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Women's Civic and Political Participation in Morocco after Arab Spring (2011-2024).

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the dynamics of women's civic and political participation in Morocco following the Arab Spring, specifically from 2011 to 2024. The primary objective is to explore how legal, institutional amendments have influenced women's roles in civic political participation, addressing the research question of How has the policy framework impacted women's civic and political participation in Morocco post-Arab Spring (2011-2024).

The study employs a qualitative methodology, including a systematic review of relevant literature and in-depth interviews with key stakeholders, women activists and political leaders. This approach allows for a comprehensive understanding of the historical context and current challenges faced by women in Morocco. The findings reveal that while significant progress has been made in terms of constitutional amendments and legislative reforms aimed at enhancing women's political participation, persistent socio-cultural barriers continue to hinder their full engagement. The study identifies critical factors such as economic conditions, social norms, and institutional frameworks that shape women's experiences in the political landscape.

In conclusion, despite the advancements post-Arab Spring, there remains a pressing need for continued advocacy and policy reform to address the systemic barriers faced by women. The implications of this research highlight the importance of encouragement an inclusive political environment that empowers women, ultimately contributing to the broader goals of democracy and human rights in Morocco.

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ABBREVIATIONS & ACRONYMS

1. UNDP - United Nations Development Programme
2. MENA - Middle East and North Africa
3. NGOs - Non-Governmental Organizations
4. UNICEF - United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
5. PR - Proportional Representation
6. VPQ - Voluntary Party Quotas
7. LCQ - Legislative Candidate Quotas
8. RS - Reserved Seats
9. CSOs - Civil Society Organizations
10. FBOs - Faith-Based Organizations
11. CVI - Content Validity Index
12. SPSS - Statistical Package for the Social Science

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Women's rights to political and civic participation in the MENA region have traditionally been undermined under prevalent authoritarian regimes, particularly in the Moroccan case under study. Morocco offers a rich and complex case study for examining women's political participation in the Arab region. Its diverse political landscape, recent constitutional reforms, and experience during the Arab Spring provide a valuable context for understanding the factors influencing women's engagement in politics. While there has been progress in certain areas, Morocco's experience also highlights the challenges faced in implementing legal changes and ensuring substantive equality. By studying Morocco, researchers can gain valuable insights into the strategies needed to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in the Arab region. Recent years have been marked by calls for a more 'democratic' organization of the government of Morocco's monarchic regime, where decision-making would better reflect 'the will of the people'. A favourable political climate that allows women equal chances in being appointed to leadership positions, electoral processes, and policy formulation is understood to foster a more democratically functional society (Dahlerup, 2006).

The Arab Spring uprisings in 2011, which were incited by a variety of socio-economic and political factors as popular demands against poverty and political oppression as well as in favor of political freedom and social justice, have altered the political dynamics of the region (Lynch, 2011).

The Libyan, Tunisian, and Egyptian uprisings of 2011 saw opposing parties pushing for more democratic changes and demands to expand women's rights in social life. Uprisings by religious-oriented movements have also affected women's activism and call for equality. There were slight improvements in some cultures in terms of women's rights, however, the situation remained contested, with cases of violence against women, limited political representation, and acute patriarchal approaches that hinder women's emancipation (Al-Ali & Laffey, 2011).

Eventually, while in Tunisia the protests resulted in toppling president Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali and setting a new democratic system (Zoabi & Gershon, 2013); in Egypt the uprising was marked by a political transition characterized by both an expansion and a contraction of democracy leading to regime change (Brownlee, 2011). In Morocco, where the monarchic regime gives the kingship

supremacy over the constitution as enshrined in the “Bay’a” (pledge of allegiance), King Mohammad VI rushed to introduce constitutional reforms in a bid to calm protesters (Arroub, 2017). This political scenery has opened both prospects and odds for Moroccan women (Inter Parliamentary Union, 2023). In this regard, the Arab Spring and the uprisings had opened new avenues for women’s continued activism and their political participation, but at the same time they have shed light on the core predicament of women in the region

Although Morocco's constitution guarantees equality of both genders and including women's political rights, and in spite of some progress made at the level of women's civic and political participation across the decades, women have remained poorly represented in the country's political life up until recently. The political space has not (yet) become more democratized and gender-inclusive in Morocco. Rather, politics remains highly manipulated and controlled by the regime of Mohamed VI (Žvan Elliott, 2019). These challenges, which include hereditarily ordained discrimination in social relations and lack of access to resources, have contributed to a very low representation of women in the public sphere. Although prior research has taken preliminary looks at aspects of women’s political participation in Morocco, on establishing the relationship between the constitutional and legislative provisions and implementation structures post Arab Spring in relation to women’s civil and political rights are scanty. In this direction, this study seeks to contribute to literature by assessing how the Arab spring affected the political participation of women and the prospects as well as problems that ensued after its occurrence. Therefore, the study aims at identifying these dynamics so as to provide a background for evidence-based policies and programs in a bid to empowering the women in political leadership in Morocco.

By providing empirical evidence on the factors influencing Morocco’s women's civic and political participation, this study offers valuable insights for the development of targeted interventions to enhance women’s representation and engagement in public life for policymakers, civil society, women’s rights activists, academics, and international development stakeholders.

Therefore, we posit the following research question: What has been the impact of the constitutional framework on women's civic and political participation in Morocco post-Arab Spring (2011-2024) and how did legislative framework influence this civic and political participation? Additionally, to what extent has the implementation framework been effective in promoting women's civic and political participation in Morocco post-Arab Spring (2011-2024)? In other words, this research aims to understand whether the legal reforms and institutional changes that have occurred

since the Arab Spring have resulted in real changes in women's representation in decision-making bodies or if they remain in essence symbolic by examining the effects of the constitutional and institutional changes between 2011 and 2024 on women's participation in the public arena, particularly whether the changes have led to enhanced political participation and representation of women.

In addition, this study seeks to understand cultural and structural dynamics by evaluating the impact of legal changes on their actual effects on women's political participation. In this way, this research helps to advance the ongoing debates on gender, governance, and political change in the MENA region with a particular reference to Morocco.

Hence, this study mainly seeks to assess the impact of the policy framework on women's civic and political participation in Morocco post-Arab Spring (2011-2024). More particularly, we first assess the impact of the constitutional framework on women's civic and political participation in Morocco post-Arab Spring (2011-2024); second, we examine the relationship between the legislative framework and women's civic and political participation in Morocco post-Arab Spring (2011-2024); and finally, we attempt to evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation framework in promoting women's civic and political participation in Morocco post-Arab Spring (2011-2024).

1.2 Research Problem

A society which is democratically functional should allow women full participation in politics and other social issues and decision-making. This demands favourable political climate that will allow women equal chances in being appointed to leadership positions, electoral processes, and policy formulation (Dahlerup, 2006). It would mean that there would be a more 'democratic' organisation of the government, where decision-making would better reflect 'the will of the people'.

