violence are more of a concern in Egypt than in the other two countries. This is in sync with the fact that in Egypt there is a National Strategy for Combating Violence Against Women that was issued in 2015, even

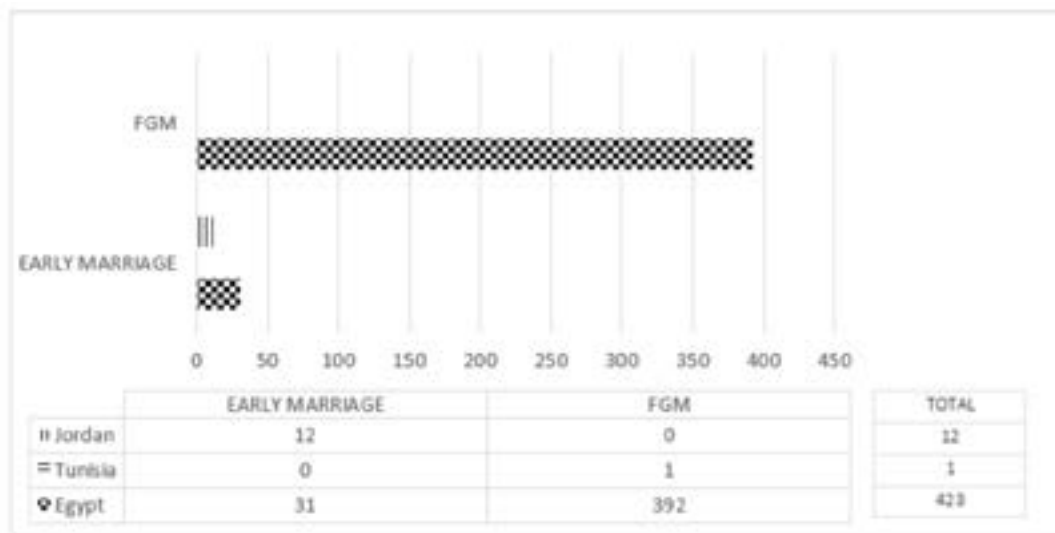
Figure 7. Analysis of the Most Interactive Post Related to SDG 5.2 on Violence



before the National Strategy for Women was issued in 2017. It is a more serious problem in Egypt.

Figure 7 shows the number of interactions for the highest-performing posts related to violence in each of the three countries. In Egypt, the most interactive post discussing SDG 5.2 was about sexual harassment. The post was a video clip teaser produced by the National Council for Women to raise awareness about sexual harassment. The song featured Ali Ghazlan, a famous

Figure 8. SDG 5.3 Number of Mentions of Keywords Indicating Early (Forced) Marriage and FGM in Each of the Countries



social media influencer, and Marwa Nagy, an Egyptian singer. Analyzing the message delivered through this post using the Dragonfly model, we find that the message was clear, through both the video description and the song lyrics. The post had 2 million views and a total of 10,084 interactions. Interestingly, although the teaser was a hit on social media, more than 60% of the reactions to the post were a “ha ha” reaction. Sexual harassment is a serious problem in Egypt, so having so many mocking reactions to the post detracts from its quality. Perhaps the choice of singer and/or influencer evoked an unwanted comic reaction, or the issue of harassment is not taken as seriously as it needs to be by the lay public. Using the Dragonfly model, seeing that the audience mocked the content of the message, means that there is a failure in the crafting and delivery of the message. In addition, the absence of any call to action made the post of poor quality.

In Tunisia, the most interactive post discussing SDG 5.2 was about “violence.” The post was regarding an incident of a man physically and verbally abusing his 83-year-old mother, causing her bruises and other injuries. The Minister of Women, Family, Childhood, and Senior Citizens was keen on communicating with the public regarding updates on the matter by writing an article on its FB page. The post received 2,891 interactions, which made it the highest interaction rate on the page. Relating to the Dragonfly model, the message was detailed, clear, and concrete. It grabbed the attention of the public. Respect and care for the elderly, and

