

Comments on Gender Inequalities in the Arab Region chapter

By Sahar T. Rad

School of Finance and Management,
SOAS

The chapter's findings

- Reviewing gender inequality in education, employment and health in the Arab states.
 - **Overview** of inequalities in selected educational, health, and labour market outcomes
 - **Evolution** of these inequalities over time

Comments

- How does the chapter **fit** in with the previous chapters on inequality in health and education outcomes and opportunities?
 - The effect of gender considerations on health/education inequalities, **and** vice versa.
 - Perhaps best to combine this chapter with earlier ones?
- More careful use of the notions of gender **empowerment** and gender **equality** (Naila Kabeer's work)
- The evolution of inequalities **over time** has not been highlighted or discussed sufficiently (e.g. no analysis of Figures 6-8)
 - This could be an important part of the story that the chapter tells
- Data permitting, an analysis of inequalities between men and women could benefit from an additional analysis of **inequalities across women** in society (spatial, ethnic, age, etc.)
- The **double (direct/indirect) impact** of gender inequalities on health outcomes could be emphasised more (e.g. intergenerationality)

Comments

- **Determinants** of trends: the paper highlights mainly biological and cultural factors
 - Important to also emphasize the gendered impact of **macroeconomic and fiscal policies** (e.g. Bargawi et al 2017; Ortiz and Cummins 2011, 2013; Ghosh 2013). The inclusion of these variables depends on the objective of the chapter, but nevertheless significant for policy implications.

- One way to do the above:

Fiscal policy	Intervening dimensions	Direct impact	Gendered impact
Revenue, expenditure (SR LR)	Intergenerational dimension, class, location, ethnicity, norms, etc	Employment, wages, segregation, etc.	Formal/informal paid/unpaid work

- Is the chapter filling a void in the literature ?
 - Important to define its objectives well in order to complement the Report's narrative

Labour Market considerations

- An important area for inequality → merits **wider coverage** in the Report?
- Important in relation to the **inequalities in education**
 - Does enhanced inequality in education lead to better employment/livelihood for women?
- **Beyond** usual indicators (FLPR, employment and unemployment), it's important to add considerations of wage differentials, labour market informality, paid vs. unpaid work, etc.
 - Hence, further attention to the **quality** of female employment
- Would be useful to look at gender inequalities in labour market along **skills & sectors**
 - Important for both: policy implications as well as **future of work**
- Discussion of **demand-side variables** could draw on work done by UN-WOMEN.
- What is the chapter's **conclusion** in terms of labour market inequalities?
 - Time-series analysis could add important element to the story: are we observing increased or stagnation of gender inequalities over time? How to interpret the data?