Although Morocco's constitution guarantees equality of both genders and more so women's political rights, women are poorly represented in the political life of the country. The Libyan, Tunisian, and Egyptian Arab Spring uprisings of 2011 saw opposition pushing for more democratic changes and wishing to expand women's rights in social life; the latter political landscape that has opened both prospects and odds for Moroccan women (Inter Parliamentary Union, 2023). In addition, female representation in local leadership and decision-making forums is even worse suggesting that it in the local politics leadership women are still marginalized. These challenges which include

hereditarily ordained discrimination in social relations and lack of access to resources, has contributed to a very low representation of women in the public sphere.

Though prior research has taken preliminary focus on the aspects of women's political participation in Morocco, studies on establishing the relationship between the constitutional and legislative provisions and implementation structures post Arab Spring in relation to women's civil and political rights are scanty. In view of this, this study seeks to contribute to literature by assessing how the Arab spring affected the political participation of women and the prospects as well as problems that ensued after its occurrence. Therefore, the study aims at identifying these dynamics so as to provide a background for evidence-based policies and programs in a bid to empowering the women in political leadership in Morocco.

1.3 Research Objectives

1.3.1 General Objective

To assess the impact of the policy framework on women's civic and political participation in Morocco post-Arab Spring (2011-2024).

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

- i. To assess the impact of the constitutional framework on women's civic and political participation in Morocco post-Arab Spring (2011-2024).
- ii. To examine the relationship between the legislative framework and women's civic and political participation in Morocco post-Arab Spring (2011-2024).
- iii. To evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation framework in promoting women's civic and political participation in Morocco post-Arab Spring (2011-2024).

1.4 Research Hypothesis

1.4.1 General Hypothesis

The policy framework does not impact women's civic and political participation in Morocco post-Arab Spring (2011-2024).

1.4.2 Specific Research hypotheses

- i. The constitutional framework does not have an influence on women's civic and political participation in Morocco post-Arab Spring (2011-2024).

- ii. There is no relationship between the legislative framework and women's civic and political participation in Morocco post-Arab Spring (2011-2024).
- iii. The implementation framework is not effective in promoting women's civic and political participation in Morocco post-Arab Spring (2011-2024)

1.5 Research Questions

1.5.1 General research questions

How has the policy framework impacted women's civic and political participation in Morocco post-Arab Spring (2011-2024)?

1.5.2 Specific Research Questions

- i. What is the impact of the constitutional framework on women's civic and political participation in Morocco post-Arab Spring (2011-2024)?
- ii. How does the legislative framework influence women's civic and political participation in Morocco post-Arab Spring (2011-2024)?
- iii. To what extent has the implementation framework been effective in promoting women's civic and political participation in Morocco post-Arab Spring (2011-2024)?

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study offers valuable insights for policymakers, civil society, women's rights activists, academics, and international development stakeholders. By providing empirical evidence on the factors influencing women's civic and political participation in Morocco post-Arab Spring, the research contributes to informed policymaking, advocacy efforts, and academic discourse. The findings can inform the development of targeted interventions to enhance women's representation and engagement in public life.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

Data availability and quality for women's civic and political participation in Morocco might be limited and inconsistent. To address this, a mixed-methods approach combining quantitative and qualitative data will be employed, with triangulation of findings from multiple sources to enhance reliability.

Generalizability of findings to other countries might be restricted due to cultural and political differences. Identifying commonalities and differences with similar cases will contribute to broader discussions on women's political participation.

Researcher bias can influence the research process; therefore, rigorous methodological approaches, including reflexivity and peer review, will be used to minimize its impact.

Time and resource constraints might affect the study's depth and breadth. Prioritizing research questions, effective time management, and potential collaborations can optimize resource utilization.

1.8 Organization of the Study

In the following, we provide a brief historical background of the study as a backdrop to better understand the problem facing women's rights in Morocco, in addition to a systematic literature review showcasing the studies concerned with women's rights in Morocco in the last decade to illustrate further research needs in Chapter 3. Therefore, we focus mainly on exploring the extent to which constitutional and legislative implementations concerning women's political roles have come as well as understanding leading women's experiences in civic political sphere which we attempt to address in Chapter 4 (Results). Finally, in light of previous studies and data coming out from our research and interviews with female leaders, officials and activists, we discuss and interpret the trajectory of women's civic and political participation in Morocco.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In this section we begin with an overview of the history and the literature of women's civic and political participation before, during and after the Arab Spring in Morocco. We then investigate the theoretical and conceptual frameworks and models relevant to the research and to previous studies on the issue; thus, setting the theoretical and empirical landscape within which the study is underpinned. It gives a clear delimitation of the key ideas and frameworks that the research relies on and goes further to set the context of the study and its consequent chapters.

Briefly, through a systematic review of relevant theoretical and empirical literature published mainly between 2011 and 2024 about women's civic and political participation in the post-Arab Spring context, six related elements have been covered by previous studies: 1) Social and cultural factors (Ennaji, 2010; Sadiqi, 2008; Wuerth, 2005); 2) Economic conditions (Fabiani et al., 2023; World Bank, 2019); 3) Political environment (Sater, 2007) ; and 4) Constitutional (Delbecchi 2017; Madani, Maghraoui, Zerhouni 2012; Manal, 2020), legislative (Ahmed, 2015; Ennaji, 2016; Parejo-Fernández and El Khamsi, 2021; Sadiqi, 2008; Smith, 2018;Wuerth, 2005) and legal (Ara, F., 2019) ; 5) Institutional Reforms (Fabiani et al., 2023; Natter, 2020; Hüllen, 2015; Köprülü & Abdulmajeed, 2018; Sadiki & Bouandel, 2016) and 6) finally, aspects of policy implementations (Ennaji, 2010, 2016...).It is found that women's political participation in Morocco has been influenced by constitutional provisions. Therefore, in line with the use of quantitative data and large sample size, Franceschet et al. (2012') analyse the effect of quotas on a global level. Ennaji (2010, 2016) uses historical and legal analysis, making a historical analysis of the Moroccan constitution to scrutinize the women's rights. Parejo-Fernández and El Khamsi (2021) rely on a qualitative approach, analyzing discourse and media representation to understand the ongoing barriers faced by women in Moroccan politics.

Most importantly, the legislative reforms in Morocco have included the Family Law reforms (or Mudawana) in 2004, which partially liberalised women's rights in spite of persisting gender inequalities (Sadiqi, 2008), and the 2011 Constitution, in efforts to lift the political representation of women. According to studies by Franceschet, et al. (2012), many countries have proven the potential of gender quotas. As Ennaji (2010) and Sadiqi (2008) mention, traditional gender inequality and challenges in the implementation of laws continue to bar the way forward. Any efficiency in the

legislation is pegged to aspects such as its enforcement, cultural norms, and availability of resources, especially to the rural woman.

