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Sarah is interested in using experimental methods to address issues related to the political economy of the Egyptian transition. She has conducted three lab experiments on undergraduate students at Cairo University. She has travelled to Atlanta in January 2013 to pilot her first experiment at the Experimental Economics Center at the Andrew Young School for Policy Studies. On her return, she prepared the lab at FEPS with both software and computer dividers for her real experiments that started to take place at Cairo University in March 2013. Her academic work in progress includes: a. An Economic Laboratory Experiment on: “Tax Compliance and Trust in Post-revolutionary Egypt: An Experimental Approach”. This study is jointly conducted with Prof. Sally Wallace and Dr Vjollea Sadiraj (Georgia State University, USA) and includes a laboratory-experiment on 270 Egyptian students. This project is considered the first known economic laboratory experiment in Egypt. Its main purpose is to examine the significance of a number of factors assumed to affect levels of tax compliance in Egypt using a laboratory based tax compliance experiment. It tests several assumptions based on the context of post-revolutionary Egypt. It aims at assisting policy-makers, in this transitional period, better understand the behavioral aspects of taxpayers’ decisions to comply with the tax system- something critical to the country’s fiscal sustainability. Thus, the course on the evaluation of public policies is highly important to enhancing her research skills. b. “Political Polarization and Support for Reform: Experimental Evidence from Egypt”. This study is jointly conducted with Prof. Rebecca Morton (New York University, USA) and Dr Mazen Hassan (Cairo University, Egypt). We examine whether political polarization in elections is an obstacle to reform in an incentivized laboratory experiment using natural ideological differences in Egypt. Specifically, we create political societies which subjects join based on ideological preferences. Then, voters choose between enacting a reform, which will lead to higher payoffs for all (but has a differential benefit for supporters of one of the political societies) versus not enacting the reform and everyone facing the same lower payoffs. Finding that when voters are provided with information that support for the reform varies across ideological societies in previous sessions, they are significantly more likely to report that their vote choices are influenced by their society membership to a greater extent than when such information is not provided. We also find some evidence that the information influences voter choices in the election. Results suggest that ideological polarization can impede reform in elections.

Blanca Moreno-Dodson is an experienced development economist with 21 years of World Bank service worldwide, especially in Africa and Latin America. She is accomplished in macroeconomics and fiscal policy for developing countries, with a focus on growth, inequality and poverty reduction. She is skilled in public expenditure analysis, fiscal sustainability, tax reforms, and transfer pricing, among others. Previously, she worked as junior economist at the European Union (European Commission and European Parliament). She is the editor of three World Bank books: “Reducing Poverty on a Global Scale”, 2005, “Public Finance for Poverty Reduction”, 2007, and “Is Fiscal Policy the Answer? A Developing Country Perspective”, 2012. She has also published on macroeconomics, public finance, growth, and poverty issues at the National Tax Association Journal, Banca d’Italia Fiscal Policy Annual Volume, Hacienda Pública Española Journal, and the Bulletin of Economic Research, as well as several World Bank Working Papers. She holds a PhD and a Masters in International Economics and Finance from the Aix-Marseille II University, France, as well as a Masters in Economics from the Madrid Autonomous University, Spain. She is fluent in Spanish, French, English and Portuguese. She has been currently working as a Lead Economist in the World Bank (Global Lead for Tax Policy, Macroeconomics and Fiscal Management).
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