The case method in the teaching of contemporary Arab political thought: The shutdown of the pan-Arab newspaper *al-Ḥayāt* as a case study

El método de caso en la enseñanza del pensamiento político árabe contemporáneo: el cierre del periódico pan-árabe al-Ḥayāt como caso de estudio

JUAN A. MACÍAS-AMORETTI
Universidad de Granada

Abstract

Backed by the development of postcolonial studies and subaltern studies, the teaching of contemporary Arab political thought as a "border" and interdisciplinary subject must provide students with the theoretical and conceptual tools to respond to the ideological, social, political and intellectual dynamism of contemporary Arab societies in transformation. To apply this methodological approach, this article presents a practical activity based on the case method (CM). As its general objective, the method challenges students to assume learning as a space for cross-cultural reflection through the analysis and argumentation of a real case history: in this instance, the definitive closure of the influential pan-Arab newspaper *al-Ḥayāt* in March 2020, after almost 75 years of existence. The activity trains students in general and instrumental competences, such as critical text analysis, by positioning them face-to-face with the case under study. After analyzing and evaluating the case elements provided in the classroom, students can apply any previously acquired knowledge about reform, identity, democracy, culture, Arab nationalism, capitalism, etc. Responding to the case in question, students proved to be able to develop alternatives and synthesize their own views. This method also encourages students to analyze their self-perception of this process.

Keywords: active methodologies, case method, Arab political thought, MENA Region, teaching.

Resumen

Respaldado por el surgimiento de los estudios poscoloniales y los estudios subalternos, la enseñanza del pensamiento político árabe contemporáneo como materia "fronteriza" e interdisciplinaria debe

dotar a los estudiantes de las herramientas teóricas y conceptuales para responder al dinamismo ideológico, social, político e intelectual de las sociedades árabes contemporáneas en transformación. Para aplicar este enfoque metodológico, este artículo presenta una actividad práctica basada en la metodología de caso. Su objetivo general es que los alumnos asuman el aprendizaje como un espacio de reflexión intercultural a través del análisis y la argumentación de un caso real: el cierre definitivo en marzo de 2020 del influyente diario panárabe *al-Ḥayāt* tras casi setenta y cinco años de existencia. La actividad fomenta la formación de competencias generales e instrumentales, como el análisis crítico de textos, a través del posicionamiento de los alumnos frente al caso de estudio. Tras analizar y evaluar sus elementos impartidos en el aula, los estudiantes son capaces de aplicar los conocimientos adquiridos previamente sobre reforma, identidad, democracia, cultura, nacionalismo árabe, capitalismo, etc. Respondiendo al caso en cuestión, se confirma que fueron capaces de desarrollar alternativas y sintetizar sus propios enfoques. Este método también les permitió analizar su autopercepción de este proceso.

Palabras clave: metodologías activas, método de caso, pensamiento político árabe, región MENA, enseñanza.

CONTEXTUALISING THE LEARNING PROCESS: PARTICULARITIES OF THE MENA-RELATED SUBJECTS IN A PUBLIC UNIVERSITY

The introduction of new theoretical frameworks in the classroom capable of endowing teaching with an appropriate epistemological approach to different academic subjects is making more and more sense. In this case, bearing in mind the emergence of postcolonial studies and subaltern studies, the teaching of contemporary Arab political thought, as a "border" and interdisciplinary subject, cannot be approached as a forensic analysis of a petrified and *orientalised* reality. Rather, it must provide students with the theoretical and conceptual tools that respond to the ideological, social, political and intellectual dynamism of contemporary Arab societies in transformation. The theoretical framework of post-orientalism (Dabashi, 2012), applied from within a transcultural epistemology, allows them to address this genuine reality through active learning (Ferreiro Prado, 2020). On the one hand, this approach facilitates a contextualized-problematized access to critical knowledge of Arab contemporary political thought, its main authors, its concepts and its debates; on the other, it directly challenges students from the beginning of the teaching process, questioning their agency and responsibility in learning, as well as their commitment to social transformation (Melero Aguilar, 2012).

To apply this methodological approach, this chapter presents a practical activity based on the case method[1]. Its general objective is for students to assume the practice of learning as a space for cross-cultural reflection through the analysis and argumentation

---

1. Special thanks to the cohort of students enrolled in "Contemporary Arab Thought" at the University of Granada (2020-2021).

of a real case, namely, the definitive closure of the influential pan-Arab newspaper *al-Ḥayāt* in March 2020, after almost 75 years of existence since it was founded in Beirut in 1946. With this objective in mind, the activity encourages the training of general competences such as the "development of reflective attitudes and a critical spirit" (CG1) and the "appreciation of cross-cultural interconnection, curiosity and an open attitude towards other cultures, ideas and paradigms" (CG13) as well as instrumental competences, such as critical text analysis.

The activity took place during the second semester of the academic year 2020-2021 and developed in three phases in May 2021. It was based on the positioning of the students just before the aforementioned case. The previously acquired knowledge about reform, identity, democracy, culture, technology, Arab nationalism, capitalism, etc. (the conceptual dimension) will be applied after analysing and evaluating in a reasoned way the available elements provided by the teacher (the analytical dimension) (Benito and Cruz, 2011). These elements include primary textual sources in Arabic, and secondary textual sources in English and Spanish, and photographs. Responding to the case question "what does the shutdown of *al-Ḥayāt* imply in ideological and political terms?", students should be able to develop alternatives and synthesize their approaches to the question, assuming the consequences of their decision. Students will then discuss these alternatives and approaches in small groups and present them in the reassembled class (the synthetic dimension). As the secondary objective, students analyse their self-perception of this process through the final writing of an intellectual autobiography. Finally, a qualitative evaluation will be carried out.

Following the latest trends in pedagogy, many studies point out the importance of enhancing learning through effective practice (Fernsten and Fernsten, 2005; De Miguel Díaz, 2005; Esteve Mon and Gisbert Cervet, 2011; Jones *et al.*, 1997). This practice also implies a set of important changes in the traditional mental framework of the teaching process in the university classroom, going from a teaching-oriented to a learning-centred methodology (Tourón and Martín, 2019: 31). This educative transformation also implies a change of paradigm, as long as the student is now an engaged actor in its own learning process. Students are neither isolated in terms of their personal and academic relationships nor in ideological terms. More often, students of Middle East and North African (MENA) studies and related areas in public universities as the University of Granada usually have directly experienced the diversity of the region and its particularities. They are usually deeply engaged in the cultural and political narratives about Middle Eastern and North African societies, being themselves North African in origin or connected to Arab and/or North African friends and/or families.

Compared to students in other private universities (Díaz Sanz and Ferreiro Prado, 2021: 2), they appear to be especially concerned about the problematized subjects usually represented in Western media, such as the *hijāb* (Ramírez and Mijares, 2021), Muslim minorities, migration, terrorism and such. Instead of finding postcoloniality (Shoat, 1992) and neocoloniality as problematic concepts lacking in *objectivity* (Díaz Sanz and Ferreiro Prado, 2021: 3), fourth-year undergraduate students enrolled in the

Contemporary Arab Thought course at the University of Granada respond comfortably to this post-structuralist perspective and prove eager to overcome the preconceptions and problematizations of Arab and Islamic reality in social terms. Thus, taking into account the new paradigm, this sensibility and proximity with the academic object should be stressed. The university lecturer in this situation should use the proximity between subject (student) and object (MENA studies) to go along with students in their learning journey in order to reach the ultimate goal not only of achieving social transformation through critical knowledge but also fighting islamophobia, racism, xenophobia and other forms of inequality and injustice. Thus, the teacher or academic lecturer should not remain a mere *magister* who teaches *ex catedra* but instead become someone whose academic experience may facilitate the students" learning process through the use of active methodologies and the implementation of alternative systems of evaluation (Ferreiro Prado, 2020: 13). This process should transform the students into active subjects of their own learning and principal actors of social transformation (Melero Aguilar, 2012). This change significantly affects the role of students in the learning process:

Graphic 1.
The new roles of students in the EHEA
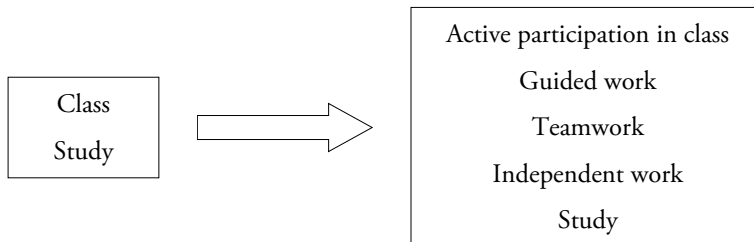
Source: Benito and Cruz (2011: 18).

