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Political Rights of Moroccan Women: Ambition Clashing with Practical Enforcements

Khadija Oulghazi

Abstract

This study examines the political status of Moroccan women who comprise more than half of the voting population. It focuses on the disparity between legal, institutional, and human rights guarantees and actual practice. According to the Global Gender Gap Ranking, Morocco ranked 136th out of 146 countries in 2022, compared to 137th out of 149 countries in 2018. The study concludes that this low-ranking stems from the interaction of various factors that hinder change. Key factors include the limited interest of political parties in women's issues, various forms of gender inequality, weak economic empowerment, and widespread violence against women. Additionally, political patronage has emerged as a counterproductive outcome of the 'quota' system. Initially increasing the quantitative presence of women in the political landscape, it raised women's political representation from zero in the 1963 elections to ninety-five women in 2021. Representation reached 24.3 per cent compared to 20.51 per cent in the previous legislative term (2016-2021), marking an increase of 3.8 per cent. The number of female parliamentary advisers also rose by twelve per cent in 2021, with an increase of 26.64 per cent at the local level in 2021 compared to the previous legislative term.

Keywords: Women's Political Rights; Morocco; Gender Parity; Quota System; Women Elites

Introduction

The issue of Moroccan women's political rights is garnering growing attention from various political forces. These include female elites, who view political rights as a direct expression of their political will, a commitment to citizenship, and a practical affirmation of their ability to drive change. The state has also shown interest,¹ adopting what is known as 'state feminism.'² This approach aims to empower women politically and economically, integrate them into diverse roles and sectors, and ensure their active participation in decision-making at all levels.³

Despite legal and institutional consolidation,⁴ there remains a significant gap between the ambitions of female elites and the political reality due to the dominance of patriarchal culture within the political sphere. Moroccan women's political participation remains limited—not due to a lack of female competence, as studies show,⁵ but rather due to women's difficulty engaging with the public sphere, where their presence is often delegitimised. Political parties inadequately integrate women, especially within their leadership bodies. Institutionally, horizontal gender integration remains unachieved, as ministries responsible for advancing women's rights face issues of institutional instability and marginalisation within the executive branch. These ministries also suffer from a shortage of expertise and limited human and financial resources, further hindering their effectiveness.⁶

It is worth noting that Moroccan women have made significant strides in their struggle to secure political rights,⁷ a process now referred to in United Nations circles as 'women's political empowerment.' Historically, the early women's movements (the first generation) benefited from post-independence political climate, which was characterised by party pluralism.⁸ This environment facilitated the establishment of numerous women's associations, often with a charitable focus,⁹ aimed at improving the status of women, the majority of whom faced illiteracy and poverty. These associations advocated for the rights of domestic workers, called for a personal status code to protect women (which did not yet exist at the time), and promoted awareness and education against gender-based violence.¹⁰

The political struggle for women's rights in Morocco experienced a partial hiatus due to clashes between the left-wing faction of the national movement and the monarchy over the nature of post-independence governance. This period was marked by repression and the suppression of opposition, which led to a decline in women's activist voices.¹¹ However, the roots of women's activism remained alive within 'women's sectors,' notably in organisations like the National Union of Moroccan Students, alongside various professional and cultural associations.¹² By the mid-1980s, Morocco witnessed signs of political easing, which sparked the emergence of a second generation of women's movements. These women took control of their own destinies by establishing independent women's organisations outside the framework of political parties.¹³ They championed revolutionary demands, advocating for Moroccan legislation to address women's rights and dignity. Their calls included reforms to the personal status code, criminal law, commercial law, nationality law, civil procedure law, and other laws that were predominantly discriminatory.¹⁴

Between 1962 and 2011,¹⁵ Morocco adopted numerous ordinary and electoral laws that explicitly enshrined the principle of gender equality in political processes and opposed all forms of gender-based discrimination. The Parliament's internal regulations, specifically articles 75 and 76, established a 'Thematic Working Group for Equality and Gender Parity.'¹⁶ This group aims to support and strengthen women's legislative achievements, oversee government actions, evaluate public policies, and engage in parliamentary diplomacy. It also organises training workshops to spotlight gender equality issues.¹⁷ Female parliamentarians from this group participated in the 68th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (held from 11-22 March 2024). They are

expected to submit a report on this mission to the House of Representatives' office for further action. At the decision-making level, the council has partnered with various civil, human rights, and political organisations. This dynamic has significantly increased women's representation in politics.¹⁸ Female representation in parliamentary elections rose from zero in 1963 to ninety-five women in 2021, achieving a growth rate of twenty-four per cent.¹⁹ Likewise, the number of female parliamentary advisers grew by twelve per cent in 2021, while local representation (in municipal elections)²⁰ saw a 26.64 per cent increase that same year.²¹

The aforementioned data does not imply that the current situation is one to celebrate. In fact, the political status of Moroccan women—who make up over half of the electorate—reveals a stark contradiction between the legal, institutional, and rights-based guarantees on one hand, and the ability of current female elites to effect real change on the ground on the other. This dilemma raises several critical questions: Has the quota system truly fostered a politically competent group of female elites? Have these women successfully advocated for both their political and societal causes? Have political parties genuinely integrated women within their ranks in line with constitutional and legal requirements? What obstacles continue to hinder Moroccan women's political participation, and what is the complex relationship between women's level of representation and their societal influence?

The study is divided into three main sections. The first section is titled 'Women and Politics in Morocco: Aspirations of an Elite and the State.' The second section addresses 'The Gap Between Political Ambitions and Social Reality.' The third section is titled 'Interconnected Obstacles Hindering Change Drivers.'

To unpack the main issue and the sub-questions of this research paper, we employed several analytical perspectives related to women's political rights derived from feminist approaches. Concepts utilised to address women's political realities include 'gender',²² 'empowerment',²³ and 'gender equality and gender mainstreaming in public policies.'²⁴ Our study primarily adopts a descriptive analytical method to examine the institutional frameworks governing Moroccan women's political rights and assess their implementation in practice. This approach is underpinned by concepts of gender planning²⁵ and gender analysis.²⁶ Additionally, the nature of the study necessitates the use of a comparative method in specific instances to highlight intersections and distinctions between pioneering experiences and explore possibilities for their development and monitoring in the Global South, particularly in the Moroccan context. We will also utilise national and international statistical techniques based on Gender-Disaggregated Statistics to support our analysis.²⁷

All of the aforementioned concepts are reflected in the work programmes and objectives of women's organisations, as well as in the governmental plans and programmes aimed at developing gender disparity indicators. This process spans from the programme planning to implementation, monitoring, and evaluation, within a systematic scientific framework known as Gender and Development.²⁸