The empowerment of women through the implementation of policies is what holds the key to the realization of the potential of legislative reforms. According to Ennaji (2010), Ftouhi et al. (2020), and Parejo-Fernández and El Khamsi (2021), among the limitations and challenges are the inadequate resources, weak institutional capacity, and cultural barriers. The role played by Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) through advocacy and monitoring of the implementation process is very important, but their collaboration with government agencies remains complex. Though efforts have been taken to bridge the gap in gender equality in political participation, huge gaps remain.

2.2.1 Historical Background of the Study

2.2.1.1 Women's Civic and Political Participation before, during and After the Arab Spring in Morocco

Pre-Arab Spring women in MENA lacked many opportunities as citizens and especially in voting and holding political positions. The sociopolitical factors consisting of traditional practices of patriarchy, laws and norms of gender restrained women's possibilities of participating in politico-public spheres (Al-Ali and Laffey, 2011). In some countries there were gradual improvements in the status of women, but as a general rule, women were excluded from the decision-making. Women suffered low political mobilization and had little or no place in legal structures such as government and the bodies that made decisions (Ennaji, 2010).

The Arab Spring uprisings became an important reference point for women activism and voting in the states of MENA. Women engaged in protests as they walked with men to March for democracy, human rights and better employment (Al-Ali & Laffey, 2011). Their participation questioned the gender roles and conventions, pointing at women's desire for change. However, women's experience of the Arab Spring present dissimilarities; and an account of the Arab Spring cannot elude a note on the events that surrounded it and how women were affected. While some women assumed the leadership posts and were most effective in strategizing reforms and political changes, on the other hand some of them became subjects to violations, harassment and discrimination (Al-Ali & Laffey, 2011). These uprisings also unveiled the rooted patriarchy that was

still rampant in the region, and which limited women's political engagement (Zoabi and Gershon, 2013).

The Arab Spring provided both opportunities and challenges for women's civic and political participation in the MENA region. Some countries, such as Tunisia, implemented constitutional changes and quotas to enhance women's representation in government (Franceschet, Krook, & Piscopo, 2012). However, these gains were often fragile and faced setbacks due to political instability and conservative backlash. In Morocco, while quotas were introduced following the 2011 constitutional changes, women remained politically marginalized (Sater, 2007). The country continued to grapple with discriminatory legal provisions and social norms that hindered women's empowerment.

2.2.2 Contextual Background

2.2.2.1 Social and Cultural Factors

According to Sadiqi (2008), culture and tradition played a very significant role in limiting women's participation in the public sphere in Morocco; most significantly owing to the extremely rigid patriarchal system in Morocco which does not allow women much freedom of movement. These social norms supplemented or endorsed by religious beliefs have restricted women's right to education, work and voting (Ennaji, 2010). Although there has been a change in the women legal status in the country especially after the Family Law in 2004, the patriarchal values were present affecting women participation in the Arab Spring and its outcome (Wuerth, 2005).

2.2.2.2 Economic Conditions

The pre-Arab Spring Moroccan socio-economic context was one of rural/urban and male/female inequalities. This mainly included issues such as; high unemployment levels specially among the youths, this created social unrest which helped in driving the need for change. Even though the participation in education by women has tremendously improved, they experience difficulty when it comes to employment and a good number of them are stuck in low-wage earnings (World Bank, 2019). The above economics effects of cultures covered these economic disparities that affected the women's involvement in the Arab Spring and their chances of grabbing opportunities from the uprisings.

2.2.2.3 Political Environment

A gradual change to the monarchical system in Morocco, which is characterized by elected and appointed government representatives, has been underway in recent years. However, the civil liberties and rights for civic society and other political opponents have been restricted thus impacting the general political atmosphere. The Arab Spring seems to have given the region and its people a chance to fight for a change in status quo to be granted a better political participation. However, for various reasons, and despite the fact that the Moroccan government has effected some reforms such as constitutional, the changes have been incremental which affected women's political participation (Sater, 2007).

Gender relations in the socio-cultural, economic and political spheres have defined women's experience and possibilities for involvement in the public domain.

To comprehensively understand the impact of the policy framework on women's civic and political participation in Morocco, this study focuses on three key dimensions: the constitutional structure of the system, the legislative structure of the system and the operational structure of the system. The choices to focus on these frameworks were informed by the fact that they affected the rights of women, political roles, and chances to participate in society. Although it has to be recognized that other policy dimensions, including economic and social policies, might also influence the opportunities for women's political activity, this paper is to underline and deploy the specific legal-institutional factors that are most consequential in constituting the political sphere for women. In this vein, it is the purpose of the research to map out key factors that surround women's political enfranchisement cross-culturally and to draw on such findings to make recommendations as to appropriate policy interventions supported by the three aforementioned frameworks.

2.3.1 Constitutional Framework and Women Civic & Political Participation

The first constitution in 1962 created a constitutional monarchy with Sultan Mohammed V making sure that the monarchy remained strong after the creation of a two-house parliament and an independent judiciary. In the years between 1965 and 1972, political instability was characteristic of Morocco; King Hassan II continued the process of strengthening the monarchy's authority and actively controlling the government. In 1992 and 1996, the government started to liberalize the political system and increase the role of the parliament, but the monarchy still held the most power. The most dramatic change happened in 2011 following the Arab Spring where major changes

increased the powers of the Prime Minister, improved the protection of human rights and the independence of the judiciary. These reforms also acknowledged Morocco's cultural pluralism and devolved system of government because they decentralized more powers to regional authorities.

Discussions regarding the balance between traditional values and modern human rights norms, suggest that while the Constitution lays a foundation for gender equality, its practical implementation may be influenced by ongoing cultural and religious dynamics.

Despite these efforts, the King still had significant power, especially in security, religious, and foreign affairs, which was still a sign of Morocco's modernization process, but keeping the monarchy's power strong.

Reforms at the Constitutional level was made in 2011 in Morocco where the country sought to improve the standing of women in the society, including their participation in the political arena. The constitution of the Kingdom of Morocco has enshrined equality of men and women in all civil, political, economic, social, cultural, and environmental spheres in article 19 of the Constitution. It is a progressive framework that enshrined rights and democratic principle that were either not existent or were implicit (Madani, Maghraoui, & Zerhouni, 2012).

Moroccan Constitution simultaneously references universally recognized human rights and elements specific to national identity, such as Islam and the 'permanent character of the kingdom' (known as "constantes du royaume" in French and "thawabit al mamlakah" in Arabic). This dual focus creates complexities in understanding and interpreting a document that seeks to align with both the ideals of liberal democracy and a specific interpretation of 'tradition' (Madani, Maghraoui, Zerhouni 2012)

During the February 20th movement which paralleled the Arab Spring, King Mohammed VI of Morocco endorsed a new constitution in response to widespread protests. this constitution preserved the monarch's significant powers but made progressive strides in human rights. It recognized Amazigh as an official language and bolstered gender equality and political participation. Article 19 endorsed gender parity in representation, while Article 30 affirmed the equal voting rights and political participation of men and women. Additionally, Article 25 safeguarded freedom of thought and expression, and the right to peaceful assembly was strengthened. In Parliament, representation was enhanced with a dedicated 60-woman national list, up from 30, and a new 30-member youth list to ensure greater diversity (Delbecchi 2017) .