That said, it is necessary to note that despite the change in the theoretical paradigm, the lack of economic and academic resources in public higher education, along with the speed and superficiality with which the process of assimilation into the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) has been undertaken in Spain, has left this transformation of roles in its initial stage. Students and university lecturers still face many difficulties in overcoming this problem in terms of resources, time and effort (Masjuan i Codina *et al.*, 2009). Because of this, classic paradigms continue to predominate in the classroom. The question remains how this new paradigm could be applied in an academic context where the study of the Middle East and North Africa also implies a social narrative constructed in terms of perception and action.

Bearing in mind the importance of this societal observation, the learning process should consider the epistemological element in the classroom. That is why the post-orientalist perspective (Dabashi, 2012) may help teacher and students to adopt a critical

stance towards the object (Arab political thought) and towards the dialectical relationship that takes place between the student and the political ideas and contexts constituent to the process. This conceptual dimension is essential to undertake the analytical dimension of the practical activity at the heart of the case method.

Thus, the main goal of subaltern studies (Spivak, 2010), including those theories such as post-orientalism that call for an epistemological reform of knowledge in the Arab and Islamic region —from Edward Said to Hamid Dabashi— is the meeting of diverse *othernesses* without an ideological, historical and cultural center in a synchronous world (Macías Amoretti, 2019). Overcoming the ethnic-territorial limits of thought and, therefore, the concept of national identity as an ideological starting point, would be the first step to overcoming the epistemological limits imposed by contemporary power relations between the center and the periphery, as in the traditional narratives of "West-MENA". An alternative narrative, properly presented to the students, would help them to re-categorize traditional center-periphery political narratives and thereby re-evaluate the premises of modernity that frame non-Western thought. In the case of contemporary Arab thought, these premises of modernity are the nation-state (culture-identity), democracy (politics) and development (economy). Thus, new active methodologies offer significant tools for connecting this shifting paradigm to different "levels of knowledge" as in Bloom's taxonomy (Ferreiro Prado, 2020: 14)[2] and to the three "typologies of political reasoning" found in Rosenberg (1998)[3]. Students must link these elements critically to their own way of learning and thinking about the "other" in cross-cultural perspective, taking into account that knowledge also comes from the "other" (al-Jābrī, 2003). In this sense, the concepts of "interdisciplinarity" and "border" thinking in classroom activities are understood from a post-structuralist perspective.

Cooperative learning and the case method (CM): possibilities in MENA studies

As part of active learning methodologies, cooperative learning's main objective is to encourage collaboration among students distributed in small groups in order to maximize learning. In this way, the students assume an active role, seeking information and solving the proposed task while promoting the development of their classmates" learning, since they all contribute in the same way to the resolution of the proposed task. To do this, the students must necessarily assign interdependent roles to

---

2. According to Bloom *et al.* (1956), these levels are: 1. Remembering; 2. Understanding; 3. Applying; 4. Analysing; 5. Evaluating; and 6. Creating.
3. Sequential, linear and systematic (Rosenberg, 1998: 548); these typologies are directly linked to the cognitive description of Arab reason by the Moroccan philosopher Muhammad ʿAbid al-Jābrī (1935-2010): *bayān* (demonstration), ʿ*irfān* (illumination), and *burhān* (deductive reasoning) (al-Jābrī, 2001).

the members of their group (the reader-recorder-verifier technique) or seek and complete the information that the teacher has previously distributed in a fragmented manner (the puzzle technique) (Benito and Cruz, 2011: 27). Any practical application of this methodology in the case of Contemporary Arab political thought and other MENA-related subjects would involve different techniques, such as historical commentary, social and economic contextualization and cooperative discourse analysis, either by assigning different roles by group/text/source or by giving random snippets of the text/source to members of each group. The role of the teacher in this collaborative methodology consists in the first place of explaining the group's learning objectives to the students very clearly. Secondly, the activities must be prepared according to the objectives specified (which could be a single topic, a concrete practical activity or the whole subject). The interdependence of the work groups must be guaranteed and defined by the teacher from the very beginning of the activity and should follow a clear set of criteria. The teacher is also responsible for monitoring and evaluating group activity in accordance with the abovementioned objectives. Even though the teacher's role as a planner and counselor is essential, students must participate with their instructor in resolving any doubts or problems that may arise during the learning activity.

Cooperative learning and the case method are fundamentally practical methods, as long as they integrate the acquisition of skills and attitudes and realize academic objectives (Escribano and Del Valle, 2008). They also possess an affective dimension (Ferreiro Prado, 2020: 20) and democratic component that is especially valuable in learning MENA politics in general terms and Arab political thought in particular (McNergney *et al.*, 1999). The case method is a form of cooperative learning, in which the active participation of students is encouraged through their interaction as subjects of their own learning process. Its distinction from other active methodologies such as problem-based learning (PBL) lies in the teacher's proposal of activities related to subject content, though groups must resolve the assigned case autonomously, preventing ant unequivocal or so-called "correct solution" (Moallem *et al.*, 2019):

> Because there are no "right answers" to case issues, both teachers and students are liberated from the tyranny of the right-answer syndrome. The instructor who creates classrooms conditions of psychological safety can extend people's thinking about matters critical to living in a democracy: understanding differences, choosing from alternatives, helping fellow students, stimulating ethical thinking and acting, learning about history and understanding the complexity of moral decisions, and testing beliefs and myths against the reality of life (McNergney *et al.*, 1999: 13-14).

This learning method is therefore basically autonomous and possesses a strong self-assessment component, since it is possible to detect and remain aware of group deficiencies and difficulties while observing obstacles encountered while solving proposed tasks. This may lead students to solve concrete problems and even continue

with their learning. The main techniques used according to this learning method relate to sharing and corroborating sources of information, analysis methods and consultation tools, so it implies learning methodologically and technically along with learning about the object itself. Having this ultimate goal in mind, the proposed case-method activity must be well planned, and its objectives clearly integrated not only in terms of both general objectives and syllabus competences but also in terms of the method's learning philosophy and active methodologies in general terms. Contrary to traditional learning, the case method proposes a kind of circular learning, in which the case to be analyzed is first presented and discussed and its learning requisites identified. This marks a turning point that finally leads to the problem's solution or to new problems to solve. The last phase utilizes an evaluation that concludes not so much with a solution to a problem as with the clarification and exposition of methodological difficulties in learning in order to be able to solve them later. As Zerrillo states: "Case teaching transports the educational experience from passive to active learners […]. The case setting, whether it is a class discussion or an assignment, demands that the students actively participate in solving a problem" (Zerrillo, 2021: 4-5).

Nevertheless, the case method includes more than a solution to a problem as in the PBL method; it also involves taking a stand on a given case developed from a real situation. Consequently, participants engage in a practical activity to try to extrapolate previously acquired knowledge (the conceptual dimension) about a specific scenario. After analyzing and rationally evaluating the available elements (necessarily limited in sources and time), the students should be able to take a stand and defend a critical position vis-à-vis the case (the analytical dimension). At the same time, students should be able to develop alternatives and synthesize their ideas, experiencing the consequences of their decisions in the first place (an ethical commitment), debating them in small groups, and presenting them to the full class (the synthetic dimension). This makes it one the most active and practical methods to be used in the classroom.

The proposed case must be a real case extracted from an equally real context that is directly linked to the theory and the conceptualization used in the learning content. This type of learning is especially suitable for practice in the Political Thought classroom generally and Contemporary Arab Thought classes particularly because it adds context, perspective and prospective analysis to a clearly problematized area. Perspective must be taken into account in the planning, development and evaluation of a case method activity.

Table 1.
Elements and methods in a CM activity

CM element	Case	Study question(s)	Debriefing	Follow-up
C-method	Theory/Praxis	Analysis	Discussion	Evaluation

Source: Author, based on Berbeco (2019).

In any case, according to Berbeco (2019) the case study involves four main elements:

— A case related to a concrete issue extracted from reality to which students should apply theoretical principles.
— Study question(s), in order to facilitate the students access to the analytical dimensions of the case.
— Debriefing, so students can debate and undertake small-group discussions, allowing active participation without leading to a predetermined solution.
— Follow-up, in different dimensions (such as individual or group), form(s) of self-perception and rubric(s).

Along with these four main elements, the use of new active teaching methods such as the CM must be accompanied by the use of diverse learning tools and resources. Active methodologies and use of teaching resources, some of which are detailed below, offer two common objectives. In one objective, they actively involve the student, transforming them from a mere passive spectator to an active evaluator and analyst; on the other, they find ways of presenting information that lies closer to a student's reality while maximizing procedures that transcend mere reading. Then, on the one hand, they attempt to approach the reality of political analysis through simulation and prospective analysis, a practicable part of the case method while, on the other hand, they attempt to bring the student closer to original sources and away from second-order materials such as textbooks.