We can assert a key conclusion that feminist movements, through years of political struggle and activism, have successfully leveraged the 'culture of globalisation,' raising various slogans about

human rights, democracy, and civil society. These interconnected themes aim to solidify social and political reforms and ensure broad participation from various social groups.²⁹ This evolution has transformed the discourse of female elites from a ‘practical needs’ approach,³⁰ focused on women’s rights to education, work, and health, to a ‘strategic needs’ discourse that emphasises their right to full citizenship and equality,³¹ as defined by Caroline Moser.³² However, the gender gap in Moroccan society remains wide. Data indicate that Morocco has failed to reach the global average set by the Inter-Parliamentary Union of thirty per cent representation. The country’s ranking in terms of female parliamentary representation has fluctuated, largely due to the low percentage of women in the House of Councillors, which stands at twelve per cent. Furthermore, the number of successful female candidates in local lists has seen a significant decline, despite an increase in female nominations exceeding 34.2 per cent.³³ This decline has adversely affected Morocco’s developmental indicators, as the kingdom is among the six countries in the North Africa and Middle East region where gender inequality is most pronounced.³⁴ It ranks in the bottom third regarding human development and gender equality.³⁵ These findings align with international reports on equality, which assert that Morocco’s efforts in this area remain insufficient and have limited impact.³⁶

In this regard, it is important to note the dominance of the global feminist movement within the United Nations,³⁷ where annual reviews are conducted to assess progress made alongside representatives from member states, including Morocco. The global feminist movement, along with its partners worldwide, aims to achieve its goals fully by 2030, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals. Moreover, the ‘Generation Equality Forum,’ held annually in Mexico and France, has established a more optimistic acceleration plan to achieve gender equality and full women’s empowerment by 2026. Whether the anticipated historical moment arrives in 2026 or 2030, it will mark a pivotal phase in human history, potentially initiating a new wave of the global feminist movement, one that is more empowered and influential. Undoubtedly, this will impact the quality and dynamics of political engagement for Moroccan women.

Literature focused on the political rights of Moroccan women has witnessed a significant and diverse surge. The thesis presented by Abderrazak Moulay Rachid in 1985 regarding the status of women in Morocco marked a pivotal turning point for academic research, particularly in legal studies concerning women’s participation in the political process. This period witnessed a flourishing of women’s newspapers and magazines, such as ‘8 Mars,’ ‘Anwal,’ and ‘Kalimah’. Notably, the book ‘Women and Decision-Making in Morocco’ by Professor Mukhtar El Harras, published in 2008, discussed the absence of internal democracy in economic activity spaces, which consequently led to the exclusion of women from decision-making positions due to a purely patriarchal mindset that views women as weak and lacking in skill and competence. Many studies have addressed similar topics, including Mohammed Dhrif’s 2022 work titled ‘Gender Policy and Authoritarian Resilience: The Women’s Quota System in Morocco as a Mechanism to Support the Regime.’ Most of these studies concluded that women’s representation in the Moroccan political landscape (in both houses of Parliament) remains weak and has not reached the global average,³⁸ which stood at twenty-three per cent in 2017, with countries like Rwanda surpassing Morocco by

allocating half of parliamentary seats to women.³⁹ These studies highlighted the ongoing debate surrounding the 'quota' system, which has sparked discussions among elites, with proponents and opponents each presenting their justifications and perspectives.

Other studies have warned against the continued reliance on this discriminatory mechanism, which has yielded limited results due to its focus on quantitative representation at the expense of qualities and capabilities of women as politicians. One such study is that of Abdel Rafii Za'noun, titled 'The Effects of the Quota System on Women's Parliamentary Representation in Morocco: A Reform Process or a Regressive Trend?' This study discusses the negative aspects of the quota system, which has contributed to specific manifestations of electoral patronage by creating a political class that exploits these discriminatory measures to gain electoral positions through the use of nepotism and personal connections.

It is observed that most previous studies have focused on the referential, legal, and rights-based aspects of women's political participation. However, this issue cannot be discussed in isolation from the underlying causes and societal consequences, while considering the economic dimension and psychological readiness to reduce the severity of gender inequality. This approach aims to enhance the qualitative participation of women in a political arena in which they have not fundamentally contributed to establishing the rules. This is what we will attempt to focus on in this study, emphasising the idea that the feminisation of power in Morocco, in addition to being a legal demand, is also a developmental one, facing a series of interconnected and overlapping obstacles.⁴⁰

Women and Politics in Morocco: Aspirations of an Elite and the State

The aspiration for the feminisation of power in Morocco represents a goal that the first generation of women elites rallied around, which was quickly embraced by state institutions shortly after the country's independence in search of democratic legitimacy and a confirmation of political modernity. This explains the connection between women's movements in Morocco and the ruling class, as these movements emerged from the state and were integrated into the structures of political parties that enjoy state patronage. The royal institution has played a pivotal role in adopting the rights issues of Moroccan women for several reasons,⁴¹ the most important being to strengthen internal institutional legitimacy and to achieve external gains in a globalised environment where gender equality is considered a developmental issue.⁴² The state remains the primary beneficiary of this partnership, while women's movements,⁴³ through building bridges of cooperation with the state, strive to achieve some of their goals and enhance their efforts. The Moroccan state has adopted, alongside its international commitments consistent with the text and spirit of the constitution, reforms and legislative amendments that have affected numerous laws, particularly those relating to personal status, family code, criminal law, commercial code, public service, and labour law. It further established various programmes and plans that have been integrated into its public policies. Noteworthy examples include:

- The Organisational Law Concerning the House of Representatives, which stipulates effective representation for women in regional councils, designating one-third of the seats exclusively for women, with women also having the right to run for the remaining two-thirds on equal footing with male candidates. In relation to Communal Councils, the law has increased the number of seats allocated to women from four to five. Additionally, an increase in the number of seats to eight has been adopted for Communal Councils whose members are elected according to a list system, provided that the population does not exceed 100,000 inhabitants, and ten seats are allocated for Communal Councils with populations exceeding 100,000. For communities divided into districts, three seats are allocated for women in the Communal Council and four in the council for each district.⁴⁴
- The Governance with a Feminine Perspective Committee,⁴⁵ which is responsible for enhancing and supporting women's representation in governance bodies. This committee conducted a study on the representation and participation of women within governance bodies of major public and private national institutions, drawing on several successful international experiences. The study concluded with a set of recommendations and measures that should be implemented to support women's representation in these bodies and to prepare all economic and political actors for their effective implementation on the ground.
- The Integrated National Programme for the Economic Empowerment of Women and Girls by 2030, known as 'Morocco for Empowerment,' which aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals.⁴⁶ This programme was developed using a participatory approach that involved all stakeholders in the field, including public authorities, national institutions, local communities, the private sector, universities, civil society, and international technical and financial partners. The programme's development process was based on alignment and results-based management.
- The Government Programme (2021-2025) focused on the economic empowerment of women aims to increase women's participation rate to thirty per cent by 2026, in line with the outcomes of the new development model.⁴⁷ In this context, three strategic axes related to gender have been established: participatory local governance, enhancing the capacities of elected women and officials, and training elected officials on issues related to advanced regionalisation and territorial governance.⁴⁸
- The establishment of a support fund to encourage women's representation has contributed to financing projects for political parties and civil society organisations aimed at motivating women to engage in political participation and enhancing their capacities at the national, regional, and local levels. A financial allocation of ten million dirhams has been designated for this fund.