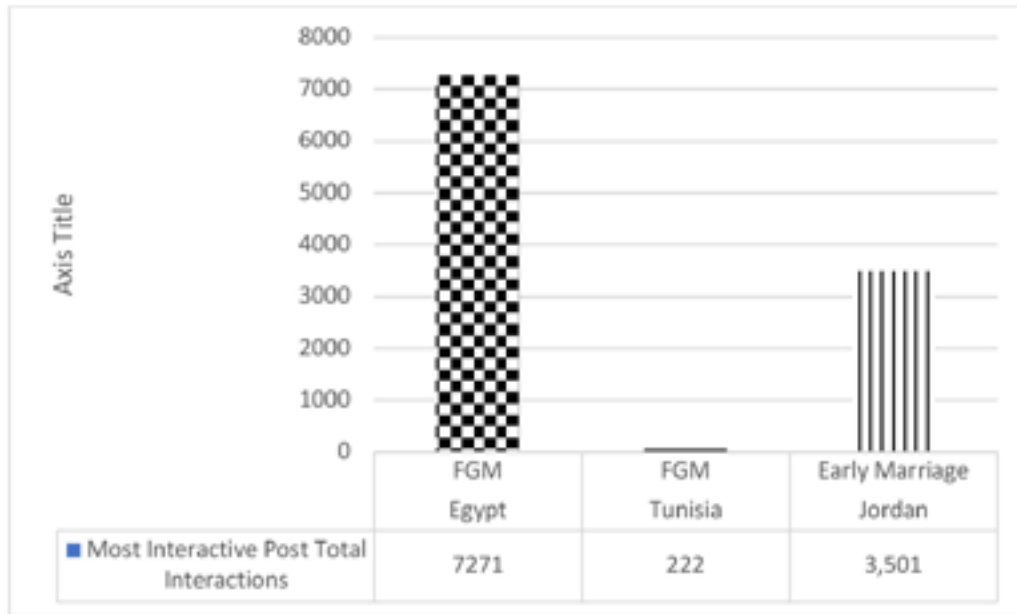
especially the mother, is of utmost importance in Middle Eastern cultures, so it is no wonder there was a high level of interaction. However, there was no mention of any call to action.

In Jordan, as in Tunisia, the most interactive post for SDG 5.2 was about “violence.” It was a video clip song in 2017, as part of an awareness campaign named “Still Too Young to Be Married” by the Jordanian National Commission for Women, aimed to stop violence against girls and underage marriage. The song was performed by the famous Jordanian singer Nedaa Sharara. The post received a total of 8,824 interactions, which is considered high compared to the overall performance of the page. In relation with the Dragonfly model, the high number of interactions reflects the effectiveness of the message in grabbing the attention of followers and engaging them through likes, comments, and shares. The lyrics of the song spoke indirectly about the risks of early marriage. However, there was no clear call to action, neither in the lyrics, nor the captions.

SDG 5.3: Eliminate Forced Marriages and Female Genital Mutilation

Figure 8 shows the number of mentions of the term “early marriage” and the term “FGM” in each of the countries. It is clear that FGM is a very serious concern in Egypt, mentioned 392 times, but not so in Tunisia, where it was mentioned once, and not at all in Jordan. “early marriage” is a serious problem in Egypt, less so

Figure 9. Analysis of the Most Interactive Posts Related to SDG 5.3



in Jordan, and not at all in educated, more liberalized Tunisia.

In Egypt, the most interactive post defining Target 5.3 included the keyword “FGM—Female Genital Mutilation.” (See Figure 9.) The post was a video featuring the Egyptian actress and UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador Mona Zaki, who participated in a campaign named “Protect Her from FGM” (see Figure 10.) The message included in the post was clear. The video was widely viewed, with around 1.5M views, and it grabbed attention with 7,271 total interactions. That is mostly because FGM is a recognized harmful practice in Egypt. According to Olinski and Szamrowski (2021), the more sophisticated the content (i.e., photos, videos), the more engagement and interactions it receives from the audience, which is clearly what we can assume is the case in analyzing the most interactive post in Egypt, a video post. This all can be related to the Dragonfly model, where we can see a clear message, the ability of the message to grab attention since it is a major societal issue in Egypt, and the ability to engage the audience perhaps promote action by sharing the post in their feed.

In Tunisia, there were no mentions of FGM in all of the posts regarding SDG 5.3. There was only one post referring to male genital mutilation, which is an approved practice among Muslims.