FLHS, Cadi Ayyad University published a journal called *The Road a Head* (Slimani 2023). With the introduction of Morocco's new constitution in 2011 following the Arab Spring and February 20th Movement, a major focus has been the elimination of gender discrimination. However, simply changing laws is not sufficient for achieving true equality. A deeper transformation in societal attitudes and values is necessary. Despite legal advancements, discrimination against women persists in society and workplaces. Zirari noted the ineffectiveness of legal reforms alone. Furthermore, a 2012 UN study highlighted resistance from conservative and patriarchal forces, particularly among judges and magistrates, whose traditional mindsets hinder the practical application of these reforms. Therefore, enhancing the training and altering the attitudes of judicial authorities is crucial to enforcing these laws effectively and promoting genuine equality.

But the question is whether these articles were implemented or not, all the citizens should have equal opportunity in terms of civic and social participation. Manal 2020 discussed her paper *Women's rights post 11*. It said the 20 February Movement's failure to address gender issues led to Article 19 of the 2011 Moroccan constitution being seen as a landmark for women's rights. This article explicitly acknowledges gender equality in various fields for the first time. However, its implementation remains a "dream deferred" due to inherent ambiguities and contradictions. While it promotes gender parity, it also emphasizes adherence to national "constants," such as religious values, creating a tension between progressive gender policies and traditional religious norms. This unresolved conflict reflects the ongoing struggle between changeable legal frameworks and immutable religious doctrines, with no clear strategy from the state on reconciling these opposing forces. Despite these challenges, the article underscores the importance of respecting Islamic values, even if they clash with the pursuit of gender equality.

An analysis of Article 30 in the context of Morocco's current situation reveals both successes and areas where expectations have not fully materialized. While the constitution provides a robust framework for gender equality, the practical implementation of these provisions has been uneven. The legal mandate to encourage equal access to elective functions has led to some legislative reforms, including quota systems in local and national electoral lists, aimed at increasing female political representation. However, challenges persist. Despite the constitutional and legislative advancements, the actual empowerment of women within political parties and in governance remains limited. Women's representation in significant decision-making roles is still lower than desired, often due to societal attitudes, lack of support from political parties, and institutional barriers that inadvertently favor male candidates. Moreover, while quotas increase quantity, they do not necessarily enhance the

quality of participation or the influence women have in political decisions, which remains a critical concern

The constitution struggles to decentralise power to elected institutions while attempting to reign in the monarchy; the king maintains significant executive authority in military, foreign and judicial affairs. This has given rise to criticisms that the constitutional changes are cosmetic, are meant to respond to the calls for democracy while the core anti-democratic features remain intact. However, the independence of the judiciary cannot be said to be strong bearing mind that they are accused of being political. This has been a debilitating facade between what Morocco aspires to be at the constitutional level and what it actually is in practice.

Moroccan constitution for the first time in the history of constitutional law intertwines international human rights with distinct features of Moroccan culture, including Islam and the country's permanency. With respect to this concern, the document shows a struggle between liberal democratic norms with cultural/ traditional values. The 2011 constitution was adopted in wake of the Arab Spring protestors, which gave most of the power to the monarchy as well as some liberal changes. It legalized the Amazigh language, spored women's rights, and enlarged the political arena. Article 19 guarantees women right of proportionate representation, Article 30 on the other hand guarantees equal franchise rights. Also, preserved in Article 25 are the rights to think, speak, and rally. Since this time, the Parliament has included a 60-woman national list and a 30-member youth list (Delbecchi, 2017). In this case, thus, while constitutional changes seek to correct imbalances in the society by providing for gender equality, the fight against discriminations in the society demands more than just the drawing up of a new constitution. Thus, though laws have been passed for equality and the abolishment of discriminations, discriminations subsist.

Article 19 has formulated equality between man and women, but the enforcement of this law is a bit prerogative. This is so despite quotas that have ensured the increased representation of women in the political realm, women's voice within political parties and stages of governance is still fairly restrained. A culture of suppressing women for higher responsibilities, political affiliation and perceived institutional cultures are some of the factors that have hampered the progress of women to decision-making positions. Article 30 envisages equal opportunity to competitive positions and is not devoid of obstacles. Despite this, quotas and other legislative reforms that have been adopted in the countries of the world have increased the proportion of females in legislative bodies, but they hardly

exert much political power. Apparently, issues inherent in the society and institutions do not allow women to be fully involved in decision-making processes.

However, the impact of these reforms to the enhancement of substantive representation and Women's voice in policymaking is still contentious (Ennaji, 2016).

Such have been the constitutional gains, however, there are continued challenges in realising the women's rights enshrine in the laws. Thus, Ennaji (2010) has pointed to the existence of a paradox: on the one hand, legal non-discrimination of women as voters and candidates; on the other hand, continued cultural and social barriers to women's political involvement. However, the quota system has been realized in an irregular manner with differences in category of women in terms of social and economic status (Ftouhi et al., 2020). Rules that are constitutional or legally required also known as legal mandates can also enhance female representation in the decision-making bodies according to Franceschet, Krook, and Piscopo (2012). "Constitutional provisions can indeed trigger a critical mass by noticing that quotas independently predict the incidence of women in Parliament is positive." (Staub and Firmstone, 2012)

Speaking of limitations and challenges, Ennaji (2010) contributes to the argument that legal changes cannot be enough to alter various pervasive precepts and practices that undermine women's political participation. As Sater (2007) also explored, the status of women's empowerment in Morocco has been mixed at best: Women who became parliamentarians remained to be marginal in terms of power in their respective political parties and the political structure. Focusing on the Moroccan context, one more work sheds the light on the relationship between constitutionalism and women's political representation. Discussing the changes in Moroccan law, Ennaji (2016) pays considerable attention to the role of the 2011 constitutional changes that provided for the gender equality principles. Nevertheless, she also discusses implementation issues to the present day and cultural concerns.

Parejo-Fernández and El Khamsi (2021) have a more pessimistic view asserting that even though much progress has been achieved at the constitutional level much has still not changed at ministerial level in Morocco regarding women. Their study thus points to the flaw in the current general framework warning that it may not be adequate to eliminate well-rooted gender bias in the political auspice.

Moroccan constitution has been subjected to several revision processes with a view of improving women's political rights. The articles 19 and 30 of the 2011 constitution of Morocco clearly state the principles of gender parity and equal voting rights, which is the country's way of ensuring that it complies with the international human rights standards. These reforms have seen women being accorded a place in the legislative assemblies through the quota systems and other legislative instruments which is a sign of achievement in the fight for gender equality. However, the preceding democratic and economic reforms have resulted into the increase of women in the parliament, but the challenge now is balancing power between women and men and balancing women's decision-making power over scarce resources. From the analysed papers, it is clear that the way the constitution regulates the political process influences women's civil and political rights in a complex way. Although constitutional advances may open door for women in politics, practices to ensure their participation in parliaments as well as complete social transformation are inevitable for the representation of women in politics. The case of Morocco illustrates such nuances, thereby pointing to the need to undertake more studies that compare the ways in which legal, cultural and political factors affect women's political participation.