Despite resistance, the efforts to feminise the pillars of power in Morocco have proven successful.⁴⁹ In the legislative branch,⁵⁰ women's political representation reached 24.3 per cent, compared to 20.51 per cent during the previous legislative term (2016-2021), marking an increase of 3.8 per cent. The number of female parliamentary advisors also increased by twelve per cent in 2021, with a local increase estimated at 26.64 per cent in 2021 compared to the previous legislative term. In the executive branch, Moroccan women waited nearly forty-four years before achieving their first governmental participation; all previous governments had been male dominated since the first ministerial formation in 1955 until 1997, which for the first time saw the appointment of women to head four ministries. Since then, the percentage of women's participation in successive governments has fluctuated. In the 2011 government, a single woman held the Ministry of Family, while the share of women in the 2013 government rose to five ministers. In the 2021 government, it reached seven women, an increase of 29.1 per cent. In addition to this quantitative development, there is another qualitative indicator that is more significant: the assignment of women to politically important ministerial positions such as the Ministry of Economy and Finance and the Ministry of Digital Transition and Tourism. Previous governmental experiences constrained women to traditional ministerial positions such as Solidarity, Family, and Social Development. Furthermore, their position in the executive protocol hierarchy was elevated by appointing them as ministers instead of state secretaries who performed their duties by delegation from the relevant minister. However, in the judicial sector, women represent less than twenty per cent of judges and lawyers.

The ambition of the Moroccan state and elite to involve women in the political process transcends legal and political considerations, although we emphasise their importance and relevance. This ambition has become a developmental demand focusing on the necessity of integrating women in the development system,⁵¹ viewing investment in women as a means to achieve high returns on economic growth, societal welfare, and global stability. According to a study conducted by McKinsey Global Institute, global gross output could increase by \$28 trillion if women participated in the workforce at comparable levels to men, which exceeds the expected increase by twenty-six per cent.⁵² The same study indicates that gender equality could add between twelve per cent and twenty-five per cent to global GDP by 2025. According to UN studies, it is anticipated that the percentage of women among graduates worldwide could reach sixty-six per cent.⁵³ National reports reflect similar trends, as the number of female students enrolled in institutes and higher education in Morocco exceeds that of males by 52.7 per cent.⁵⁴

The World Bank published an important study titled 'Corruption and Women in Government', which demonstrated that women possess higher standards of ethical behaviour⁵⁵ and are more concerned with the public good. The study concluded that higher rates of female participation in government are associated with lower levels of corruption; therefore, increasing the number of women in power brings greater societal benefits.⁵⁶ The same study confirmed that with every percentage point increase in women's participation in public positions above 10.9 per cent, corruption decreases by ten per cent. These conclusions were reinforced by the 2013 Global Corruption Barometer published by Transparency International.⁵⁷

The Gap Between Political Ambitions and Social Reality

Despite what has been achieved, the ambition for political representation of Moroccan women faces a societal reality that does not align with the will of the female elite, or with their societal size, nor with the vision and direction of the state. The Global Gender Gap Ranking⁵⁸ places Morocco in the 136th position out of 146 countries in 2022,⁵⁹ compared to the 137th position out of 149 countries in 2018. This low ranking can be attributed to several factors, the most important of which are:

- The low rate of women's political participation, which does not align at all with Morocco's demographic structure. Women make up fifty-two per cent of the population, and seventy-six per cent of them are under the age of forty-four. This bias towards values of masculinity places the greatest responsibility on political parties. Women are almost entirely excluded from leadership and decision-making bodies that create alliances and determine nominations and endorsements. Most parties rely on a pragmatic logic that places women at the bottom of electoral lists. We can assert that the interest of parties in women is often nothing more than a necessity dictated by external marketing.⁶⁰
- The multiple forms of gender inequality are a strong phenomenon at the level of poverty.⁶¹ Nearly five per cent of poor women are from rural areas, while the percentage drops to 1.7% among urban residents.⁶² Illiteracy rates among women stands at thirty-seven per cent. The unemployment rate among females stands at 16.8% compared to 10.9% among males. Meanwhile, the unemployment rate in urban areas among those holding a higher education diploma is 31.7 per cent for females compared to 19.1 per cent for males.⁶³
- The economic empowerment of Moroccan women is weak.⁶⁴ The rate of women's participation in the national economy in 2022 is 19.8 per cent.⁶⁵
- The prevalence of violence against adult women,⁶⁶ with the rate of violence committed against them across Morocco reaching 57.1 per cent.⁶⁷

When we analyse the counterproductive results of the quota system, the gap between political aspirations of Moroccan women and the societal reality becomes very clear.⁶⁸ Theoretically, this mechanism is supposed to provide women with equal chances and opportunities for candidacy in local and national lists. In practice, the implementation of this mechanism has resulted in the recycling of electoral patronage through a reproduction of the patriarchal systems.⁶⁹ This is manifested in the leadership of political parties exploiting discriminatory measures to seize parliamentary positions,⁷⁰ leveraging their networks of relationships and interests at the expense of the activist women who engaged in party formations and benefited from the vibrancy and dynamism of civil society.⁷¹

In the recent legislative elections held in Morocco in 2021, it was noted that one-fifth of female parliamentarians have sibling, filial, or marital relationships with the leaders of their parties.⁷² This resulted—directly—in a weak female political class that entered the representative institution with limited influence and effectiveness. This ‘elite’ of women is worn out and does not represent the real accumulations of the political struggle for Moroccan women, nor are they enmeshed within gender culture. Sixty-nine percent of female parliamentarians are not aware of the relationship between parliament and government, and forty per cent do not specifically understand the financial competencies of parliament, while only seventeen per cent are competent in the technique of oral questions.⁷³ These data highlight the inability of this elite to benefit from their parliamentary duties in building networks of relationships and resources that would enable them to enter the electoral competition and qualify to return to parliament through local lists outside the quota framework.