Arabic media as a learning tool: questioning post-coloniality and ideology in the classroom

There are powerful reasons to subject Arab mass media to active methodologies as applied to the study of the Arab political context. In social terms, university students of MENA-related subjects have an open mind to this particular undertaking, which interprets social, economic, cultural and political facts through different political views. In pedagogical terms, the use of the media in the classroom entails changes in the role played by the teacher, as required by active learning methodologies such as the CM.

On the one hand, the Arab press can be an object of study itself, since it is important for students to know how to read the press in critical terms (political analysis). Furthermore, Arabic-language press uses its own lexical and iconographic code, so it can be used as a methodological resource to allow a first approach to the lexicon, the ideological and symbolic structures and the connotations of the Arab press and its *milieu*. Progressive knowledge acquired in the Arabic language should be essential to gain first-hand access to the Arab media and thus to political debates and ideas (Suleyman, 2003). Unraveling a press release, contrasting front pages, differentiating opinion and information in substance and form, sequencing sections, and analyzing pictures or rewriting a headline constitute some of the many activities that can be performed in the classroom to help students to decode the language of the press and critically analyze mainstream political discourse in Arab societies (political narrative).

On the other hand, the Arab media can be a very effective learning tool. In this sense, media discourse is not a closed text, so it may be used to contrast information issued by other sources, continuously raising historical dimensions and analyzing for concepts, ideas and silences. In the case of Arab countries, this is especially relevant, since there is a large number of government-funded media outlets, mainly newspapers, traditionally used for ideological and political purposes. Whether there is a marked ideological monism characterized by the implantation of a dominant ideology, or a concentration of political power in a charismatic personality surrounded by a network of interpersonal, family or patronage ties (Elias Hanna, 1993: 126-127). Media discourse and debates may help the students to enter political, social and economic arenas.

Obviously, the political situation has slightly changed in some contexts such as Tunisia in recent years (Owais, 2011). In general terms, the increasing presence of digital newspapers that escape state control and censorship and the common use of social networks have undoubtedly signified the social and political empowerment of Arab citizenship, as evidenced in the *techno-praxis* (Anderson, 2004) undertaken during the Arab revolts of 2011 and 2012. For these reasons, it is important, in order to achieve a certain degree of objectivity and usefulness in the classroom, to consider different ideologies, countries and languages, starting with the case of contemporary arab thought —in the Arabic language whenever possible. This linguistic element is not just a "devotional" or "exotic" performance in the classroom; it may be observed within the framework of postcolonial debates on identity and *coloniality* (Bennabi, 2016). These debates have "generally been approached in an essentialist way that reduces its discourses to a certain literate Islamic heritage [that] has confined the understanding of these discourses to an imminent, ahistorical tradition and has isolated them from other regional discourses" (Kassab, 2010: 11). From our perspective, this "post-anti-colonial critique" (Shohat, 1992; Kassab, 2010) is an essential foundation in the learning experience whenever the object of study is a post-colonial or "subaltern" subject whose "political expression" and identity is directly linked to the Arabic language (Suleyman, 2003). This core idea is stressed by the postcolonial Tunisian historian Hédi Timmoumi who, when considering his particular approach to subaltern studies, asks if it is possible to subvert colonial categories of knowledge (epistemology) using colonial tools (methodology) (Omri, 2020: 332). In his view, this query also applies to the Arabic language; therefore, it could be utilized as the first study questions addressed to students when planning a case method activity in terms of cross-cultural learning and critical thinking, as is the case.

THE CASE METHOD AND ARAB POLITICAL THOUGHT: A PRACTICAL TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Bearing in mind the main elements mentioned above, this part deals with the description of the practical development of a real case method or CM activity carried

out during the second semester of the academic year 2020-2021 in the Contemporary Arab Thought class (27911 Contemporary Arab Thought/Pensamiento Árabe Contemporáneo, OP, 6 ECTS)[4]. In this case, we analyze the academic and social context of the students, the theoretical concepts and methodological tools used in the activity, and the provisional results of the follow-up. One of the main categories in the curriculum of this course is the political and ideological emergency that characterizes the intellectual development of contemporary Arab thought throughout the 20th and 21st centuries. The emergence of the Arab State, on the one hand, and the building of new social and historical relationships between post-colonial Arab societies and the Arab State, on the other hand, are thus the epistemological framework in which political concepts as "democracy" (*al-dīmuqrāṭiyya*), "civil society" (*al-mujtamaʿ al-madanī*), or "human rights" (*ḥuqūq al-insān*) are studied. This conceptual approach allows students to understand the ideological development of contemporary mainstream political ideologies in Arab countries such as Arab Nationalism, Arab Socialism, Pan-Arabism, Marxism, political Islam and other Islamic-related ideologies, Liberalism(s), and so forth (Abu-Rabi', 2004: 63-92). In general terms, this course tries to fill a very important gap in the study of contemporary Arab societies, both in cultural and political terms, and contributes to the enhancement of inter-cultural critiques and ability in self-reflection among students.

That said, the course is designed for fourth-year students as an optional course in order to strengthen theoretical insights and methodological capacities acquired in the mandatory courses of the undergraduate degree (BA) program in Arabic and Islamic Studies at the University of Granada. Therefore, we may well assume that there is a personal motivation in the choice of this particular subject by students in their final year. Along with that, the number of students is still very low, so every year the class generally consists of a small group made up of eight to twelve students. This low enrollment level is usually perceived by the students as a very good opportunity to take advantage of the learning situation, as long as the teacher-student relationship is more direct than in other overrated university courses. The learning activities should also take this low enrollment into account as an opportunity for students to develop individual skills through group activities, debates and cooperative learning. In the case of this particular CM activity, four female students took part in the three different phases of the case study in two class sessions held on May 31st and June 2nd, 2021, in addition to independent research work, reflection and small-group debate during the previous week. All of them signed an individual consent form accepting the conditions of this activity and the subsequent academic research.

In the 2020-2021 cohort, a number of the students enrolled in the course had "personal interest" in the subject. All of them were interested in the contents, but also wanted to "go beyond" the concrete political history of contemporary Arab world in

---

4. See the course's summary in: https://grados.ugr.es/sites/grados/default/public/guias-firmadas/2021-2022/27911E1.pdf (October 2021)

order to "get involved" in the ideas that allowed political change to happen in the Arab context, according to their final briefing for the case method activity. Indeed, 50 % of the students were "heritage learners" (G-HLL)[5] (ElHawari, 2020), mostly Spaniards of Arab descent (specifically, in this case, Moroccan) who studied Arabic and Arab Studies as part of a personal process involving the cultivation of knowledge, family culture, abilities and identity. These students contribute largely to the enhancement of the conceptual approach and to the debates on given subjects from different cultural and ideological perspectives, mainly by leading cooperative learning activities with fellow students. They also play a very important role in enhancing the linguistic abilities of their classmates in the Arabic language.

TABLE 2.
STUDENTS PARTICIPATING IN THE CM ACTIVITY

Cohort 2020-2021	Type	Gender	Enrollment	Academic background
2	G-HLL (Arabic)	F	Ordinary	Arabic and Islamic Studies
2	No HLL	F	Ordinary	Arabic and Islamic Studies

Source: Own elaboration based on ElHawari (2020).

The case: the shutdown of al-Ḥayāt in 2020

Designing a CM activity in this context necessarily involves a multidisciplinary approach. The selection of the case for this activity was based on the interest of current hot Arab political issues. Furthermore, the case's echoes are directly linked to some of the main characteristics and conditions of contemporary Arab political thought, such as the dialectics and tensions between tradition and modernity; idealism and pragmatism; cultural identity and westernization; technology and ethics; economy and politics; particularism and universalism; capitalism and human rights, and so forth. In this sense, this particular case allows students to put their previous knowledge of contemporary Arab political thought into practice.