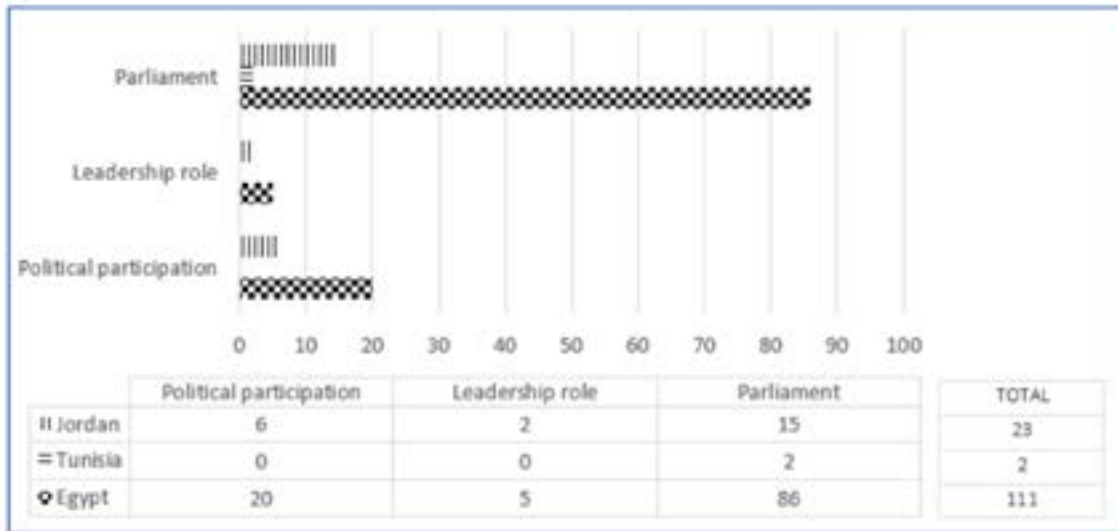
In Jordan, the video that was classified by Crowd-

Figure 10. SDG 5.3 Most Interactive Post About FGM in Egypt Featuring Actress Mona Zaki



Tangle as the most interactive post for Target 5.3 with the keyword “early marriage” was part of an awareness campaign initiated by the JNCW. It was an animation infographic video about the disadvantages of early marriage and its effect on little girls’ lives and was part of the campaign “Still Too Young to Be Married.” Similar to all other videos posted, the total interaction for this post was relatively high, reaching 3,501 interactions and 406,000 views. The message was clear, and the audience were familiar with it as a result of the frequency of repetition. Relating to the Dragonfly model, it grabbed attention compared to the overall performance of the page in the selected date range. The engagement was also high, and the purpose of the infographic video was clearly to raise awareness and encourage people to

Figure 11. SDG 5.5 Number of Mentions of Keywords Indicating Political Participation and Leadership Role in the Three Countries



spread the information. This can be categorized as a call to action.

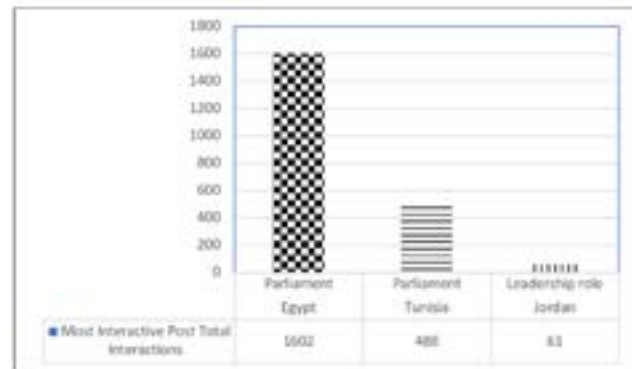
SDG 5.4: Value Unpaid Care and Promote Shared Domestic Responsibilities

Searching for the keywords defining this target goal was a long and unrewarding process. The researchers used several keywords to try to describe this target such as domestic work, unpaid work, pay gap, unequal pay, housewife, and unpaid care. The search showed zero findings in all three countries. A possible explanation is that the topic is perceived as less of a priority in Middle Eastern culture, especially when compared to other more pressing issues facing women. Barnett et al. (2020) point out that only 20% of women aged 15 to 64 in the Middle East are in the formal paid labor force, which is remarkably lower than the international percentage of countries not at war, with Jordan being one of the countries with the lowest rate of women’s participation in the labor force in the world.