Interconnected Obstacles Hindering Change Drivers

The participation rates of women in political work are low worldwide, not just in Morocco.⁷⁴ Based on the elections and appointments that took place in 2023, the percentage of women in parliament reached 26.9 per cent. However, the rate of female participation in the Arab region remains the lowest, whether in elected or appointed councils.⁷⁵ Several studies⁷⁶ indicate the presence of a number of obstacles in Morocco that constitute a barrier to women’s participation in political work:

Socio-cultural barrier

Like other Arab societies,⁷⁷ traditional culture dominates Moroccan society, defining stereotypical roles for women and men, primarily confining women’s roles to household duties. Working outside the home places a dual burden on women to balance their professional responsibilities with their duties as mothers and wives. Participation in political work translated to additional labour that most women may not be able to handle, especially in the absence of a supportive environment and services. According to a field study, 36.32 per cent of Moroccan women have no political affiliation, and 86.32 per cent have never run for election. Moreover, 94.92 per cent of the women surveyed stated that they have never held an elected position in any elected body, while 3.91 per cent of them expressed that they are not interested in political work at all.⁷⁸

Economic barrier

The economic barrier is limited to the funding element that controls the electoral process at all its stages. This includes the lack of regulation on the use of money during elections, the absence of a ceiling for campaign budgets, and the difficulty—or scarcity—of securing financial support to manage the electoral campaigns of female candidates. Thus, the difficulty of accessing economic resources poses additional obstacles for women to ensure their integration and participation in society.

While financial independence is a crucial step for economic empowerment, women in Morocco largely lack it, with only twenty-nine per cent of women in the country having a bank account.⁷⁹ This subjects them to the authority of their family or men to provide assistance, whether in

establishing an economic project or during elections and electoral campaigns.⁸⁰ One of the reasons for women's lack of independence is the limited sources of income available to them, and their low wages in many jobs. The wage gap between women and men in the private sector has reached seventy- nine per cent.⁸¹ Even if a woman manages to secure a source of income, this does not necessarily mean she has economic decision-making power, as this income may still be controlled by her husband or family. This explains why women often resort to loans to finance small projects, which in many cases lack financial sustainability. Conversely, few institutions and organisations work to create new projects to employ women and utilise their skills towards economically empowering them, amid a lack of studies that focus on the percentage of women who have benefited from loans and the impact of these loans on their livelihoods.⁸²

Institutional barrier

Political parties bear the largest share of responsibility in this regard, as they exclude women from their electoral lists or place them at the bottom of the list, fearing that they will not garner votes. The cooperative relationships between women's organisations and other organisations, such as labour and professional unions, are nearly absent, and there are no programmes to train women for leadership roles. Consequently, women's inability to form an elite or establish a political career path stems from their lack of professionalism in political work, due to the rapid turnover rate and the impossibility of renewing their electoral term if they were elected through the quota system. This deprives women of the opportunity to benefit from successful experiences or learn from mistakes.

Alongside these obstacles, there are barriers linked to the nature of the existing political and electoral systems. Political parties are not convinced of women's political and competitive abilities. Moreover, the prevailing electoral climate characterised by negative practices negatively affects women's effective political participation. These practices include widespread corruption and the use of political money, which leads to women's reluctance to engage in public affairs and political work. Those responsible for the political and party system often adopt a flawed understanding of women's participation, believing that it only requires their nominal inclusion—meaning merely listing female candidates at the bottom of party lists. Furthermore, the political and media spotlight on women's participation is often exploited without ensuring their access to decision-making positions, which is not a priority for any political entity. They restrict women's membership to the electoral bloc or voting rights while limiting their leadership roles within the party and often marginalising them. These practices reflect a misunderstanding of the true concept of political participation and the limits of its application, which not only restricts women's involvement but also has negative repercussions for youth.⁸³ This brings to the forefront the crisis of internal democracy within political parties and the issue of the perpetuation of leadership.

Psychological barrier

Studies indicate that many women do not trust their ability to work in public affairs and fear participating in political activities and running for elections. A study concluded that 31.64 per cent of Moroccan women do not trust political parties or politicians, while the percentage of women

belonging to political parties does not exceed 8.49 per cent. This study found that women view politics negatively, considering it an unethical arena, and they avoid engaging in it.⁸⁴ It is worth noting that these manifestations are prevalent even in advanced countries like the United States. A study titled 'Men Rule'⁸⁵ discussed women's fear of the electoral environment, which is accompanied by fierce competition, media campaigns, and exchanges of criticism. The study suggests that the lack of widespread female participation in political life has negative impacts, particularly on issues concerning women and legislation related to health and women's issues. It recommends increasing training programmes and raising awareness to enhance women's confidence in their ability to compete with men and encourage them to engage in politics.

Interestingly, some women adopt exclusionary practices towards each other, preventing them from having a collective influence within political entities. This can be attributed to the prevailing values and customs that hinder women from holding a specific position and thus contributing to decision-making processes in a practical manner. This is particularly evident in rural areas, where 'a woman forgoes claiming her inheritance to preserve the family legacy.'⁸⁶

The portrayal of women in the media contributes to the reinforcement of stereotypes and mental images of women, which are often characterised by weakness and a lack of political ambition compared to men. This is manifested in a rather striking phenomenon: a percentage of female voters choose not to support women candidates in elections. This, in fact, stems from the lack of confidence that female voters have in women themselves and their tendency to follow men's desires. The results of elections in countries that do not adopt a women's quota system have shown weak support from women for female candidates. For example, in Egypt, the number of female members of parliament decreased from thirty women in 1979 to nine women in 1995, prompting the Egyptian state to reintroduce the quota system in 2010 under Law 149/2009.

Conclusion

Awareness of the necessity of politically empowering Moroccan women has grown, and this conviction was further cemented in the late twentieth century and the beginning of this century. On one hand, Morocco ratified all international agreements related to gender equality. On the other hand, the kingdom lifted most of its reservations on the CEDAW agreement in 2011, except for the articles related to resorting to its arbitration mechanisms. Laws and discriminatory procedures were adopted in favour of women to enhance their quantitative and qualitative presence within political institutions.

Nevertheless, studies indicate that the representation of women has not yet reached the required global rates; the political situation of Moroccan women suffers from a gap between theory and practice. There is a widening distance between what has been achieved since the state ratified international instruments related to women and their constitutional entrenchment, and the rates of their representation. This is evident in the limited ability of the current female elites to influence the margins of political practice.

These outcomes can be attributed to the convergence of several obstacles resulting from the persistence of gender inequality in all its forms, particularly in terms of poverty, illiteracy, and unemployment, all of which are high among women. Additionally, there is a lack of economic empowerment and exposure to violence.

Conversely, we cannot separate the dynamics of the Moroccan political sphere, aiming to transition to a democratic system that accommodates the ambitions of all its political elites, from the increased active political participation of Moroccan women. Undoubtedly, these positive changes have created a supportive environment that embraces the female presence in the Moroccan political scene and responds to contemporary theories of gender integration, especially women's involvement in shaping public action.