At the time, the final shutdown of such a prestigious pan-Arab Arabic newspaper as *al-Ḥayāt* in March 2020 (al-Majhadānī, 2014: 92) appeared as a clear learning opportunity to put the interdisciplinary case method approach into practice. In order

---

5. Heritage Language Learners (HLL) are described as those who study a "heritage language", in this case Arabic language and its culture. According to ElHawari, "a heritage language is a language of people that belongs to the past: the near or far past. This language is no longer the present dominant language at the place where the individual, in this case the HLL, lives" (ElHawari, 2020: 3). The HLLs of Arabic language are divided into G-HLL (Geographical HLL), whose family comes from an Arabic speaking country and uses an Arabic dialect, and M-HLL (Muslim HLL), whose family comes from an environment where Arabic is a common language, as in many Muslim-majority countries in Africa and Asia (*ibid.*: 74-75).

to engage the students, it was essential to present the case in a clear way, stressing the core elements of the case from the beginning, including strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities. To do this, the teacher s introduced the case during the first session, dividing it into a deductive structure as follows: background; description; analysis; and conclusion.

a) Background

The press in the Arab world has been a fundamental vehicle for cultural, linguistic, political and ideological expression of modernity. Its origins can be traced back to the first modern newspapers issued in Syria, Lebanon or Egypt during the mid-19th century. All of them were somehow linked to the region's Ottoman and European intelligentsia, developing in parallel to Arab societies as principal actors of contemporaneity in the convulsive context of colonization, the independence processes and various post-colonialities. For this reason, the majority of Arab national newspapers accompanied and championed different nationalist political liberation projects, some of them becoming the official bulletins of authoritarian states while others raised a critical awareness among citizens embracing diverse ideologies from liberalism to Marxism, while passing by pan-Arabism or political Islam. The Arab press projected a special identity in the field of language and culture, becoming the almost exclusive supporter of modern standard Arabic (MSA), first called *lughat al-jarā'id* (the language of the newspapers), and thus demarcating one of the main boundaries between the diversity of Arab societies "from the [Persian] Gulf to the [Atlantic] Ocean". Since the mid-twentieth century, this projection would also be present among the Arab diasporas of Europe and the Americas *(mahjar)*, a context in which new cultural and identity awarenesses of Arabic expression would arise and re-emerge.

b) Description

The newspaper *al-Ḥayāt* (meaning "life" in Arabic) was founded in Beirut in 1946 (first number issued 01/28/1946), just after the proclamation of the Lebanese National Pact (1943). In a very short period, it became one of the most important daily newspapers in the country and the region, attracting many prestigious intellectuals and journalists from Lebanon and other Arab countries. These intellectuals and writers found in its pages a space to propose ideas and expose diverse points of view in a complex scenario such as the national construction of the post-colonial state, in which political ideologies fought for hegemony. From the beginning, the founder of the newspaper, Mr. Kamel Muruwwa (1915-1966), wanted to convert *al-Ḥayāt* into a space of intellectual freedom and critical thought in direct opposition to the authoritarian regimes that already in the 50s and 60s were about to be established in the Middle East, such as the Ba'athist regime in Syria and the Nasserist in Egypt. For the same purpose, Muruwwa founded the Anglophone "sibling" newspaper *The Daily Star* in 1952. Given the difficulties of containing ideological

polarization in the Middle East at that time, *al-Ḥayāt* was an exception in the media spotlight, admired by some and hated by others. In 1988, after Muruwwa's assassination in 1966 and the end of material difficulties during the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990), the founder's heirs sold the newspaper to the Saudi capital investors of Prince Khaled bin Sultan al-Sa'ud (b. 1945). The Saudi Prince relaunched the newspaper by reinforcing its international dimension in the wake of the "off-shore" model that other Arab newspapers that had begun to adopt since the end of the 1970s and the 80s, such as *al-Quds al-'Arabī* (1989) and especially *al-Sharq al-Awsaṭ* (1978), both published in London. To this end, *al-Ḥayāt* moved its headquarters to London and established editorial offices in Riyadh, Jeddah, Beirut, Cairo, Amman, Baghdad and Dubai, in addition to Paris and New York, becoming one of the most important international newspapers worldwide and the most influential pan-Arab newspaper, distributed and read throughout the Arab world and beyond. Until the second decade of the 21st century, its print run was estimated at around 150,000-200,000 copies, placing it as the second largest Arabic publishing distribution group after *al-Sharq al-Awsaṭ*.

FIGURE 1.

FORMER *AL-ḤAYĀT* HEADER WITH THE ARABIC MOTTO, "LIFE IS BELIEF AND EFFORT (*JIHĀD*)"

إن الحياة عقيدة وجهاد

Source: Al-Ḥayāt (2020)/public domain.

c) Analysis

In the case presentation, strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities are stressed as the main parameters for students to analyze. Beyond the economic and political complexities of the late twentieth century, *al-Ḥayāt* was able to maintain the liberal principles that had led it to be considered an intellectual reference throughout the Arab world, taking into account the writers who signed opinion articles from the most diverse ideological trends and critical perspectives. However, since the 1990s, pieces of news on Saudi Arabia and the West tended not to be excessively scathing. Even so, *al-Ḥayāt* was banned in Saudi Arabia on several occasions. The historical continuity of a medium like *al-Ḥayāt* seemed to be one of its

major *strengths*, along with the editorial prestige of a newspaper that had become a broad and recognizable intellectual forum. These two strengths were added to a third: Saudi capital made *al-Ḥayāt* a business project solidly backed by one of the most stable and growing economies on the planet. The *weaknesses* of a communication giant such as the publishing company Dār al-Ḥayāt began to grow evident with the emergence of new communication technologies and their application to the news media. As with most paper-based press media, the growth of digital media posed one of the greatest *threats* to pan-Arab newspaper in terms of competitiveness and informational immediacy and highlighted the economic weakness of traditional media compared to new generation digital media in terms of staff, offices, media, printing, distribution and sales. Another important threat was the progressive ideological polarization and the difficult role of Saudi Arabia in a context less and less prone to intellectual debate in the Arab world and internationally since 2001. However, *al-Ḥayāt* wanted to make clear the *opportunities* to compete in this new context by launching an online version of the newspaper in 2002, and also a local Saudi edition more focused on regional issues. These movements were also perceived as new opportunities to reinforce *al-Ḥayāt's* character as an opinion leader in terms of critical participation and intellectual plurality.

d) Conclusion

The pan-Arab daily newspaper *al-Ḥayāt* closed its historic office in Beirut in January 2018, firing around 100 employees for financial reasons. Later that same year, the offices in Cairo, Dubai and London were closed as well. In June 2018, the last edited number of the newspaper was issued on paper, maintaining the online version and a downloadable pdf edition (as happened in February 2020 with *The Daily Star*). In March 2020, at the beginning of the global pandemic of COVID-19, the newspaper announced the definitive closure of the media outlet.

Once the case was presented in these terms, the students are able to understand the importance of the case and to design different approaches to the study questions and their debate. To do so, they have to face the presented parameters of analysis by going further into the context and the ideological and political complexities of the contemporary Arab world.

Design and study questions

The design and the structure of the activity based on the CM follows a progressive deductive structure that facilitates the learning process in terms of not only knowledge but also self-awareness of the students' abilities and personal skills (Benito and Cruz, 2011). After setting the objectives of the case, actions such as communication (individual and/or group), observation and dialogue take part in the ultimate identification of achievements and problems in order to provide

solutions. The CM is not merely a way of acquiring new knowledge on a given subject, but rather a way of establishing a positive and self-aware attitude towards learning. These are the foundations of the proposed activity. Bearing this in mind, the activity was presented following this structure:

Graphic 2.
CM activity structure
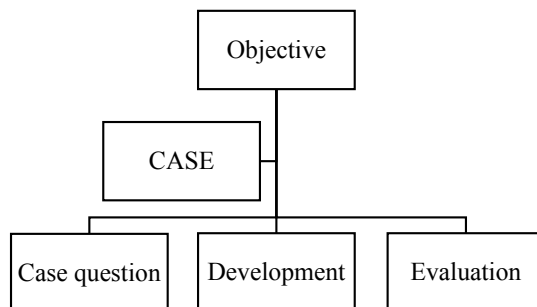
Source: Own elaboration.

1. Objective: To answer the case question and propose horizons and alternatives.
2. Case question: What does the closure of *al-Ḥayāt* imply in ideological and political terms? In any case, giving the nature of this activity, the fact that there is no such thing as a "right answer" or "correct solution" to the case question was very much stressed in the presentation. This perspective allows freedom in critical thinking and helps teachers to facilitate the exchange of perspectives and ideas among students.
3. Evaluation: The follow-up was based on a "intellectual autobiography", the fulfillment of an individual diary and a final questionnaire (self-assessment-co-assessment) related to an evaluation rubric.
4. Development: 2 class sessions of 2 hours each. These sessions were held on May the 31st and June the 2nd, 2021. These two sessions were preceded by both the individual independent work and the small-group debates prior to the final debate in class (debriefing). This debate decisively put the analysis and conclusions in context and led to a final resolution of the case question. To prepare the debriefing, the debate was recorded by the teacher with the individual permission of the students.

