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Title: Inequality of Opportunity in Education in the MENA Region: A Closer Look at the Post-Arab Spring



The political and social turmoil of the past several years, dubbed as the Arab Spring, has raised interest in the extent of inequality in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. The primarily claimed reasons for these uprisings is the people's demand for social justice, namely in the cases of Egypt and Tunisia.

As argued by Assaad et al. (2014), understanding inequality of opportunity in education is particularly important because, from the time of MENA's independence in the mid-20th century, free access to education has been an important part of the social compact between authoritarian regimes and the people they ruled in societies.

My study aims to examine the trends of inequality of opportunity (IOp) in education in the MENA region. Inequality of opportunity in education concerns the influence of circumstances children are born into on their educational attainment.

This research perfectly fits in the vision of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) as this latter aims for a world of equitable and universal access to quality education at all levels, and a just, equitable, tolerant, open and socially inclusive world in which the needs of the most vulnerable are met. Goal 4 of the SDGs consists of ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promotes lifelong learning opportunities for all (World Bank, 2018).

While there are few studies about IOp in education in MENA that found high levels of inequality of opportunity in educational attainment, this research contributes to the literature as it is the first to quantify at the evolution of the situation of IOP over time, namely comparing the before and after Arab Spring situations.

We use some of the most up to date surveys on 13 MENA coming from three sources of data: (1)MICS, (2)PAFPAM and (3)DHS. These data typically provide information on community as well as individual and household characteristics. Using these surveys, we estimate models of educational attainment to measure the relationship between two measures of attainment and child circumstances.

This study can come under two of the conference themes: (1) Education and (2) Equality, Equity and Development.