

**SPRINGBOARDING MENA:  
ECONOMIC SUCCESS IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA**

**Felina B. Duncan, Department of Marketing and Economics**

**Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Zulal S. Denaux, Department of Marketing and Economics**

Periodically referred to as the “cradle of civilization”, an adage reflecting its past economic success and growth, the MENA region continues to serve as an international focal point, albeit a disappointing one in light of its economic potential. Moreover, for a region characterized by high unemployment, security states, a weak private sector, volatile external revenues, and a disproportionate concentration of power in the hands of a few, the recent widespread civilian protests, demonstrations, and toppling of dictatorships should come as no surprise. Even so, I would argue that the Arab Spring was not a sufficient response to appropriately curtail the political repression and lack of economic opportunities that caused it. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to utilize regression analysis to reexamine the impact of the initial conditions, human capital, investment ratio, external shocks, macroeconomic performance, openness, natural resource abundance, and output volatility of the MENA region—which previous studies have cited as prominent determinants of the region’s economic growth—on the growth of the MENA region’s real GDP per capita in light of recent events. Finally, this study will consider a largely overlooked but nonetheless significant factor, the influence of the state, and assess whether or not it can now be viewed as a more prominent determinant of the region’s economic growth as a result of the Arab Spring Uprising.