Table 3.
CM activity design and structure

Work Type	Contents	Phase
Individual	Reading of the basic materials and case study	I
	Case presentation	

Work Type	Contents	Phase
Individual / group	Start. Reflect individually and subject the answer to specific questions (small group): 1. What is the relationship between ideology, politics, history and the market? 2. At what point is a divergent drift established in the editorial/ intellectual/business project? 3. Are there determining elements of the contemporary Arab context in this case? 4. Is it possible to include such concepts as "democracy", "power", "liberalism", "secularism", "nationalism", "capitalism", "identity" and "culture" in the case analysis? 5. What are the possible effects in the medium-to-long term?	I
	Developing. Analysis of text materials, discussion and assessment of alternatives. Decision making (small group)	II
	Presentation of results: exposition and argumentation of decisions (large group)	III
Debriefing	Closure	III

Source: Own elaboration, based on Benito and Cruz (2011).

Along with the case presentation (analytic dimension), a basic set of bibliographic materials was given to the students. Among them, there were two main sources (Ayalon, 1995; al-Majhadānī, 2014), mainly dealing with the relationship between Arab media and society from historical and social perspective. Other complementary materials were made up of different references, from the general open sources about *al-Ḥayāt*, including Wikipedia[6] news on the closure and difficulties of the newspaper in different periods and languages, mainly English and Arabic (Abu-Fadil; Abū Rizq; *al-Akhbār*; and *Middle East Eye*)[7]. All these materials contain basic information about the newspaper and also public journalistic information issued in the Middle East that could give the students a hint of inner-Arab perceptions on the social, political and economic process leading to the final shutdown of *al-Ḥayāt*. These materials were also

---

6. General information about *al-Ḥayāt* is available at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Hayat (English); https://ar.wikipedia.org/wiki/(جريدة)_الحياة (Arabic) (May 2021).

7. See Abu-Fadil, Magda. 2018. "Al Hayat daily adrift in a sea of Media sharks", *Arab Media & Society*, (15/08). Available at: https://cutt.ly/uNGDvBm (Retrieved: 02/09/2022); Abū Rizq, Muḥammad. 2019. "Man a'dama *al-Ḥayāt* al-sa'ūdiyya? Taḥqīq li-l-Khalīj Online yakshif al-mustawir", *al-Khalīj Online*, (20/09). Available at: https://alkhaleejonline.net/ثقافة-وفن/من-أعدم-الحياة-السعودية؟-تحقيق-لـالخليج-أونلاين-يكشف-المستور; (Retrieved: 02/09/2022); *Al-Akhbār*. 2017. "Jamāl Khāshuqjī khārij *al-Ḥayāt*", (01/12). Available at: https://al-akhbar.com/Media_Tv/242012 (Retrieved: 02/09/2022); and *Middle East Eye*. 2020. "Pan-Arab newspaper al-Hayat officially closes after decades of journalism", (04/03). Available at: https://cutt.ly/nNGDPQl (Retrieved: 02/09/2022).

important to answer the study questions and to construct arguments for the final reso-lution of the case question.

Debriefing

The debriefing in any case method activity constitutes one of its core elements and represents its synthetic dimension. The debriefing should allow students to debate and perform small-group discussions, stimulating active participation without leading to a given solution. In this case, a debriefing was developed during the second and third phases of the planned activity. The class (large group) divided into two small discussion groups, so there were two two-student groups (A and B). The small number of students offered an advantage in terms of not only organiza-tion but also emotional dealing, as long as the students already knew each other and, to a certain extent, were familiar with the personalities and personal abilities of their classmates.

After studying the case and reading the bibliography, the students engaged in an initial period of discussion in small groups. These discussions took place outside the classroom and academic hours, without the presence of the teacher and the rest of the students. Nevertheless, this small-group discussion was vitally important; the one hand, to finding a proper answer to the study questions and, on the other, to prepare for the final classroom debate and debriefing. Responsibility and accountability are essential to the learning process during this phase, although no written record is required, the better to enhance the self-awareness of students during the learning process. To some extent, they were as well aware of the importance of the process as they were the importance of the learning content and concepts. The idea of asking questions in the context of contemporary Arab thought class rather than looking for a correct solution received special stress.

In the final discussion in the classroom, each small group subjected their argu-ments and partial answers to the study questions, adding arguments to supplement their answers to them. Some of the ideas that came out in this debate, held on 2 June 2021, can be related as follows[8]:

> In the process towards the final shutdown, the market is essential, as long as we are dealing here with a society with important economic benefits. We see a progressive collapse in this sense. This collapse is evident in the firing of employees and the closing of international offices around the world and is related to the growing importance of the online journalism (Small group A).
>
> Capitalism would be an economic framework that strengthens the political structures of authoritarian regimes, as it is in the case of Saudi Arabia. It may lead to political weakness in contexts of financial crisis. Nevertheless, we do not see it as

---

8. The debate was recorded with the consent of the students.

the most determinant element in this case, apart from the above. It is more about political decision-making based on political interests, using different means (Small group B).

Thus, the students did not see capitalist economy and new technologies as the ultimate cause of the closure of such an important international newspaper. There are other reasons, the students argued, relevant to the historical and political situation of the Arab world, whose particular condition in terms of politics relates to authoritarianism:

> On the one hand, it is about building a space for pan-Arab intellectual debate that overcame the regional political particularities (ideology); on the other hand, the Saudi political interests are progressively mining this space, whose main turning points are the Lebanese Civil War [1975-1990], and the appointment of Prince Muhammad Bin Salman as Saudi crown prince [2017] (history). To some extent, the digitalization process contributed to enlarging the democratic options in the Arab world, and perhaps this has been seen as a threat by Saudi interests, as the case of Jamal Khashoggi would demonstrate (Small group A).

Regarding the specificities of the Arab context, the debate led to a rather significant argument:

> We have not seen any sign of Arab specificities: authoritarianism is not specifically Arab, and there are other similar examples in Asia or Latin America. We conclude that Arab culture or Islamic religion, in general terms, do not play a significant role in this case. It is about political authoritarianism and economic interests, as in other contexts (Small group A).

> The relationship between Saudi Arabia and the West is more important than a mere inter-Arab reading in this case, since the former relevant Arab actors (as it used to be Lebanon in cultural and political terms in the past) are not relevant now, not anymore (Small group B).

Nevertheless, political concepts can be used to bind different arguments such as absence of democracy and resistance (case of Jamal Khashoggi), capitalism and authoritarianism, and panarabism and nationalism:

> The power and international influence of Saudi Arabia did manage to erase any kind of responsibility. It is impunity that allows Saudi Arabia to put an end to a significant witness of the intellectual history of the Arab world, and as critical forum for its political thought as *al-Ḥayāt* was. This impunity is based on fear of the people. Democratic information could eventually lead to rebellions and revolutions as happened in the past (from Nasserism to the Arab Spring). Capitalism contributes to reinforce this impunity because of the economic and geo-strategic alliances for which lack of freedom is a price to pay (Small group B).

In a second phase, Saudi nationalism (which is one of the strongest ideological representations of the Arab state) tries to develop a new international image. Independent journalists like Jamal Khashoggi, who was fired from *al-Ḥayāt*, was an obstacle to building this positive image, as he was denouncing the lack of freedom and the repression of the Saudi regime towards critical journalists in the country […]. He was killed for that later on. They [the Saudis] put an end to this unique critical space represented historically by *al-Ḥayāt* in terms of plurality and independence. Arab intellectuals somehow lose their voices in this international perspective, and the Arab street loses its plurality. It is a critical loss in terms of democratic space and pluralistic representations of the Arab world, whose consequences eventually reach us all (Small group A).

This final assertion does demonstrate how the CM activity contributes to obtaining a personal perspective of a learning object. It is also important to point out that the study questions were especially relevant to proposing an answer to the case question beyond the diversity of the arguments stressed by the small groups.

Follow-up

Within the framework of the EHEA, academic follow-up is defined as "the process of communication between teacher and students where the former provides the feedback to allow the students to develop their individual skills and knowledge" (Benito and Cruz, 2011: 67). The affective dimension adds value to this academic task as long as the teacher must personally accompany students during their learning process. In this context, it is not merely a task of tutoring, but rather, on a broader plane, fostering an attitude of active listening and dialogue with the students and their possible doubts or learning problems. Thus, the follow-up must point out the academic, ethical and social responsibilities of the students, especially when dealing with a highly sensitive issue such as Arab political thought and its relationship with its society. It is a progressive process in which, after setting the case objectives, activities such as studying and debating (individual and group), observation and dialogue contribute to the ultimate identification of achievements and problems in order to provide solutions. The CM does not merely offer a way of evaluating knowledge of the subject but rather a way of establishing a positive climate for learning and affirming a mutual commitment of responsibility between teacher and student.