SDG 5.5: Ensure Full Participation in Leadership and Decision-Making

On checking the frequency of mention of all keywords related to SDG 5.5, “parliament,” “leadership role,” and “political participation,” Egypt ranked highest by far compared to Jordan and Tunisia, with the term “parliament” featuring more highly in Egypt than the other two terms, indicating more advocacy efforts directed

Figure 12. Analysis of the Most Interactive Posts Related to SDG 5.5: Ensuring Full Participation in Leadership and Decision-Making



toward getting women in Egypt to join parliament (see Figure 11).

Figure 12 shows that in Egypt the most interactive post mentioning “parliament” had 1,602 interactions. The post was considered irrelevant as it covered offering condolences to the head of the Egyptian National Council for Women for the death of her son. Messages were from parliamentarians and therefore this caused the confusion. As this can be found to be unrelated and hence, when applying the Dragonfly model to this target, we can see that there was no clear message. In Tunisia, the most interactive post reference to SDG 5.5 was about the government of Tunisia’s celebration of International Women’s Day with the attendance of the First Lady. It received 448 interactions. Meanwhile, in Jordan, the most interactive post was about leadership

training provided by a Canadian NGO. The post received 61 interactions in total.

SDG 5.6: Universal Access to Reproductive Rights and Health

On checking the frequency of mention of keywords related to SDG 5.6, we found that there were few mentions of the word “birth” or “reproductive health” in all three countries. In eight-and-a-half years, relevant keywords were mentioned once in Tunisia, twice in Jordan, and seven times in Egypt. The reason may be that there are other governmental organizations focusing on reproductive health and birth issues. In Egypt, for example, there is a Ministry of Health, a National Population Council, and a National Human Rights Council, and all three may be working on advocating for reproductive rights and health. Thus, the women-focused governmental organizations may have decided to exclude these issues from their advocacy agenda.

Among the very few posts related to SDG 5.6, the most interactive posts in all three countries were related to “reproductive health.” In Egypt, the most interactive post about “reproductive health” received 827 interactions, while in Tunisia a post about the same topic received 488 interactions, and in Jordan, the most interactive post about “reproductive health” received only 26 interactions. Looking at the Dragonfly model, since the number of mentions of keywords, as well as the interactions to the post and the engagements were low compared to other targets and posts, we conclude that the message intended to be delivered through these posts was not clear nor concrete, and it didn’t grab the attention to the issue at hand.

SDG 5.A: Equal Rights to Economic Resources, Property Ownership and Financial Services

On checking the frequency of mention of the relevant keyword to SDG 5.A, “inheritance,” Egypt ranked the highest, with a total mention of 38 times, followed by Jordan 17 times, and with only 1 mention by Tunisia over the eight-and-a-half year period. One explanation may be that in Egypt the problem of women not being allowed to inherit land, especially in Upper Egypt, is a more pronounced issue, compared to Jordan. In Tunisia, it is no longer a pressing matter since the inheritance laws have been structurally amended for the benefit of women.

Next, on checking the most performing posts re-

lated to SDG 5.A, in Jordan, it was a post mentioning “inheritance” with 1,863 interactions. The post was an animated video about women not getting their rightful inheritance. In Egypt, the most performing post including the term “inheritance” had received 1,280 interactions. The post was about a meeting between the head of ENCW and the parliament to discuss several issues including inheritance. In Tunisia, the most performing post including the term “inheritance” had received 93 interactions. The post was a shared news piece.

The overall interaction and engagement with the messages related to Target 5.A. was not as high as other targets of the SDG. We can see few interactions and engagements and little action from the audience toward these messages, which, building on the Dragonfly model means that it was not a successful crafting of the message. The post had no clear purpose and did not include any clear call to action.

