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 emphasis the gendered impact of **macroeconomic and fiscal policies** (e.g. Bargawi et al 2017; Oritz 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiscal policy</th>
<th>Intervening dimensions</th>
<th>Direct impact</th>
<th>Gendered impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Revenue, expenditure (SR LR)</td>
<td>Intergenerational dimension, class, location, ethnicity, norms, etc</td>
<td>Employment, wages, segregation, etc.</td>
<td>Formal/informal paid/unpaid work</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• 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?