In conclusion, the study recommends that activating the political rights of Moroccan women necessitates comprehensive societal participation. Elevating the rate of women's political participation, both quantitatively and qualitatively, can be addressed through three fundamental actions: combating poverty, unemployment, and illiteracy, thereby reducing the gender gap between men and women. It is essential to reconsider the mechanism of positive discrimination, which has exhausted its justifications as demonstrated by experience; it has lost its connection to the democratic ideal and no longer serves as a rights guarantee. Furthermore, there should be a clear agenda and procedures for the automatic improvement of women's political representation, rather than relying solely on a discriminatory administrative mechanism. Democracy, before being a practice, is fundamentally a culture that should be instilled and entrenched in society through social and political upbringing institutions. The issue of accumulation in political action from early stages is an urgent demand for the women's political elite, and it has become essential for them to engage in public affairs as much as they do in their own issues, as they ultimately constitute the majority of society.

In a third and final stage, it is essential to involve women in managing the electoral process, starting from the drafting of legislation and measures to overseeing the operations. This should be done by ensuring women's representation across all structures and committees responsible for receiving candidacies, as well as monitoring voting and counting processes. Accelerating the enactment of the framework law for the Parity and Anti-Discrimination Commission is necessary, granting it the powers and resources required to uphold the rights and freedoms established by the constitution, foremost among them being the realisation of political parity in all its forms. Without these measures, achieving a modern Moroccan political model will remain questionable.

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¹ The Kingdom of Morocco has ratified all international and regional agreements related to women's political rights, including but not limited to the CEDAW Convention (1993), which was published in the official gazette in 2001. The Kingdom lifted all reservations in 2011, except for the articles related to resorting to arbitration mechanisms in the event of a dispute between states regarding the interpretation or application of the convention, specifically Article 2, Article 15 (paragraph 4), and Article 29 (paragraph 1), as well as Article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 13 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, and Article 7 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination. It also includes articles 1, 2, and 3 of the International Convention on Women's Political Rights adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1952.

² State feminism refers to the adoption by the government or state of policies that benefit women's rights and improve their lives. This concept emerged in: Hernes, Helga (1987) *State Feminism and Gender* (Routledge).

³ Al-Hirras, Mukhtar (2008) *Women and Decision-Making in Morocco, 1st edition* (Beirut: Al-Mu'assasa Al-Jami'iyya lil-Dirasat wal-Nashr wal-Tawzi' 'Majd').

⁴ Moroccan women head the most important constitutional institutions: the National Human Rights Council (Amina Bouayach 2018), the Court of Accounts (Zainab Adoui 2021), and the High Authority for Audiovisual Communication (Latifa Akharbash 2018). Additionally, in 2021, Moroccan women took on local management roles, as three women were appointed mayors of the largest Moroccan cities: Rabat, Casablanca, and Marrakech.

⁵ According to the Ministry of Interior, 71% of locally elected women have a secondary or higher education level, compared to 52% among men. See: National Human Rights Council (2015) 'The Status of Equality and Parity in Morocco, Executive Summary', p. 9, accessed on 31 August 2024, <https://urlz.fr/rY92>.

⁶ National Human Rights Council (2015) 'The Status of Equality and Parity in Morocco, Executive Summary', p. 10, accessed on 31 August 2024, <https://urlz.fr/rY92>.

⁷ Moroccan women engaged in the struggle to reclaim national sovereignty and resist occupation, contributing to organising protest demonstrations and directly participating in armed struggle at the front lines (e.g., Itew, the daughter of the leader Moha Ou Hmou El Zayani, who was martyred alongside her father while carrying her rifle). For more, see: Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (2005) *Women's Movements in the Arab World* (United Nations: ESCWA Publication), p. 38, <https://shorturl.at/Eqoun>.

⁸ Chapter three of the first constitution of the Kingdom of Morocco, 1962.

⁹ For example, the 'Sisters of Al-Safaa' association was established in 1947, followed by the 'Association of Welfare' and the 'Family Protection Association,' founded by the 'Istiqlal Party' in 1956 and 1957, respectively. Additionally, the 'Progressive Union of Moroccan Women' was founded in 1962, which raised demands aimed at improving the situation of women, the majority of whom were illiterate and poor, as well as respecting domestic workers and preparing a personal status code that did not exist at the time to protect women. The association also worked in the field of awareness and education against violence towards women.

¹⁰ Riyadi, Khadija (2021) 'The History and Achievements of the Feminist Movement in Morocco', *Capiremov*, 7 October, accessed 30 August 2024, <https://capiremov.org/ar/tajarib/alnasawiat-almaghrib/>.

¹¹ The women's issue experienced a flourishing in the 1980s and early 1990s, marked by the establishment of various women's associations, the first of which was the 'Democratic Association of Women of Morocco' (Party of Progress and Socialism) in 1985, followed by the 'Women's Labour Union' (Democratic Labor Party) in 1985, and the 'Independent Women's Organisation' in 1987.

¹² Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (2005) *Women's Movements in the Arab World*, p. 56-57.

¹³ Riyadi, Khadija (2021) 'The History and Achievements of the Feminist Movement in Morocco'.

¹⁴ In 2004, the Family Code was amended, and a second amendment is currently being worked on, expected to be issued by the end of 2024. This follows the amendments to the electoral and nationality laws in 2008, the Labour Law in 2004, the Criminal Procedure Code in 2004, and the Commercial law in 1995.

¹⁵ For example: Article 19, which affirms that men and women equally enjoy civil, political, economic, social, cultural, and environmental rights and freedoms. Article 6 states that 'public authorities shall work to create conditions that enable the effective realisation of the freedoms of citizens and equality among them, and their participation in political

life'. Article 30 includes provisions aimed at encouraging equal opportunities for women and men in accessing elected positions. Article 416 establishes the Authority for Equality and the Fight Against All Forms of Discrimination, under Regulatory Law 79-14.

¹⁶ In 2015, this initiative began as the first institutional body in the history of the House of Representatives focused on equality and parity, establishing a framework for collaborative work among various parliamentary groups. All parliamentary groups are represented and work in a consensual manner, free from party or ideological sensitivities, prioritising women's issues while transcending political affiliations.

¹⁷ Based on priority areas: family, women's economic empowerment, human development, education and training, health and social protection, and political empowerment.

¹⁸ It is important to note that this quantitative shift in the increase of Moroccan women's political participation is primarily attributed to the adoption of a 'positive discrimination' system, commonly known as 'quota.' However, some have deemed it an undemocratic system that contradicts the principle of equality in rights and duties, as well as the principle of equal opportunities between men and women. The legitimacy of the 'quota' system is derived from the principle of justice, which requires representation for a broad and less privileged segment of society—namely, women. It remains an optimal temporary solution for a society still dominated by a patriarchal mentality that does not believe in women's political participation capabilities, especially in decision-making roles.