SDG 5.B: Promote Empowerment of Women Through Technology

The term “technology” was mentioned the most in Egypt, but not very frequently, only 14 times over an eight-and-a-half-year period. Meanwhile, it was mentioned five times in Jordan and once in Tunisia. Although technology plays an important role in the economic and social empowerment of women in the MENA region (Cherif and Koudari 2021), it is unclear why this target is not getting enough attention from policymakers in the region. The authors assume that it may be because there are other government organizations responsible for access to technology at large, like the Ministries of Information and Communication.

SDG 5.C: Adopt and Strengthen Policies and Enforceable Legislation for Gender Equality

When examining the total mention of keywords related to SDG 5.C, we found that the keywords “equality” and “empowerment” were mentioned the most in Egypt, 553 times; followed closely by Jordan 448 times; and then Tunisia 119 times. This may indicate that Egypt and Jordan are still grappling with women empowerment legislation, and therefore are exerting more effort in advocating for enforceable legislation for gender equality, while in Tunisia, women empowering legislation is already there.

When examining the most interactive posts related to SDG 5.C in Egypt, the post was about “Equality,” an animated short movie raising awareness about equality

between women and men in all aspects of life, and the importance of the role of men in promoting equality. The video was a collaboration between UN Women and the Egyptian National Council for Women in November 2017, and the post received a total of 15,851 interactions. The post was widely shared, with “likes” and “love” reactions topping the reactions, which we perceive as a reflection of the good quality of the message and its ability to grab attention and therefore drive toward action in terms of more engagement and shares. Using the Dragonfly model, we can see that this is a successful message in terms of clarity, ability to grab attention and engage the audience, and then calling on them to take action.

In Tunisia, the post was also about “Equality,” with 2,891 interactions, and was an incident report about an assault on a senior citizen by her son. The post did not include a video or a significant photo for engagement but this incident was very famous. It had already made it to the top newspapers and TV shows. It can be considered a successful message if reflected upon through the Dragonfly model, in terms of crafting the message that interests the audience and grabs their attention.

However, we see no evidence of either a direct or indirect call for action.

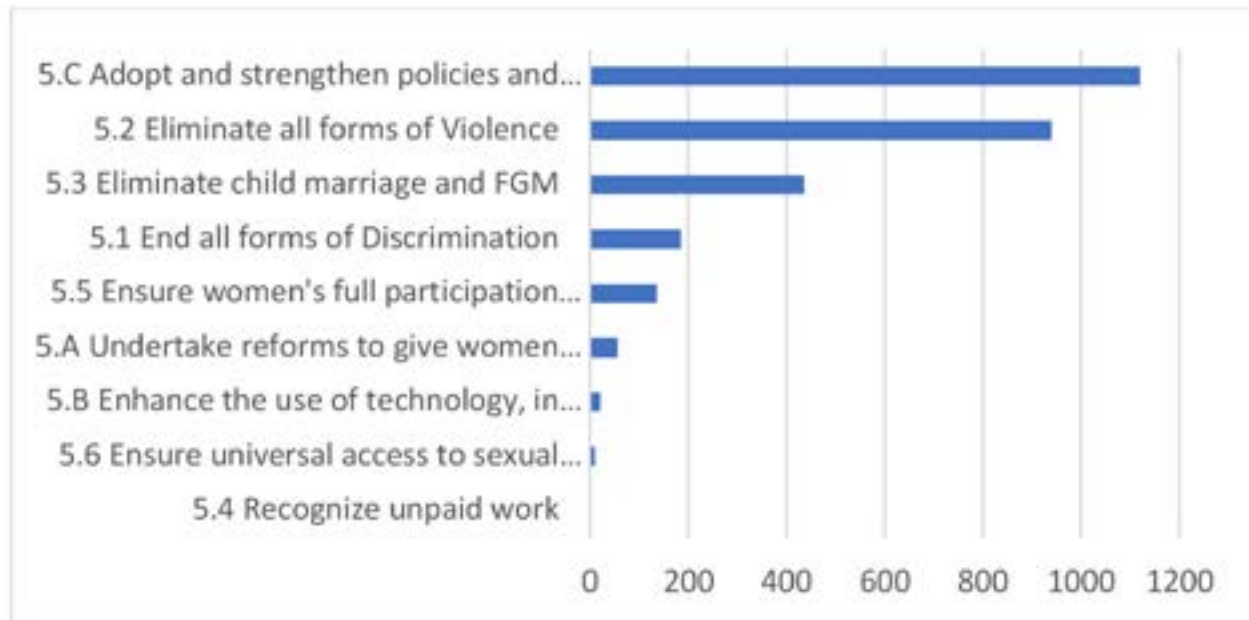
In Jordan, the most interactive post that included the word “equality” was about a famous incident in Jarash, where a young girl was killed by her family under the allegations of an honor crime. Similarly, like Tunisia, although the most interactive post was not a video or photo to increase engagement, it was a famous incident that has been widely spoken about in the media and among several communities in Jordan, which raised the interactions of the post to 313 interactions. Here again, the post is clear, the message is well-crafted, grabbed the attention of the audience, but failed to call for any action.