2.3.2 Legislative Framework and Women Civic & Political Participation

The electoral system of a country impacts the political representation of women. According to Ara, F. (2019), Electoral systems can be broadly categorized as majority/plurality, proportional, and mixed systems. Majority/plurality systems, used in 46% of countries globally, prioritize single candidates who appeal to the majority of voters, potentially disadvantaging female candidates due to perceived electability concerns. Proportional representation systems, practiced in 36% of countries, allocate parliamentary seats based on parties' share of total votes, offering more opportunities for women's representation through party lists. Mixed systems, found in about 15% of countries, combine elements of both majority/plurality and proportional systems, potentially increasing female candidates' chances through party lists while preserving some seats for direct election. Quotas, a common strategy to enhance women's participation, include voluntary party quotas, legislative candidate quotas, and reserved seats. Voluntary party quotas, prevalent in developed countries, aim to ensure a specific proportion of female candidates. Legislative quotas, emerging in developing nations, reserve a portion of electoral lists for women. Reserved seats, specified in constitutions or laws, allocate seats to women based on electoral results or through separate lists. Despite debates on quotas' effectiveness and potential drawbacks, they remain integral to efforts to increase women's

political participation globally. However, controversy surrounding quota implementation can hinder women's advancement to top political positions.

Family law reform, known as the Moudawana reform that was adopted in 2004 also enhanced women's position and rights in relationship to marriage, divorce and children (Ahmed, 2015). This was only one of the many reforms the Moroccan government has made, indeed, especially in the recent years, aiming at enhancing women's situation and power. Still.

The number of women elected and or appointed to political positions in a certain country depends on the electoral system of that country. It is thereby possible to distinguish three broad categories of electoral systems: majority/plurality, proportional, and mixed- or blended- systems. Duverger's hypothesis; majority/plurality systems that are currently in use in 46 % of the country prefers unmarried winners of the majority's votes probably causing lots of concern to female candidates with their chances of winning due to the fears of not garnering majority of the votes. Thus, with other opportunities in the frameworks of the party lists, proportional voting systems, which are used in 36% of countries of the world, divide the seats in the parliament in accordance with the share of the total vote. 15% of nations are considered to have mixed electoral systems: some aspects of which are proportional representation and majority/plurality elections. Overall, visions might offer female candidates a better prospect of victory through principles when some of the seats are left open for straight election through the use of mixed systems. Among the strategies used to enhance women's political representation include; reserved seats, voluntary party quotas, quotas for legislative aspirants and others (Smith, 2018). Voluntary party quotas, commonly implemented in developed countries, aim to ensure that a specific proportion of female candidates are presented to the parliament. As provided by law or constitution, the women are given seats either through specific seats or through election lists. For people who are skeptical about the effectiveness of quotas or are concerned by the potential hindrances they may pose to women seeking political representation, it is important to recognize that quotas are important to campaigns to increase women's participation in politics across the globe. However, the ownership of the discussion on quotas may prevent women from climbing the political ladder to leadership roles (Smith, 2018).

The new constitution of 2011 thus can be seen as a step forward in addressing women's rights in Morocco in what is often referred to as the 'Arab spring.' These changes were to increase women's political rights, where provisions on gender quotas for women in parliaments, political parties and election systems that were adopted aimed at improving the political rights of women (Ennaji, 2016).

AIDS Nonetheless, the question as to how these provisions have been effective in the enhancement of the lot of women has remained a topic of concern. Some of these changes include the following amendments that have characterized the legal scenario of women so far;

‘The constitution 2011 enshrines democratic principles and rights for women, including equal participation in politics. However, the monarchy's continued power and the judiciary's perceived bias have limited the effective implementation of these reforms’ (Madani, Maghraoui, & Zerhouni, 2012). This is so because ‘The constitution seeks to balance universally recognized human rights with elements specific to Moroccan culture. This can create tensions and challenges in implementing progressive gender policies, for instance Quotas have contributed to a significant increase in women's representation in parliament’ (Delbecchi, 2017). ‘The 2011 constitution has increased women's representation in parliament. However, these quotas often lack substantive power, and women may still face marginalization within political parties and decision-making structures’ (Sater, 2007).

Deep-rooted societal and cultural issues continue to hinder women's political participation, despite legal reforms. These factors include Cultural Barriers which define Traditional gender roles and expectations and can thus limit women's opportunities for political engagement (Ennaji, 2010). The prevalent Patriarchal Attitudes: Are major Conservative forces, particularly among judges and magistrates, and may resist efforts to promote gender equality (Madani, Maghraoui, & Zerhouni, 2012).

The effective implementation of legal reforms and quotas is crucial for advancing women's participation. However, several challenges hinder implementation: Uneven Quota Implementation: Quotas may be implemented unevenly, with differences based on social and economic status (Ftouhi et al., 2020). Legal Loopholes also exist: Ennaji (2010) highlights the need for stronger enforcement mechanisms to address legal loopholes that undermine women's participation. Cultural Resistance is also prevalent: Sadiqi (2008) notes the continued influence of patriarchal attitudes and cultural barriers.

The literature reveals contradictory processes of interaction between the legislative environment and women’s civil and political activities. Even the best of well-framed legislation serves as an opportunity to encourage women’s participation if complemented by sound branding, implementation, enforcement and overall reculturing. The Moroccan case particularises these issues and calls for more legislative changes apart from the efforts that focus on changing the existing

citizens' social beliefs about women within political spheres. Indeed, the Moroccan legislative system has experienced some transformations in this regard in view of enhancing women's political participation. Although these reforms open up trajectories for improvements if not fully contentious these strategies have to be implemented and enforced as well as societally transformed. Successive research operations should compare the legislation objective content to women's subjectivities to determine its true role in women political enfranchisement.

2.3.3 Policy Implementation Framework and Women Civic & Political Participation

In the wake of the Arab Spring, Morocco has witnessed notable progress in terms of gender representation within its government. This shift is highlighted by the significant increase in female ministers, rising from just one woman holding a ministry position in 2011 to seven out of twenty-five by a recent count. This development is part of a broader trend observed across various nations that have undergone similar political upheavals, indicating a gradual but definitive move towards greater gender inclusivity in political arenas traditionally dominated by men. Despite ongoing acknowledgements of the critical need to enhance female participation in public governance, the representation of women in significant decision-making roles remains disappointingly low. According to the latest findings from the Higher Commission for Planning's 2021 study, highlighted in "A Lowdown on Gender-Lag in Moroccan Society: The Road Ahead" (IJSSHR, Volume 06 Issue 04, April 2023) , there is a persistent gender disparity in various professional sectors. For instance, women hold only 29.1% of ministerial positions within the government, which is less than one-third of the total. Furthermore, the proportion of female lawyers in Morocco stands at merely 22.3%, and a scant 12.8% of businesses, whether small, medium, or large, are led by women. These figures starkly illustrate the ongoing challenges in achieving gender parity in areas of public administration and business, reflecting a gap between the aspirational goals of gender equality advocates and the current realities.