In this case, the follow-up tried to focus this affective dimension towards the learning process through the development of diverse tools for the proposed activity. The first one was an "intellectual autobiography" in which students tracked their own path in ideological and intellectual terms, stressing the obstacles but also their personal progress. The other tools used in follow-up were the individual activity diary, with both academic and mainly emotional content, and the fulfillment of a final questionnaire (self-assessment) related to an evaluation rubric.

a) The intellectual autobiography

The idea of writing an intellectual autobiography is based on the linguistic approach of the "linguistic autobiography" in which a given number of individuals review their trajectory regarding their languages and add their personal point of view towards them (Otxandorena Satrustegi, 2019; Idiazabal Gorrotxategi and Dolz Mestre, 2013). The purpose of an intellectual autobiography is similar, however, it analyses the main ideas, values, ideologies and thoughts related to their individual intellectual progress in both academic and personal terms, adding comments on the value of these ideas and the knowledge supporting them, or on the possibility of change. This autobiography should be written by students after the CM activity ends and should respond in general terms to the following guiding questions:

> What are my values and intellectual principles? Where do they come from? How have they manifested themselves in this course? And in this particular activity? Have they been confirmed/refuted/changed or shaken? How do I critically position myself before the Arab reality? And before my immediate reality? Is there any relationship? On what do I base my analysis? How do I forge my ideas? Would they be different within the Arab context? Have I learned anything from that context for my reality?

These questions should be answered regarding the experience of the CM activity and the Contemporary Arab thought course, eg.:

> I have never stopped to think about my values or principles to place them in one ideology or another, although it is true that they are part of my thinking and influence my decisions and points of view. My values come from my experiences, education and family […]. As I see it in Spain, or in the Arab world after taking this course, people seek through different forms [ideologies] to live well and live in a fair system. The ways to achieve that welfare status for each ideology are different and even the objectives may vary from one to another […]. I think my way of thinking has not changed but my knowledge has […]. Before the course, the information I had to "judge" events in the Arab world depended on the media, but now I feel I have enough resources to analyze the Arab reality from different points of view (Student 1).
>
> Personally, I am shocked because having a Moroccan culture and having been born and lived here in Andalusia, I feel I am part of both the Arab culture and the West. Sometimes I have found similarities, but also great differences, especially in terms of social values and thinking. Since I started this degree and this course, I feel that this experience has put a little piece in the person I have become today […]. In short, I wanted to go beyond the surface in terms of knowledge of the Arab world, somehow to find myself and fight for what I want to be (Student 2).
>
> In general terms, I have questioned the emergence of several concepts and ideas throughout the activity, such as power and capitalism. From my point of view this is one of the key concepts, usually linked to the authoritarian regimes in the Arab world, but also in the rest of the world. Neoliberalism also plays a central role in our society, as in the Arab world. The study of this case has showed me how the authoritarian

powers of the Arab world are happy with the capitalist system, a fact that is also a reproduction of the Western balance of power, which I am radically against (Student 3).

b) Individual diary

The individual diary was also used to collect academic information regarding the tracking of the different phases of student activity, as well as to collect information about feelings and attitudes. As Badia states, "we need to get involved into emotions in education and learning because of three reasons". Emotions are an essential part of the daily academic life; they are related to cognition and take part in the emotional reactions to values, attitudes and beliefs; and they are related to social and cultural influences (Badia, 2014: 62). This said, the proposed structure of the individual diary tried to link both academic content along with derived feelings and changing attitudes towards the activity throughout its whole learning process.

Table 4.
Individual diary design and structure

Phase	Date	Work	Knowledge	Difficulties	Feelings	Attitude
0						
I						
II						
III						

Source: Own elaboration.

The collected information proved to be very interesting for both parties and demonstrated the importance of actually involving feelings in academic work, not only to develop new capacities but also to develop new learning approaches for our students.

Here are some examples extracted from different diaries:

> INDIVIDUAL DIARY 1
> Phase 0
> Date: 31/05/2021
> Work: presentation of the case, information and guidelines to follow.
> Knowledge: I did not know the shutdown of the newspaper before the presentation. I knew the name of the newspaper from a prior practice performed in this same course a month earlier.
> Difficulties: There were no big difficulties. I understood the case and the reflection that we had to do about it.
> Feelings: I felt encouraged regarding the presentation. It seemed interesting to look for the actual reasons for the shutdown of the newspaper.
> Attitude: I was looking forward to working on the case and finding an answer for the case question.

INDIVIDUAL DIARY 2
Phase I
Date: 31/05/2021
Work: Individual reflection.
Knowledge: Looked for [the] complementary bibliography and read the material.
New ideas came to my mind, and [I] wrote them to share them in the small-group
discussion.
Difficulties: The articles in Arabic were easy to read. I experience some difficulties
in understanding some concepts.
Feelings: I was worried about the linguistic level of the articles in Arabic, but I felt
good when I could read them.
Attitude: Open to learning more and ready to analyze the collected data.

INDIVIDUAL DIARY 3
Phase II
Date: 01/06/2021
Work: Small-group discussion.
Knowledge: I learn new aspects regarding the case. The discussion brings new
approaches, especially related to the relationship between ideology and power.
Concepts of capitalism, socialism and secularism came out.
Difficulties: Difficulties to understand some concrete aspects that came out, like
the role of Hamas in Syria, and to reach a clear idea on the direct ideological and
political causes for the shutdown.
Feelings: I feel good when discussing some ideas with my partner, as I can express
my ideas and understand other points of view. I feel interested in sharing and
contrasting my own ideas.
Attitude: Attraction for the research.

INDIVIDUAL DIARY 4
Phase III
Date: 02/06/2021
Work: Large-group discussion. Final results.
Knowledge: There was a coincidence in the presentation of the final results. We
reached the same basic conclusions and opened to new aspects of the case.
Difficulties: I found no difficulties in presenting the results, but some of the ideas
were still weak.
Feelings: I feel confident in the final results as we have been working the case in deep.
Attitude: Positive attitude towards my presentation and ready to listen to the other
group and their conclusions.

After collecting this information, the analysis of the diaries proves that a close rela-
tionship exists between feelings and attitudes in the development of the activity's
different phases. The students seemed to grow more and more confident in themselves
throughout the working process and to appreciate the new abilities they had devel-
oped during the activity.

c) The final questionnaire

The final questionnaire involved the last follow-up method used in the present activity. It was designed as a self-assessment method related to the evaluation rubrics. Following the spirit of the whole CM activity, the final questionnaire was designed and developed by using a very simple tool: in this case, Google Forms, due to its accessibility and simplicity, and to the institutional access provided by the University of Granada through Google GSuite UGR. The questionnaire, entitled "Final Evaluation Questionnaire: Case Method *(al-Ḥayāt)*", was sent to the students by email. The questionnaire was divided into three main sections: 1) General questions; 2) Individual and collaborative work; and 3) Techniques and knowledge.

1. Regarding the general questions, the results of the questionnaire show that 100 % of the students find the case (the shutdown of *al-Ḥayāt*) relevant in relation to the general contents of the Contemporary Arab Thought course. The same percentage (100 %) agree with considering the presentation, objectives, proposed tasks and materials as adequate for the activity.

2. Regarding the individual and collective work, 100 % of the students surveyed perceive their role in the activity as "active" and consider their work as "good" (being "very good" was also an option). Of these student responses, 66.7 % consider their responsibility in the activity as a "shared responsibility", compared to 33.3 % who consider their responsibility in terms of "leadership". The same percentage, 66.7 %, are satisfied with the final resolution of the case question, considering it as a "possible solution" among others; the other 33.3 % consider their solution as "the correct one". Again, 66.7 % affirm that have learned "a lot" from their classmates, while 33.3 % learned "something" from them. It is also interesting to see that 66.7 % find the work of their classmates "very good", while 33.3 % found it "good".

Graphic 3.
Responses to the questionnaire. Assessment of own work in the activity (%)

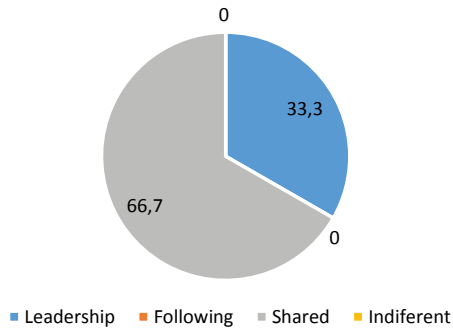In general terms, how would you rate your work in this activity?

0 0 0

100

■ Very good   ■ Good   ■ Not good   ■ I don't know

Source: Own elaboration based on responses to the questionnaire.

GRAPHIC 4.