¹⁹ In 2011, Regulatory Law 27.11, related to the House of Representatives, established a national electoral district consisting of ninety seats, of which sixty were allocated for women and thirty for youth.

²⁰ Regulatory Law 11-59, related to the election of members of local councils, established two mechanisms to enhance women's representation. The first concerns regional councils, stipulating that at least one-third of the seats in each province or region must be allocated to women. The second pertains to communal councils, where new provisions were introduced in 2015 under Regulatory Law 34.15, mandating a minimum number of seats for women in each communal or district council, set at no less than four seats, with the possibility of increasing this number based on the total number of seats.

²¹ High Commission for Planning (2021) *Moroccan Women in Numbers: 20 Years of Progress*, Rabat, p. 113.

²² The concept of 'gender' was addressed by Simone de Beauvoir in her 1949 book 'The Second Sex' (*Le Deuxième Sexe*). The author argues that 'one is not born a woman, but rather becomes one.' While sex is determined biologically, gender is shaped by psychological, social, and cultural influences. Thus, while sex is an inescapable fact, gender functions as an exercise of free will.

²³ Empowerment refers to the process of supporting and strengthening the roles and rights of women in society and the state, enabling them to claim and defend their rights.

²⁴ It refers to integrating women's and community perspectives into the core of national development and strengthening the family institution to improve social care, ensuring the principle of gender equality.

²⁵ It refers to the establishment and implementation of specific institutional measures and arrangements, such as the ability to conduct gender-based analysis, collect gender-disaggregated data to promote gender equality, and ensure the provision of appropriate resources.

²⁶ It is a systematic tool for examining the social and economic differences between women and men; it considers their activities, circumstances, specific needs, as well as their access to and control over resources, benefits of development, and positions in decision-making.

²⁷ The term refers to data that has been collected and categorised separately for women and men, allowing for the measurement of differences between them in various social and economic dimensions.

²⁸ It refers to providing opportunities and resources for all segments of society to achieve equitable access and effective engagement in development efforts, as an influential component based on understanding community needs and optimising the capabilities of individuals and institutions to ensure active participation in development.

²⁹ Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (2005), p. 11.

³⁰ Initially, feminist ideas developed in Western societies while most Eastern societies were grappling with the dilemma of liberation from colonialism. As feminist identity crystallised globally, feminist demands shifted from a narrow focus on the state to a broader scope involving international organisations, thus becoming a global phenomenon. For more, see: Raad, Abdel Jalil and Majid, Hossamuddin (2022) *Feminist Political Theory: Intellectual Structures and Contemporary Trends* (Kuwait: Alamal Knowledge).

³¹ Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (2005), p. 117.

³² Moser, Caroline (1993) *Gender Planning and Development: Theory, Practice, and Training* (1st edition: Routledge).

³³ High Commission for Planning (2021) *Moroccan Women in Numbers: 20 Years of Progress*, p. 113.

³⁴ World Economic Forum (2017) 'The Global Competitiveness Report 2017-2018', accessed 1 September 2024, <https://shorturl.at/lfPKP>.

³⁵ According to the Human Development Index, Morocco ranks 127th among 178 countries. It also held a low position in the Global Gender Gap Index for 2014, published by the World Economic Forum to assess whether countries distribute their resources and opportunities equally between men and women.

³⁶ Referring to the Gender Inequality Index, the estimated inequality rate in the Arab region is 0.535, which is higher compared to Europe and Central Asia, where the inequality rate is estimated at 0.279, compared to the global average. For more information, see: Human Development Report (2024). United Nations Development Programme, Gender Inequality Index. accessed 1 September 2024, https://hdr.undp.org/system/files/documents/global-report-document/hdr2023-24overviewar_0.pdf.

³⁷ The global feminist movement includes nearly 600 organisations, distributed among over 60 global organisations, more than 150 European organisations, about 100 American organisations, 21 organisations in Australia and New Zealand, nearly 70 organisations in the Americas, 70 African organisations, and 120 organisations in Asia. These organisations manage tens of thousands of branches and offices worldwide, spending tens of billions of dollars annually on their ongoing activities and events. Additionally, there are thousands of academic, intellectual, artistic, cultural, social, and charitable institutions and associations that strongly support the ideas and activities of the feminist movement both locally and globally. For more, see: Abdel Hadi, Mahmoud (2022) 'Equality and Empowerment Behind Global Feminism?' accessed 1 September 2024, <https://urlr.me/4R57W>.

³⁸ The United Nations Development Programme has set the target for women's representation in parliament to reach 30%. See: Executive Board of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (2012). Progress on the Strategic Plan of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women for the period 2011-2013, <https://urlz.fr/sCN9>.

³⁹ Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). www.ipu.org.

⁴⁰ It is a development approach that emerged in the 1970s under the name 'Gender and Development' (GAD). The first stream, 'Women in Development' (WID), calls for the inclusion of women's issues in development projects and global economies by improving their status and aiding in comprehensive development. The second stream, 'Women and Development' (WAD), argues that the development process functions better and becomes more effective when women's contributions are recognised. The third stream, 'Gender in Development' (GID), which emerged in the early 1990s, focused on two main aspects: equalising roles between genders by separating gender from human roles in life and disentangling gender from specific roles in life.

⁴¹ Dhrif, Mohamed (2022) 'Gender Policy and Authoritarian Resilience: The Women's Quota System in Morocco as a Mechanism to Support the Regime. Arab Pavilion', 27(1), 5-19. accessed 29 August 2024, <https://doi.org/10.53833/MCSV7210>.

⁴² In his speech on the occasion of the 46th anniversary of the Revolution of the King and the People on 20 August 1999, Moroccan King Mohammed VI stated: 'How can the advancement and prosperity of society develop when women, who make up nearly half of it, have their rights overlooked, disregarding the rights granted to them by our noble religion? They are equals to men, deserving of a just treatment that safeguards them from any injustice or violence, especially since they have reached a level where they compete with men in both knowledge and work.'

⁴³ Thus, it reinforces its legitimacy, as mentioned earlier.

⁴⁴ This has increased the representation of women at the national level from 21% to 25%. It is also noteworthy that the kingdom amended the law regulating public limited companies, Law No. 19.20, which complements Law No. 17-95 concerning listed public companies. This law enshrines the principle of balanced representation of women and men in corporate governance bodies, establishing mandatory quotas to ensure diversity in the boards of directors of public companies. It sets a minimum target for women's representation of at least 30% by 2024 and 40% by 2027. For more, see: High Commission for Planning (2021) *Moroccan Women in Numbers: 20 Years of Progress* (Rabat).

⁴⁵ Affiliated with the Moroccan Institute of Directors, under the presidency of the Ministry of General Affairs and Governance, and with the participation of the Ministry of Economy and Finance, representatives from various governance bodies, public and private institutions, and experts.