According to constitution article 27 of the Morocco constitution (the citizens [feminine] and citizens [masculine] have the right of access to information held by the public administration, the elected institutions and the organs [organismes] invested with missions of public service.) This article protects the right of all citizens, regardless of gender, to access information held by public administration, elected institutions, and organizations with public service missions. This article promotes transparency and accountability in governance. Similarly, article 30 if the constitution promotes equal participation institutionally Article 30 focuses on electoral rights and political

participation. It stipulates that all adult Moroccan citizens with full civil and political rights have the right to vote and stand for election. The article calls for legislation to encourage equal access for women and men to elective positions. It also states that voting is both a personal right and a national duty. Additionally, the article provides for the possibility of foreign residents participating in local elections under specific conditions, in accordance with the law, international conventions, or reciprocity practices. These constitutional provisions aim to ensure equal access to information and promote democratic participation. These articles focus on transparency in governance and equal opportunities in the electoral process.

Moroccan feminist organizations are becoming more vocal in their requests, and on an institutional point of view, the number of women elected in Parliament keeps growing (2 in 1993, 60 in 2011).

The growth in the number of women elected to Parliament is a clear indicator of progress. From just 2 women in 1993 to 60 in 2011, this increase represents a substantial shift in political representation. This trend has continued, with 81 women elected to the House of Representatives in the 2016 elections, accounting for about 21% of the total seats.

The Moroccan government needs to address women's inclusion more effectively. According to the 2023 Global Gender Gap Report, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region remains the furthest from achieving gender parity, with a score of 62.6%. This represents a decline of 0.9 percentage points since the previous report, considering the same group of countries since 2006. The United Arab Emirates, Israel, and Bahrain lead the region in gender parity, while Morocco, Oman, and Algeria rank at the bottom. Notably, the three most populous countries in the region—Egypt, Algeria, and Morocco—have seen their parity scores drop since the last report. At the current pace, it will take 152 years to reach full parity in the region.

In the 2023 Global Gender Gap Index, Morocco received a score of 0.632, indicating a slight decrease with a score change of -0.003. The ranking change is also negative. This index highlights the challenges Morocco faces in advancing gender equality indeed, the constitutional process has transformed, embracing a more democratic approach compared to past constitutions, infusing the system with democratic core values. Nonetheless, the 2011 Constitution is still perceived by some observers as a "grant" from the sovereign, rather than a product of a democratically elected constituent assembly. Moreover, the separation of powers and women inclusion remains more theoretical than substantive, with the King continuing to hold near absolute, if not absolute, power. Because Morocco,

the King remains the principal figure in shaping political directives and making decisions of strategic significance for the nation. Article 49 stipulates that the King presides over the Council of Ministers, a state body responsible for addressing matters of national importance. According to Article 47, the King, after consulting with the head of government, retains the authority to dismiss ministers and dissolve the cabinet. Furthermore, Article 96 grants the King the power to dissolve the Houses of Parliament, contingent upon consultation with the President of the Constitutional Court and after informing the presidents of both parliamentary houses and the head of government, (Booley 2021). . While the King possesses significant power, he has not yet appointed more women to positions of civic participation.

In the new Morocco, certain democratic criteria have been met, such as the establishment of free and fair elections, the participation of multiple political parties representing the populace, a theoretical separation of powers, and the recognition of individual rights and freedoms. Morocco stands as an example of evolutionary change working towards a peaceful transition, yet this transition is far from complete. The onus now lies on various political actors to promulgate and implement laws as outlined in the Constitution. (Booley 2021)

Morocco has moved a long way regarding women's quota in its administration since the Arab Spring (HCP, 2021). The change is vivid and illustrated by the fact that the number of female ministers has recently increased dramatically, and as of twenty-five, seven of them appear to be women, as identified by the HCP in the year 2021 . Up to 2011, the Moroccan Cabinet (BMA) only had a single female minister for the total of fifty-six (HCP, 2021). This development also corresponds with another general trend that has been noticed in several countries that have gone through similar experience, and is indicative of a gradual process, at least, of gradual integration of gender in what have hitherto been predominantly male-dominated political structures.

Nevertheless, women are still not given suitable opportunities for the exercise of their skills and experience in crucial decision-making places in public governance (HCP, 2021). This is unfortunate since there is daily acknowledgment of the need to float more women into the public governance domain (HCP, 2021).

There was only one woman in a ministry in 2011 and to this date there are 36 ministry positions and only one of them is held by a woman (HCP, 2021). This development can be compared to a gradual but evident tendency towards greater gender sensitivity several countries have witnessed,

including the ones that have went through similar political transitions; there is a tendency to increase the participation of women in traditionally male-dominated political fields.

Nevertheless, women are still unable to take most of the core decision-making roles in public governance, as several studies show (HCP, 2021). This is disheartening especially considering that there is constant acknowledgement of the concerns of the need to enhance the number of women in public governance (HCP, 2021). The most recent findings from the Higher Commission for Planning's 2021 study, emphasized in "A Lowdown on Gender-Lag in Moroccan Society: in The Road Ahead ((HCP), 2021), various career domains with a stagnant gender disparity are reflected. For Instance, the percent of women is only 29. 1% of the ministerial government seats or below the third of the government seats in the parliament (Health Care Partnership Act, 2021). Furthermore, the representation of Moroccan women attorneys is only a twenty two percent representation. 3%, and only 12. Thus, exactly 8 percent of all big or small enterprises are owned by women (HCP, 2021). These rates strikingly illustrate the pursuit of greater equality within sectors of public administration as well as business despite being still in the distant future (HCP, 2021).

Moroccan Constitution also provides some legal rights on the issues of gender equality. In article 27 of the constitution, every Moroccan man and woman has the right to information held by the government, elected representatives and any organization that has responsibilities of the public service (Kingdom of Morocco, 2011). This article argues that person has a right to obtain any information concerning the elected bodies, public service agencies, or public administration without regard to the gender (Kingdom of Morocco, 2011). Along the same line, Article 30 focuses on the political activities and voting if it enhances equal participation in institutions (Kingdom of Morocco, 2011). It proclaims the voting and candidacy right as vested in every Moroccan citizen of voting age who holds full civil and political rights (Kingdom of Morocco, 2011).

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There is more fearless behavior on the part of Moroccan feminists, and political representation seems to improve when it comes to women in Parliament. One way of doing that would be by counting women MPs. Transformation in political representation: 1993...2 to 2001 ...17 and now sixty women are serving as the member of Australian Parliament at this year ". (HCP, qtd. This was a continuing trend, and 2016 election also brought another batch of more than eighty women to the US House or just under one-fifth out of all seats available.

The Government of Morocco, however, will have to work directly with the women, says HCP 2021. The MENA area, as per The World Economic Forum, WEF Zeroing in 2023 Global Gender Gap Report, highlighting a score of 62.6%, shows that this part of the world is still a long way to attain gender parity.

