

Potentials for Change in the MENA Region: A Socioeconomic Perspective

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Abstract : The Arab Spring, which commenced during the end of 2010 and accelerated during 2011, was caused primarily due to poverty, unemployment and a general recession in the Middle East and North African (MENA) region. The core motivation of this revolution could be said to be the need for political, economic and social reforms that the region desires to experience. Though GDP growth has been significant in the region, the income distribution mechanism in MENA countries has been ineffective. This results in low levels of education, substandard health care facilities, unemployment, and poverty. This paper argues that MENA countries have great potential for experiencing socioeconomic development by being less dependent on oil exports and enhancing their services sector through better education which would eventually lead to job creation. Furthermore, the region can encourage better trade and political integration by forming transparent and accountable governments. The notion of Nation-State needs to be addressed and the countries in the region need to look for ways to develop effective supra-national institutions for better political and economic integration that goes beyond geographical borders.

Keywords : political reforms, social reforms, economic development, nation-state, economic integration

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