RESPONSES TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE. ASSESSMENT OF OWN RESPONSIBILITY IN THE ACTIVITY (%)

What do you consider your responsibility during the activity?
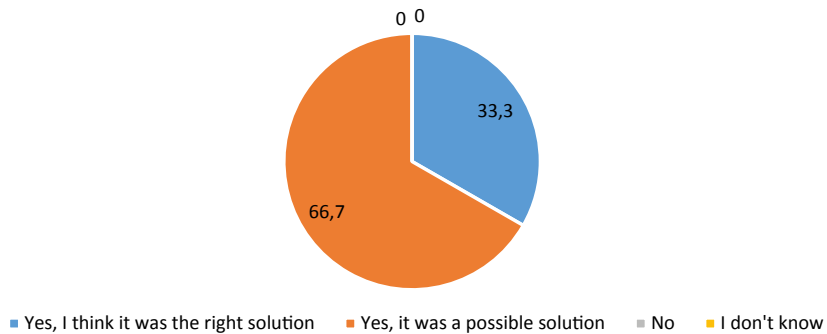

Source: Own elaboration based on responses to the questionnaire.

GRAPHIC 5.

RESPONSES TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE. SATISFACTION WITH THE RESOLUTION OF THE CASE (%)

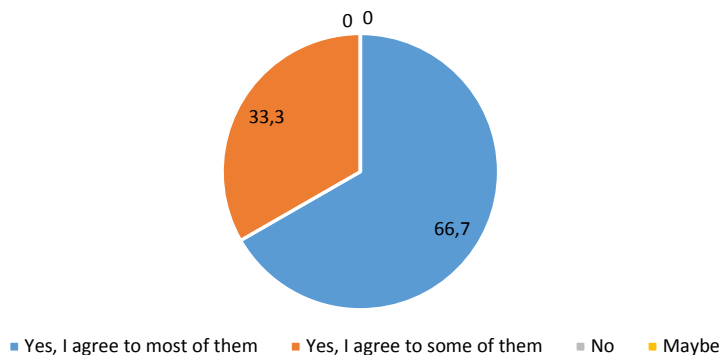### Are you satisfied with your proposed resolution of the case?

Source: Own elaboration based on responses to the questionnaire.

GRAPHIC 6.
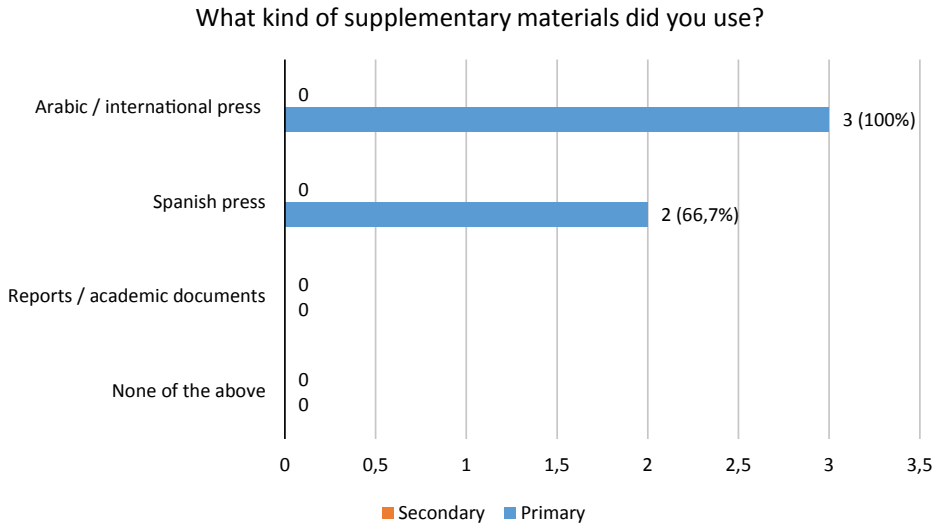RESPONSES TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE. ASSESSMENT OF CLASSMATES' PROPOSED SOLUTIONS (%)

Have you found your classmates' proposed solutions convincing?

- Yes, I agree to most of them   ■ Yes, I agree to some of them   ■ No   ■ Maybe

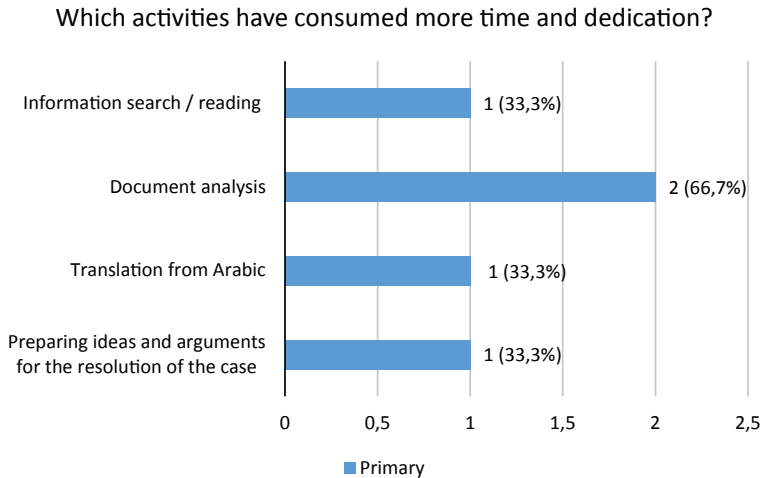*Source:* Own elaboration based on responses to the questionnaire.

Finally, in terms of techniques and knowledge, 100 % of the students affirm that they have consulted the complementary bibliography in order to delve deeper into the knowledge about the case. All of them (100 %) have searched for pieces of news in Arabic, with another 33.3 % doing so in Spanish and other languages as well. The activities that took more time and dedication, according to the students, were analyzing the documents (66.7 %), searching for information and reading (33.3 %), translating from Arabic (33.3 %), and preparing ideas and arguments for the final resolution and debriefing (33.3 %). A majority of the students (66.7 %) perceive that their opinion changed "substantially" after studying this case, and that they now possess better technical ability to undertake political analyses of the contemporary Arab world. In contrast, a 33.3 % affirm that their opinions changed "slightly" and that they now "may have" a greater ability to do political analysis. Finally, all of them (100 %) agree that they know "a little better" the political and ideological context of the Arab world, and that working on this case has helped them "slightly" to assimilate the content of the course. Whenever possible, all of them (100 %) would recommend the case method as a learning methodology in this or other courses related to contemporary Arab world.

GRAPHIC 7.
SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS USED (%)

What kind of supplementary materials did you use?

Source: Own elaboration based on responses to the questionnaire.

GRAPHIC 8.
TIME DEVOTED TO THE VARIOUS TASKS (%)

### Which activities have consumed more time and dedication?

Source: Own elaboration based on responses to the questionnaire.

GRAPHIC 9.
PROBABILITY OF RECOMMENDING THE ACTIVITY (%)

Would you recommend using the case method as a learning method in this or other subjects on the contemporary Arab world?

0 0 0

100

■ Yes, whenever possible   ■ Yes, ocassionally   ■ No, never   ■ I don't know
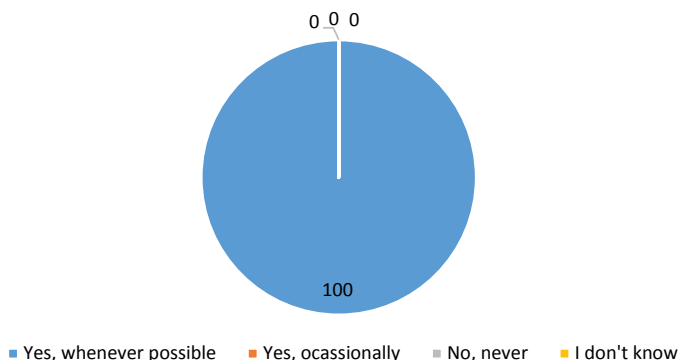
Source: Own elaboration based on responses to the questionnaire.

CONCLUSION

After developing a real case method or CM activity in the classroom of Contemporary Arab Thought specifically related to contemporary political thought, we may well conclude that there are many reasons to adopt new learning methodologies as part of the teaching-learning process. Above all, the CM and its new learning methodologies contribute to realizing the general competences of this particular subject, such as the development of reflective attitudes and a critical spirit, as well as the appreciation of cross-cultural interconnection, curiosity and an open attitude towards other cultures, ideas and paradigms. Some of the elements related to the design and development of this CM activity are directly linked to these competences, as they use critical thinking and self-awareness as part of the learning process.

In the case of contemporary Arab political thought, this critical approach to the learning process through the use of the CM in the classroom contributes to the generation of new ideas and thoughts in a dynamic learning environment in which the students are the main actors. The results of the activity's follow-up show that the self-awareness of this role by students allow them to get involved more deeply in the content of the course and to commit personally to the learning process, enhancing their capacities to reach the general competences of the course. In this sense, questioning post-colonialities in the historical and political context of the Arab world should lead, through the performance of new learning methodologies such as the CM, to the questioning of the self, also in terms of feelings and attitudes.