Discussion

Advocating for women’s issues in the Middle East takes place partially through designated government organizations. The researchers focused on the three cases of Egypt, Jordan, and Tunisia and examined the FB SDG 5 advocacy efforts by ENCW, MFFES, and JNCW. The analysis attempted both a quantitative and qualitative assessment. The quantitative analysis focused on identifying the

Table 4. Summary of Quantitative Findings for the Study

Target	Keyword	Total number of posts			Total number of posts/search term	Total number of posts/target
		Egypt	Tunisia	Jordan		
Target 5.1	Discrimination	65	42	78	185	185
Target 5.2	Violence	363	84	282	729	940
	Harassment	144	6	46	196	
	Rape	9	2	4	15	
Target 5.3	Early marriage	31	0	12	43	436
	FGM	392	1	0	393	
Target 5.4	Unpaid Work	0	0	0	0	0
Target 5.5	Political participation	20	0	6	26	136
	Leadership role	5	0	2	7	
	Parliament	86	2	15	103	
Target 5.6	Birth	4	0	0	4	10
	Reproductive health	3	1	2	6	
Target 5.A	Inheritance	38	1	17	56	56
Target 5.B	Technology	14	1	5	20	20
Target 5.C	Equality	138	64	69	271	1120
	Empowerment	415	55	379	849	

Figure 13. Total FB Posts by the Three Countries per SDG 5 Target in Descending Order

strength of the advocacy efforts, while the qualitative analysis focused on identifying the degree of quality. Table 4 shows a summary of the quantitative findings of the study.

The total number of posts per SDG 5 target by all three nations, over the eight-and-a-half-year time frame, showed that Target 5.C tackling women empowerment ranked highest with 1,120 posts, followed by Target 5.2 tackling the elimination of all forms of violence with 940 posts. Then comes Target 5.3 tackling elimination of child marriage and FGM with 436 posts, Target 5.1 tackling ending all forms of discrimination with 185 posts, Target 5.5 tackling assurance of women's full participation and leadership, with 136 posts, Target 5.A tackling reforms for women's equal rights to economic resources with 56 posts, Target 5.B tackling the use of enabling technology with 20 posts, Target 5.6 tackling giving women access to sexual and reproductive healthcare with 10 posts, and Target 5.4 tackling the recognition of unpaid work with zero posts. See Figure 13 for the total collective FB SDG 5 posts by the three countries in descending order.

From the quantitative analysis, it seemed clear that advocacy efforts for SDG 5 by the three countries could be grouped into three different categories, and that these three categories might be an indication of the level of perceived importance for the issues covered.

Quantitatively, the greatest number of posts by all three countries over the eight-and-a-half-year period were related to Target 5.C and "empowerment" which

was reportedly mentioned 849 times; followed by Target 5.2 and the mention of the term "violence" 729 times; followed by Target 5.3 and the mention of the term "FGM" 393 times; followed by Target 5.3 and the term "equality" mentioned 271 times. These highly mentioned issues—empowerment, equality, and protection from violence and FGM—reflect the top-ranking SDG 5 priorities by the three examined government bodies.

The second in priority rank by all three countries, in terms of the number of posts over the eight-and-a-half-year period were Target 5.2 and the term "harassment" which was mentioned 196 times; followed by Target 5.1 and the term "discrimination" mentioned 185 times; Target 5.5 with the term "parliament" mentioned 103 times; and Target 5.A where the term "inheritance" was mentioned 56 times.