⁴⁶ In 2015, UN member states adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with its seventeen goals. This agenda aims to set the direction for global and national policies related to development, providing new options and opportunities to bridge the gap between human rights and development. It also serves as a general framework guiding global and national development efforts.

⁴⁷ A study conducted by the Royal Institute for Strategic Studies in 2012, titled 'Sustainability of the Development Model: The Choice of the Green Economy,' introduced a concept that would gain more traction through the work of the Special Committee on the Development Model. This committee presented its comprehensive report to the King on 25 May 2011, at which point he ordered the report to be published and initiated a broad process to present its findings and recommendations to citizens and various stakeholders.

⁴⁸ As part of the cooperation between municipalities within the ‘Local and Participatory Governance in the Maghreb’ programme, the ‘New City’ network was launched in 2015, under the name of the Moroccan Participatory Governance Network ‘CoMun.’ This increased the number of networks for locally elected women to five in three targeted regions: Fès-Boulemane, Doukkala-Abda, and Gharb-Chrarda-Beni Hssen. Additionally, two regional networks were established in June 2014 for the Forum of Elected Women of Doukkala-Abda and the Forum of Elected Women of Fès-Boulemane. Within the framework of special support for locally elected women and based on the results of the participatory diagnosis conducted in 2010, a series of training activities were carried out according to the local governance programme to develop their leadership skills and enhance their effective participation in local politics, with specific support from partner regional authorities. For more, see: Ministry of Solidarity, Women, Family, and Social Development (2016) *Women’s Empowerment and Sustainable Development: Report of the Kingdom of Morocco*.

⁴⁹ For example, conservative Salafi thought, which emphasised the necessity of awareness including educating women and girls within a patriarchal and conservative framework, persisted since the colonial era. Resistance to change became even more pronounced in 2000, when the Justice and Development Party, with its conservative orientation, opposed the ‘National Plan for the Integration of Women in Development’ adopted by Abdel Rahman Youssoufi’s government. This led to a million-strong march in Casablanca, featuring scholars from the religious establishment, culminating in royal intervention to form a committee for drafting the Family Code, emphasising the need to comply with Islamic law. In the government of Abdelilah Benkirane, the first formed after the 2011 protests, women held only one ministerial position out of 32. This number increased in its second iteration in 2013 to six female ministers. Additionally, the lack of implementation of parity principles within party, union, and professional organisations undermines women’s chances for equitable participation in both local and legislative elections.

⁵⁰ The number of seats held by women in the Moroccan Parliament and the Council of Advisors has evolved; in the House of Representatives, women secured 96 seats in 2021 compared to 67 seats in 2011. In the Council of Advisors, women obtained 15 seats in 2021 versus 6 seats in 2011. Similarly, the number of female candidates in the Moroccan Parliament and the Council of Advisors has increased; in the House of Representatives, 2,334 women ran in 2021 compared to 1,624 in 2011. In the Council of Advisors, 324 women stood for election in 2021 compared to 58 in 2011. In regional councils, 3,936 women ran in 2021 compared to 525 in 2011. For more information, see: High Commission for Planning (2021).

⁵¹ Chalak, Hoda El Khatib (2017) ‘Envisioning a Better Future: The Importance of Arab Women in Pursuing Democracy’, *Heinrich Böll Foundation*, 27 April, accessed 1 August 2024, <https://lb.boell.org/ar/2017/04/27/hmy-dwr-lmr-fy-sn-lqrr-lsyy>.

⁵² For more, see: McKinsey Global Institute (2015) ‘The Power of Parity: How Advancing Women’s Equality Can Add \$12 Trillion to Global Growth’, accessed 29 July 2024, <https://urlz.fr/rxZY>.

⁵³ Arab Women’s Organisation (2020) ‘Women and Achieving Sustainable Development Goals in the Arab Region: A Guideline Study’, accessed 29 July 2024, http://arabwomenorg.org/uploads/Executive_Meeting.pdf.

⁵⁴ The enrolment rates of girls in the Faculty of Medicine and Pharmacy reached 67.8%, in Dentistry 73.2%, in Science and Technology 59.4%, and in Educational Sciences 55.5%. For more information, see: High Commission for Planning (2021) *Moroccan Women in Numbers: 20 Years of Progress*.

⁵⁵ According to a survey conducted by Transparency International among business owners and managers in Georgia, companies owned or managed by women pay bribes in about 5% of their government transactions, while the percentage rises to 11% for companies owned or managed by men. It is not a coincidence that the least corrupt countries are the same ones that have high female representation (Norway, Finland, Sweden, Denmark, New Zealand), with rates of female representation ranging between 30% and 40%. For more information, visit www.transparency.org.

⁵⁶ For more information, see: The Equal Voice Foundation, <https://www.equalvoice.ca/>.

⁵⁷ For more information, see: Transparency International.

⁵⁸ It involves a composite index that combines four indicators: economic participation and opportunities, health, education, and empowerment. The highest possible score is one, which indicates complete equality between women and men. For more information, see: United Nations Development Programme (2024) *Human Development Report 2023/2024 Overview* <https://urlz.fr/rxZS>.

⁵⁹ By analysing Morocco’s performance based on the results of four sub-indicators, the kingdom has managed to narrow the gender gap in educational attainment, health, and life expectancy; it achieved scores of 0.945 and 0.961 out of 1, placing the country in the 114th and 131st positions globally. However, the country’s performance has been weak when it comes to the participation of Moroccan women in the economy and politics.

⁶⁰ There are very few exceptions, such as the Unified Socialist Party, where Nabila Mounib was elected as its Secretary-General in 2012, along with some smaller parties.

⁶¹ Remarkable is the issuance of Law No. 83-17, which amends Law No. 41-10 regarding the conditions and procedures for benefiting from the family support fund and its implementing decree. This fund, established in 2018, enhances the protection and empowerment of women in vulnerable situations along with their children.

⁶² High Commission for Planning (2019) 'Rural Women in Morocco'. Issue No. 10, 25 October.

⁶³ High Commission for Planning (2021).

⁶⁴ Morocco is among the 20 countries with the lowest contribution of women to economic activity, ranking 128 out of 135 countries studied. For more information, see: www.worldbank.org.

⁶⁵ The Moroccan government aims for women's contribution to economic activity to reach 30% by 2030. For more information, see: High Commission for Planning (2021) *Moroccan Women in Numbers: 20 Years of Progress* (Rabat).

⁶⁶ According to the findings of the national survey conducted in 2019, 22.8 per cent of women who experienced physical and/or sexual violence in the past year incurred direct or indirect costs as a result of this violence, with the total estimated cost reaching approximately 2.85 billion dirhams, translating to an average cost of about 957 dirhams per victim. This indicates that education and economic activity do not provide adequate protection for women against violence. For more information, see: the *High Commission for Planning* (2019). Second National Survey on the Prevalence of Violence Against Women, accessed 31 July 2024, <https://shorturl.at/zbkby>.