Thus, this CM activity shows the great potential and possibilities of active methodologies, even in a micro level (thus very limited in terms of time, students and

academic infrastructures). The limitations are also evident, especially regarding the lack of epistemic traditions in some academic areas to perform such activities, and also the tightness of the academic calendars and contents, along with the students' concerns about the results of the final quantitative evaluation.

Finally, giving priority to the active subject (students) over the passive object (contents), as well as the praxis (through the synthetic dimension) over the traditional teaching process, contributes to social transformation and critical knowledge as important dimensions of the university learning process. This may eventually lead, in this case, to fighting islamophobia, racism, xenophobia and other forms of inequality and injustice.

References

Abu-Rabiʻ, Ibrahim M. 2004. *Contemporary Arab Thought: Studies in Post-1967 Arab Intellectual History*. London: Pluto Press.

Anderson, Jon W. 2004. "Vers une 'thechno-practique' d'Internet dans le monde arabe", *Maghreb-Machrek*, 178: 45-58.

Ayalon, Ami. 1995. *The Press in the Arab Middle East*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195087802.001.0001.

Badia, Antoni. 2014. "Emociones y sentimientos del profesorado en la enseñanza y formación docente", in Carles Monereo (ed.), *Enseñando a enseñar en la Universidad. La formación del profesorado basada en incidentes críticos*. Barcelona: Octaedro-UB.

Benito, Águeda and Ana Cruz. 2011. Nuevas claves para la docencia universitaria. Madrid: Narcea.

Bennabi, Malek. 2016. *Al-Ṣirāʾ al-fikrī fī l-bilād al-mustaʾmara* [12th ed.]. Damascus; Beirut: Afāq maʻarifa mutajaddida.

Berbeco, Stephen. 2019. *Case Method and the Arabic Teacher. A practical guide*. London: Lehigh University Press.

Bloom, Benjamin S., Max D. Engelhard, Edward J. Furst, Walker H. Hill and David R. Krathwohl. 1956. *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: The Classification of Educational Goals. Vol. I: Cognitive domain*. New York: McKay.

Dabashi, Hamid. 2012. *The Arab Spring: The End of Postcolonialism*. New York: Zed Books. Available at: https://doi.org/10.5040/9781350222946.

De Miguel Díaz, Mario. 2005. *Modalidades de enseñanza centradas en el desarrollo de competencias. Orientaciones para promover el cambio metodológico en el espacio europeo de educación superior*. Oviedo: Universidad de Oviedo.

Díaz Sanz, Marina and Lucía Ferreiro Prado. 2021. "Orientalism is Not My Opinion: Decolonial teaching and the problem of credibility in IR courses with a MENA focus", *Politics*. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/02633957211009068.

ElHawari, Rasha. 2020. *Teaching Arabic as a Heritage Language*. London: Routledge. Available at: https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351014670.

Elias Hanna, Elias. 1993. *La presse arabe*. Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose.

Escribano, Alicia and Ángela del Valle (eds). 2008. *El aprendizaje basado en problemas: una propuesta metodológica en educación superior*. Madrid: Narcea.

Esteve Mon, Francesc M. and Mercé Gisbert Cervera. 2011. "El Nuevo paradigma de aprendizaje y nuevas tecnologías", *Revista de Docencia Universitaria*, 9 (3): 55-73. Available at: https://doi.org/10.4995/redu.2011.6149.

Fernsten, Linda and Jeffrey Fernsten. 2005. "Portfolio assessment and reflection: Enhancing learning through effective practice" *Reflective practice*, 6 (2): 303-309. Available at: https://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14623940500106542.

Ferreiro Prado, Lucía (ed.). 2020. *Metodologías activas en las aulas de Ciencia Política y Relaciones Internacionales. Simulaciones de procesos políticos en organizaciones internacionales y nacionales*. Valencia: Tirant Lo Blanc.

Idiazabal Gorrotxategi, Itziar and Joaquim Dolz Mestre. 2013. *Enseñar (lenguas) en contextos multilingües*. Bilbao: Universidad del País Vasco.

Jābrī, Muhammab "Abid al-. 2001. *Buniyyat al-'aql al-'arabī. Naqd al-'aql al-'arabī I*. Casablanca: al-Markaz al-thaqāfī l-'arabī.

Jones, Beau Fly, Claudette M. Rassmussen and Mary C. Moffit. 1997. *Real-life Problem Solving: A collaborative approach to interdisciplinary learning*. Washington DC: American Psychological Association. Available at: http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/10266-000.

Kassab, Elisabeth Suzanne. 2010. *Contemporary Arab Thought: Cultural critique in comparative perspective*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Macías Amoretti, Juan Antonio. 2019. "El post-orientalismo como marco teórico: posibilidades y limitaciones desde el análisis del discurso intelectual marroquí", in Luz Gómez García (ed.), *Islam y desposesión. Resignificar la pertenencia*. Madrid: Ediciones del Oriente y del Mediterráneo.

Majhadānī, Sa'd Salmān al-. 2014. *Al-Ṣaḥāfa al-'arabiyya wa-l-dawliyya*. Al-'Ayn: Dār al-kitāb al-jāmi'ī.

Masjuan i Codina, Josep Maria, Marina Elias Andreu y Helena Troiano I Gomá. 2009. "El contexto de enseñanza un elemento fundamental en la implementación de innovaciones pedagógicas relacionadas con los créditos europeos", *Revista Complutense de Educación*, 20, 2: 355-380.

McNergney, Robert F., Edward R. Ducharme and Mary K. Ducharme. 1999. *Educating for Democracy. Case-method teaching and learning*. London: Routledge. Available at: https://doi.org/10.4324/9781410601292.

Melero Aguilar, Noelia. 2012. "El paradigma crítico y los aportes de la investigación acción participativa en la transformación de la realidad social", *Cuestiones Pedagógicas: Revista de Ciencias de la Educación*, 21: 339-355.

Moallem, Mahnaz, Woei Hung and Nada Dabbagh. 2019. *The Wiley Handbook of Problem-Based Learning*. London: Wiley-Blackwell. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119173243.

Omri, Mohamed-Salah. 2020. "Notes on the local and global significance of the Tunisian historian of the subaltern, Hedi Timmoumi", *Les Cahiers de Tunisie*, 226-227: 331-334.

Otxandorena Satrustegi, Saioa. 2019. *La lengua y el lenguaje como armas. Análisis de concepción y actitudes desde un enfoque multidisciplinar y transfronterizo* [TFM]. Granada: Universidad de Granada.

Owais, Rasha. 2011. "Arab Media during the Arab Spring in Egypt and Tunisia: Time for Change", *Middle East Media Educator*, 1 (1): 9-13.

Ramírez, Ángeles and Laura Mijares. 2021. *Los feminismos ante el islam. El velo y los cuerpos de las mujeres*. Madrid: Catarata.

Rosenberg, Shawn W. 1998. "The Structure of Political Thinking", *American Journal of Political Science*, 32, 3: 539-566. Available at: https://doi.org/10.2307/2111236.

Shoat, Ella. 1992. "Notes on the post-colonial", Social Texts, 31-32: 99-113. Available at: https://doi.org/10.2307/466220.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. 2010. *Crítica de la razón poscolonial*. Madrid: Akal.

Suleyman, Yasir. 2003. *The Arabic Language and National Identity*. Washington DC: Georgetown University Press.

Tourón, Javier and Déborah Martín R. 2019. *Aprender y enseñar en la Universidad hoy. Una guía práctica para profesores*. Logroño: UNIR.

Zerrillo, Philip. 2021. *Case for Cases: Teaching with Cases. How to Teach Using the Case Method*. London: World Scientific.

JUAN A. MACÍAS-AMORETTI
jamacias@ugr.es
Associate Professor of Arabic and Islamic Studies at the University of Granada, and Senior Research Fellow at the research group Contemporary Arab Studies at the UGR (HUM108). He has been Associated Research Fellow at the Jacques Berque Centre in Rabat (2012-2016), and visiting scholar at the Middle East Centre-St. Antony's College, University of Oxford (2018) and at the Dominican Institute for Oriental Studies in Cairo (2009, 2010). He has also lectured at the King Fahd School of Translation, Abdelmalek Esaâdi University in Tangier (2015), and at the Ca'Foscari University of Venice (2013). He has recently leaded the research project "Ideology, text and discourse: narratives of social change in North Africa" (FFI2016-76307-R), funded by the Spanish Ministry of Economy, as principal investigator (2016-2019). He is currently Honorary Research Fellow at the Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies, University of Exeter.