The third group in priority rank by all three countries, in terms of the number of posts over the eight-and-a-half-year time frame were, in ascending order from the least number of posts upward, Target 5.6 and the mention of the term "birth" mentioned 4 times; the term "reproductive health" mentioned 6 times; Target 5.5 and the mention of the term "leadership role" mentioned seven times; Target 5.2 and the mention of the term "rape" 15 times; Target 5.B and the mention of the term "technology" 20 times; and Target 5.5 and the mention of the term "political participation" 26 times. Target 5.4 and the search for the term "unpaid work" yielded zero posts.

Thus, empowerment, ending violence, reducing FGM, and ensuring equality are the top concerns for all three countries. Next in line are stopping harassment, ending discrimination, giving women a place in parliament, and securing their inheritance rights. The issues of lesser concern are those related to birth rights and reproductive health, leadership roles, ending rape, access to technology, and political participation. Unpaid work was not on the radar screen. This order of prioritization of women's issues is mostly in sync with what was identified earlier in the literature as typical of Middle Eastern concerns, where the issues related to women's freedom, equality, protection from violence, including FGM, early marriage, sexual harassment and honor killings, followed by political empowerment, were discussed, and given precedence over Western concerns, such as abortion rights, access to contraception, flexible work arrangements, and digital inclusion (Al Rawi 2014; El-Masri 2012; Hirsu et al. 2020; Pawlucuk et al. 2021; Rizzo and Ryan 2019; Saleh 2018). The authors attribute the fact that "unpaid work" was not perceived as an issue to the cultural context, where the role of women as the main party responsible for household chores is not seriously contested. As for the reason that reproductive health or technology, were not top advocacy issues, the authors think that may be because of the presence of other governmental institutions that are focused and mandated with these portfolios, such as the Ministries of Health and the Ministries of Information and Communication Technology.

The quantitative analysis per nation yields a somewhat different prioritization scheme with regard to SDG 5 advocacy efforts. For Egypt, the top three concerns are empowerment, FGM, and violence. Tunisia and Jordan have the same choices for the top three priorities—violence, discrimination, and equality—although with different weights. Egypt shares with Tunisia and Jordan the concern for violence, gives more focus on advocating for empowerment rather than just equality, and uniquely positions FGM as one of its top three advocacy priorities. This prominence given to the problem of FGM in Egypt is in line with what was noted in the latest VNR report submitted by the Egyptian Government in 2021, where FGM was identified as a continuing challenge (MoPED 2021).

The frequency and the rate of message repetition greatly affect the reach and engagement with the post. For example, in Egypt, when you take a quick look at the National Council for Women's FB page, you will find that most of the posts, or the main concern of the page

can be summarized into two main issues: harassment and FGM. Messages including those two issues had the highest reach and engagement. This can be attributed to the fact that these issues are mentioned frequently in all types of different media outlets as issues of concern to Egyptian society. The same applies to Jordan, where early marriage and honor crimes are major issues that both the government and the civil society try to raise awareness about.

Qualitatively, to examine the quality of the advocacy efforts, through the use of the Dragonfly model, we examined the highest-performing posts for the different SDG 5 indicators in the three countries, and the highest-performing posts were analyzed based on their level of clarity, their ability to capture attention, the extent of their being engaging, and whether they call on social media users to act. The more the FB advocacy posts meet these criteria, the higher their perceived quality, and the higher the level of engagement by the FB users. We noted that several factors explained the high performance. On top of those factors were the use of videos, songs, and animation to capture attention; the reliance on influencers, whether actors, singers, or high-level political figures, and the degree to which the topic posted is striking or capable of capturing the attention of social media users. Another factor that affected the high performance of certain posts was the degree to which the posts dealt with a topic that hit a nerve with citizens. For example, when the JNCW posted about the honor crime of a young girl killed by her family, there was a noticeably high level of engagement, and similarly in Tunisia, when a man reportedly beat his elderly mother. Both posts angered the audience. Also, posts with calls-to-action received greater interactions than those that were only informative, such as when there was a call to sign a petition to stop honor crimes in Jordan, or in Egypt to protect girls from FGM. For many of the high-performing posts, although clear, well-crafted, and engaging, they failed to call the audience to action. This is a matter that detracted from their advocacy quality. Nearly 10 out of the 13 relevant outperforming posts analyzed in the three countries failed to call for action.