Yet, in the eyes of some observers, the 2011 Constitution remains a "gift" of the sovereign and is not the result of a democratically elected constituent assembly. Besides, the division of powers and the admission of women are still theoretical, and the King holds nearly total powers.

As Morocco is a monarchy, the King is still considered the most powerful leader in determining the political policies and decisions that dictate the future of the nation geopolitically speaking (Kingdom of Morocco, 2011). According to Article 49, the King is the head of the Council of Ministers, an independent body that has the goal of addressing primary issues related to the nation (Kingdom of Morocco, 2011). The use of Article 47, therefore, requires that the King removes ministers or dissolves the cabinet after having consulted with the head of state. In addition, Article 96 provides that the King can dissolve the Houses of Parliament if he has consulted the President of the Constitutional Court, first, and then announced it officially to the executive branch of government, as well as the leaders of the two houses of parliament. Since then, the latter has not used his gigantic influence to appoint more women in positions of civic engagement.

Some of the democratic requirements, like the creation of free and fair elections, the involvement of several political parties that are representative of the people, a theoretical division of powers, and the recognition of individual rights and freedoms, have all been met in the new Morocco. Although this process is still incomplete, Morocco stands as an example of evolutionary development striving toward peaceful transition. The Constitution now vests different political actors with the responsibility to legislate and execute laws according to its letter and spirit.

While the legislative reforms might open ways for women's engagement, it depends on the presence of strong mechanisms. Franceschet et al. (2012) noticed that quotas alone do not give ground for effective change. They called for comprehensive implementation frameworks; that is to say, reforming issues of candidate selection, training, and support systems for women within political parties was underlined.

Studies have opined several challenges that impede the implementation process effectively. Ennaji refers to legal loopholes and lack of mechanisms for enforcing them in practice (Ennaji, 2010). Moreover, as Sadiqi says, the cultural resistance and deeply rooted patriarchal attitudes are another obstacle for women to participate fully (Sadiqi, 2008). Besides, the political situation and provisions concerned are other reasons which influence the effectiveness of implementation frameworks.

Morocco represents an interesting case in the context of different implementation frameworks. While the new Constitution, adopted in 2011, established quotas for women's parliamentary representation, studies show that the framework remains poorly implemented. This is evident in the slow pace of progress in achieving ministerial positions, as Ennaji (2010) comments. Parejo-Fernández and El Khamsi (2021) highlight the need to create special conditions to address internal party dynamics and women's leadership aspirations.

Effective implementation therefore becomes the defining moment between the policy formulation and the elusiveness of the desired outcomes with respect to women's empowerment. Despite the fact that the legislative frameworks pose the blueprint for advancing women's rights, the translation into tangible benefits necessitates efficient mechanisms of implementation. One of the cardinal challenges in the implementation of policies on women's empowerment pertains to the policy-practice gap. This discrepancy is usually attributed to limited resources, weak institutional capacity, and prevailing patriarchal norms. Government agencies responsible for addressing women's issues in Morocco have faced impediments arising from financial constraint, human resource limitation, and bureaucratic inertia. These impediments have crippled their efforts at designing, implementing, and monitoring effectively programs aimed at empowering women.

The decentralization of its governance has made the process to be implemented in Morocco more complicated. Decentralization can open up space for more responsiveness to local needs but creates problems around coordination and resource allocation. As many studies have revealed, there are differences in the implementation outcome across different regions and usually rural areas face more difficulties in accessing programs related to women's empowerment. This will go side by side with an overarching approach: the building of institutional capacity, adequate allocation of resources, and involvement of stakeholders. In addition, monitoring and evaluation systems should be available to monitor progress, point out challenges, and provide the impetus to make adjustments.

The civil societies play a very basic role in advocating and monitoring the implementation of legislations. Wuerth (2005), points out that "Moroccan women's rights organizations make fundamental contributions to seeking legal reforms on family law." Contributions by CSOs cannot be underrated in the implementation process. In most cases, it is CSOs that have the relevant expertise, networks, and legitimacy to reach these women and protect their rights. However, the CSOs too face multiple binds, such as funding constraints, capacity-building, or even political interference. For

effective implementation, collaborative partnership between government agencies and CSOs is very essential, but collaborative arrangements are often fraught with tension and power fights. Research gaps exist in implementation frameworks that CSOs can use to better help advance women's political participation.

Ennaji (2016) provides a broad review of women's participation in Morocco, including the challenges existing in the implementation of policies. The qualitative methodology applied emphasizes that there is a wide gap between the intention of the policies and the real outcome brought about by the cultural and social barriers existing during the implementation process. This study broadly places it in context but has a limited depth of information on specific mechanisms of implementation.

The research by Ftouhi et al. (2020) adds a dimension that is still somewhat localized with respect to the challenges of implementation that women face in rural areas. Their qualitative study underlines the role of local governance and engagement with civil society in supporting women's political aspirations. However, the focus on rural leadership misses out on the experiences of women living in urban areas. In their 2021 study, Parejo-Fernández and El Khamsi provide a critical review of the underrepresentation of women in political positions. Their methodology incorporates both quantitative and qualitative tools to reveal the complex interplay between formal institutions and informal networks in defining opportunities for women in politics. The study could illustrate how difficult it is for a woman to rise up to a leadership position but does not bring out how policies aimed at women's empowerment are translated into practice.

The literature reviewed herein on the explanation of women's political participation underscores the interplay between the legislative framework and its implementation mechanisms. For implementation to be effective, there must be strong legal structures, enforcement, shifting the culture, and support systems for women within the political institution. The complexities are well illustrated by the continuous efforts required in improving the implementation frameworks and seeking equal opportunities for women in all spheres of political life in Morocco.

2.4 Literature Review Gaps.

Previous studies on Moroccan women's civil and political engagement after the Arab Spring have mainly centered on legal changes like the adoption of quotas and amendments to the

constitution. Yet, there is a lack of knowledge about how these reforms can be practically applied and their efficiency in the real world. Although previous research has discussed the impact of patriarchal culture, few scholars have explored how these cultural factors moderate the legal rights to either encourage or discourage women's political participation. In addition, there are issues of inequality in the adoption of these reforms, especially between the urban and rural regions which are yet to be adequately addressed.

This study aims at filling these gaps by offering an evaluation of Morocco's constitutional and legislative changes and their implications for women's political representation since 2011. Thus, the purpose of this study is to provide a better understanding of whether these reforms have resulted in positive changes in women's political representation and leadership by analyzing both the presence of legal provisions and their implementation. Thus, it plays a part in the existing discussions on gender, governance, and political transformation in the MENA region with an emphasis on Morocco.

