

# **Poverty feminization in the Arab region: Analysis of trends and dynamics based on a new typology**

**Discussant**

**Ebad Ebadi**

**World Bank**

**3rd Annual Conference of the Regional Research Network of the Central Banks of MENA**

**September 2023, Rabat**

## This paper:

- Important and timely topic addressing challenges in having **inclusive growth and gender inequality**
- Investigating poverty feminization in the Arab region (six countries) by providing **new estimates of chronic and transitory poverty among female-headed households (FHHs)**
  
- **Static analysis:** Defining eight **types of FHHs** and considering the **key characteristics** of households and heads of households
  - **Children:** Having more children does not seem to raise the **poverty incidence** among FHHs in Egypt and Iraq, while in Jordan, Palestine and Tunisia, evidence suggests that the presence of children raises poverty incidence.
  - **The higher the number of children, the lower the probability of a poor FHHs escaping poverty**, except in **Egypt** where FHHs with children are still more likely to escape poverty than male-headed households with children.
  
- **Dynamic analysis:**
  - Detailed insights on **household characteristics** that are most conducive to **remaining and moving out of poverty**
  - Across all years and different typologies of households, FHHs are more likely to **escape poverty** if they were **initially poor**, and **less likely to fall into poverty** if they were **non-poor initially**, compared to their male-household counterparts.

### Mechanisms:

- **Static analysis:** Why poverty rate is higher among FHHs in these countries? Cultural, economic, labor market issues, discriminatory laws?
- **Dynamic analysis:** Which factors explain the higher probability of FHHs than MHHs to escape poverty? Also, why FHHs are less likely to fall into poverty?
- Case of **Egypt**?

### Methodology:

- **Selection bias:** The FHH sample may change during the course of the study; some households might shift from FHHs to MHHs (e.g., when a female head marries) or vice versa (e.g., a husband passes away).
- Over time, the number of children could vary.

### Other comments:

- How representative are these six countries of the Arab region? What is the rationale behind choosing these six countries?
- Country-specific shocks (Iraq, Egypt, Tunisia, and Palestine)
- Country background information: social safety nets in these countries?