⁶⁷ Despite Morocco adopting Law 103.13 to combat violence against women in 2018, along with institutional mechanisms to assist women victims of violence and prevent all forms of it, ensuring the necessary support and guidance to access available services, the prevalence of violence among women aged 18-64 reached 51.4% in the form of domestic violence, 18.2% in the workplace, 17.9% in educational settings, and 15.6% in public spaces. For more information, see: the High Commission for Planning (2021) *Moroccan Women in Figures: 20 Years of Development*.

⁶⁸ It is one of the mechanisms proposed at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, seen as a temporary solution in political life and decision-making centres, due to the marginalisation and exclusion women have faced, which resulted in their underrepresentation or, at best, weak representation, and often led to their withdrawal from participating in decision-making positions. This system was created as a solution to increase the percentage of women's political participation, even for a limited period.

⁶⁹ The feminist thinker Kate Millett expressed this by saying: 'Feminist theory is the theory that seeks to reveal the mechanism by which men dominate women, and patriarchy can be considered the most pervasive ideology in our civilisation that focuses on the concept of power; it is the same ideology that can be seen as the primary source of the control and oppression of women.' For more, see: Abdul Sattar Abu-Hussein, Salma (2020) 'A Reading in the Feminist School and Its Currents', *The Arab Center for Research and Studies*, 14 March, accessed 30 August 2024, <https://www.acrseg.org/41526>.

⁷⁰ Dhrif, Mohammed (2022) 'Gender Policy and Authoritarian Resilience', p. 15.

⁷¹ The phenomenon of marginalising genuine female activists is evident in every electoral process in Morocco. This is illustrated by the rampant political shifting that occurs at the last minute from one party to another. For instance, just before the last legislative elections in Morocco in 2021, the president of the Tangier-Tetouan-Al Hoceima Regional Council, who belonged to the Authenticity and Modernity Party, changed her political affiliation and ran as a candidate on the women's list in the Wazan region representing the National Rally of Independents Party.

⁷² Ayoubi, Mohamed (2021) 'Parties Cementing Rent in Regional Women's Lists', *Al-Akhbar Newspaper*, 16 October, accessed 30 August 2024, <https://urlz.fr/sCTI>.

⁷³ Adnani, Ikram (2019) 'Political Empowerment of Women: The Quota System in Morocco as a Model', *Arab Policy Forum*, November, pp. 7-8, <https://www.alsiasat.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/APF-PDF-5-11-1.pdf>.

⁷⁴ The United States ranks 91st globally in the representation of women in official and political positions, placing it behind countries like Rwanda, Nepal, and Cuba. Notably, female representation in U.S. official and political roles does not exceed 17%.

⁷⁵ The report found that among 188 countries with parliaments, only twenty countries have women holding at least one-third of the seats. Rwanda and Andorra lead in women's participation in parliament, as they are the only two countries where women's representation exceeds 50%. For more, see: United Nations News (2024) 'UN Report: Increase in the Percentage of Women Parliamentarians in 2023', United Nations, 5 March, accessed 31 July 2024, <https://news.un.org/ar/story/2024/03/1128952>.

⁷⁶ Among the key studies in the Arab world, see: Al-Harras, Al-Mukhtar (2008) *Women and Decision-Making in Morocco*, 1st edition, Beirut: University Foundation for Studies, Publishing, and Distribution "Majd" Also: Riyadi, Khadija (2021) *History and Achievements of the Feminist Movement in Morocco*. For foreign writings, see: Milbrath, Lester W. (1965) *Political Participation* (Harvard: Harvard University Press).

⁷⁷ While some analysts link the low participation of women in political work to conservative interpretations of Islamic law, this idea is refuted by practices in Islamic countries like Pakistan and Indonesia, which are among the largest

Muslim countries in the world. Pakistan has not prevented women from holding the position of Prime Minister, and Indonesia did not prevent women from securing 11.4% of parliamentary seats in the 2004 elections. Additionally, Indonesia imposed a 30% quota on political parties in 2004 to ensure greater representation of women. For more, see: International IDEA (2006) 'Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers', Sweden. <https://urlz.fr/sCW6>.

⁷⁸ The Moroccan Organisation for Family Justice (2023) 'Political Empowerment of Women: A Lever for Achieving Parity in Elected Councils and Professional Chambers', University of Salé.

⁷⁹ High Commission for Planning (2023) 'For an Inclusive Digital World: Innovation and Technology for Gender Equality', accessed 28 September 2024, <https://urlz.fr/sCWt>.

⁸⁰ Moroccan law regulates electoral campaign expenses by setting a cap on candidates' spending for political advertising and requiring each candidate or list agent to prepare a detailed statement of the sources of campaign financing (Decree No. 2.15.452). However, political parties do not monitor the expenses of their candidates during electoral campaigns and pay little attention to reports from the Court of Auditors, which is the body authorised to audit the expenses of political parties.

⁸¹ High Commission for Planning (2024) 'Wage disparities between genders in urban areas: The role of gender discrimination' accessed 28 September 2024, <https://www.hcp.ma/file/240105>.

⁸² Attac Morocco (2014) 'Understanding for Confrontation: Women's Struggle with Microcredit', accessed 29 September 2024, <https://arabic.cadtm.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/brochure-arabe1.pdf>.

⁸³ Since the 1970s, Morocco has been experiencing political disengagement, including electoral abstention among Moroccan youth. This situation prompted the state to work on restoring the importance of political engagement by raising awareness among citizens (especially youth and women) to participate in political life through discriminatory measures. These include the establishment of a Consultative Council for Youth and Associative Work (Articles 33 and 170 of the 2011 Constitution), which aims to expand and generalise youth participation in economic and social development and facilitate their access to political, cultural, and scientific fields. Additionally, the Regulatory Law No. 29.11 related to political parties allows anyone aged 18 and registered on the general electoral rolls, who enjoys their civil and political rights, to establish a political party or be among its managing members or freely join any legally established political party. Furthermore, Regulatory Law No. 27.11 concerning the House of Representatives allocated a national list within a 'quota' for youth, comprising 30 young individuals of both genders. For more, see: Cheraïbi Benani, Mounia (1995) *Submissive and Rebels: Moroccan Youth*, (Mediterranean Collection).

⁸⁴ Moroccan Organisation for Family Justice (2023) 'Political Empowerment of Women: A Lever for Achieving Equality in Elected Councils and Professional Chambers', University of Salé.

⁸⁵ American University in Washington (2012) 'Men Rule', Washington.

⁸⁶ Al-Haras, Mokhtar (2008) *Women and Decision-Making in Morocco*, First Edition. Beirut: University Institute for Studies, Publishing, and Distribution "Majd."