Concluding Remarks

Realizing social equity, leaving no one behind, and reducing unfairness, injustice, and inequality, necessitates that governments work on achieving the SDGs, including SDG 5. Many issues still hamper gender equity and women's empowerment in the Middle East and ineq-

unities still persist. This means that government organizations mandated with advocating for women's rights have to do their job in the best way possible to try to reduce gender-based inequities.

The examination of the different FB posts by the three different government organizations mandated with advocating for women's issues in Egypt, Tunisia, and Jordan reflected to a great extent their major concerns related to SDG 5 targets. Certain issues got more attention than others, sometimes reflecting the seriousness of the existing problem in the country, such as harassment and FGM in Egypt, or honor killings in Jordan. Sometimes findings reflect the simple fact that there were other organizations mandated with tackling the issue, such as when all three showed little attention to reproductive health, and other times when the SDG 5 target was not met with cultural acceptance, such as the issue of unpaid work, which received little to no attention from all three countries. Although the problem of women working in the informal sector in suboptimal conditions was mentioned in all three countries' national strategies, it did not feature prominently in the examined social media advocacy efforts, and it is not clear whether it was an intentional slip by the government organizations. This is something that can be examined in future research. For more quality FB advocacy for SDG 5 by the different government organizations there should be a conscious effort to link not only the number of posts over time with the different national priorities, but also a clear understanding of the factors that matter to improve the quality of the posts, make a difference, and eventually contribute to gender equity and empowerment.

Policy Recommendations

1. Governments should be persistent in their advocacy efforts for all SDG 5 targets to reduce gender inequities. They should exert more effort in utilizing social media platforms, like Facebook, to reach out to citizens, create awareness, and work on changing their attitudes and behaviors.
2. To improve advocacy quality, governments should be creative about their social media SDG 5 advocacy postings. They should have a clear link to goals, the ability to attract attention, engage the audience, and most important, include a call to action. Citizens need to be reminded every time what action is needed on their part to achieve the different SDG 5 goals.
3. FB posts that garner the highest number of

reactions can be capitalized upon to anchor and guide governments' future advocacy efforts. The factors that were identified as enhancing the quality of the FB posts, such as clarity, creativity, use of influencers and movie stars, interaction, and call to action, can perhaps be integrated into capacity-building programs for the officials responsible for social media advocacy. The call to action dimension that was found lacking in the majority of the outperforming posts is something that needs to be rectified.

Suggestions for Future Studies

The current research identified several possible future studies. These include measuring the effectiveness of the government organizations' advocacy efforts by correlating the quantity of SDG 5 associated FB posts with the improvements in the performance on SDG 5 indicators per country; comparing FB posts by government organizations advocating for SDG 5 in selected Western and Middle Eastern countries to further identify differences in issues of concern and modalities of advocacy; and comparing SDG 5 advocacy issues emphasized by government organizations and SDG 5 advocacy issues emphasized by civil society, and perhaps by surveyed citizens, in order to identify to what extent there is agreement or disagreement about the issues of concern.

Limitations

There may have been other terminologies used by the different government-affiliated institutions responsible for advocating for women's issues in the three countries studied that were not used as search terms by the researchers on CrowdTangle. In performing the qualitative assessment of the FB posts, the researchers focused on the highest-performing posts for each SDG 5 target per country. A few of these highest-performing posts were found irrelevant. For example, in some cases, the violence issues analyzed, especially in the case of Tunisia, were not always related to women, since the ministry responsible for women's issues also dealt with children and seniors.

Additionally, the interactions with Facebook across the different nations did not enable the researchers to distinguish between users in urban versus rural areas, where it may be the case that some of the serious gender inequities such as FGM and the deprivation of inheritance rights may be more prevalent.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that the results of the study apply to the findings on the FB platform only, and are not generalizable to other social media platforms, or other Middle Eastern countries. This is due to the unique context of each country and given the different nature of other social media platforms such as TikTok or X (previously Twitter).

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