2.5 Theoretical Framework

2.5.1 Feminist Theory

This theory provides a framework for studying the communication of women on the fundamental law on gender equality, the study will be able to investigate if the constitutional framework enhances the political power of women or it is a hindrance to them. Feminist institutionalism, a part of the feminist theory, is most relevant to this study. This theory mainly focuses on how establishments, such as the state and the legal system, perpetuate or question the inequalities between genders (Lovenduski, 2005). Actually, the constitution is the first legal document that a country has; it shapes the ideas of institutional situations and is the main factor in the definition of the rights of and obligations to be exercised by citizens including women.

The research makes comparisons and distinctions of how the different constitutional provisions, e.g. women's rights, political participation, and gender equality, affect the positions of women in the different sectors of the Moroccan society. Particular areas of discussion are: Provisions on electoral systems, Political parties and Affirmative action measures. Also, the research also examines the way the constitution functions in combination with other laws, such as family law and criminal law, their roles in women's possibilities in politics.

The application of the concept of intersectionality also helps track how the constitution generates different outcomes among women by processing them with the other social identifiers, such

as, class, ethnicity, and religion, which are most common in the society (Crenshaw, 1989). The roots of inequality will thus be traced more effectively with the inclusion of the gender aspects; hence, the study mainly concentrates on if the women of Morocco have disparities worse than they have it in the absence/with the presence of constitutional changes.

The feminist theory supports an in-depth study into the issues surrounding the relationships between the legislative framework and women's participation in politics and citizenry. Now, it becomes feasible to do so by utilizing concepts such as feminist institutionalism and intersectionality in a way that gives clearer insight into the role of the constitution in creating opportunities for women within the Moroccan political sphere.

2.5.2 Institutional Theory

The institutional framework is one good lens through which to look at the issue of the link between the implementation framework and women's participation in civic and political life in Morocco. One thread of this theoretical perspective examines how formal and informal rules, norms, and practice structure organizational behavior and outcomes. Applying that framework, this research will be able to answer how institutional factors influence the implementation of policies and programs related to women's empowerment.

Institutional isomorphism—the hallmark of institutional theory argues that organizations become homogenous over time because they have to adhere to various external pressures to gain legitimacy. In this case, concerning women's empowerment programs, the implications are that implementation practices can be guided by institutional logics and norms. Government agencies may exhibit similar approaches to program design and delivery in response to pressures to conform to bureaucratic procedures or to please donors.

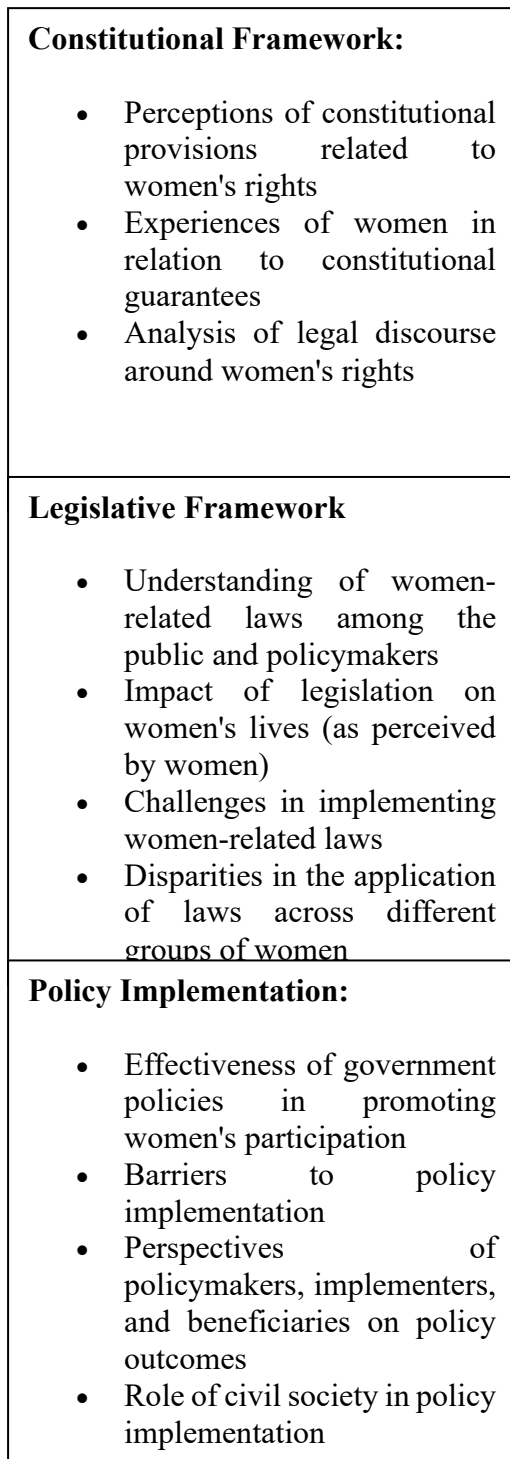
Modern institutional theory places a heavy emphasis on the role of decoupling, which means that organizations exhibit formal conformance to institutional expectations while retaining operational autonomy. This concept may help explain better the gap between policy intent and outcome insofar as it concerns the implementation of women's empowerment programs. This can easily happen when government agencies formally adopt responsive gender policies but fail in their implementation due to internal resistance or lack of resources.

Institutional theory provides a valuable lens through which one can understand the primary challenges and opportunities relating to the implementation of women's empowerment programs in Morocco. Since this study targets research into the institutional context within which these programs are operational, it will, therefore, be able to identify facilitators and hindrances to their effectiveness to promote women's civic and political participation.

2.6 Conceptual Framework

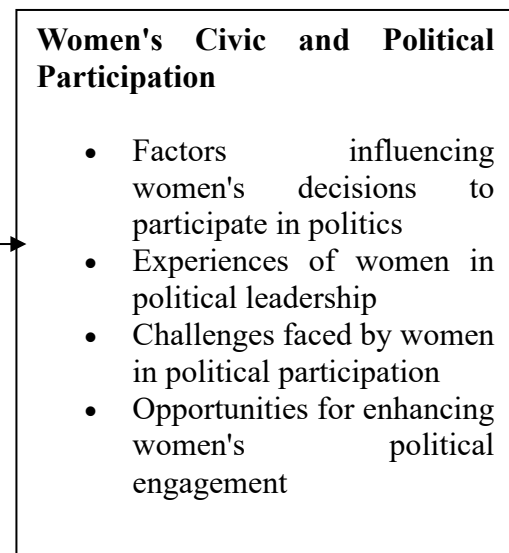
Independent Variables/Themes

Policy Frameworks



Dependent Variables/Theme

Women's Civic and Political Participation



2.7 Operationalization of Variables/Themes

Constitutional Framework: It implies knowledge of its perception and experience. This would be achieved through legal documents, interviews with key informants, legal experts, women's rights activists, and case studies of women who have had any experience with the legal system. This kind of data sources can thus be analyzed for information on how constitutional provisions have been interpreted and implemented and are experienced by different categories of women.

The legislative framework: Entails knowledge of content, implementation, and effects of the laws on women's rights. The researchers should analyze the existing legislation, conduct surveys and interviews in regard to knowledge by the public regarding these laws, and look into case studies of women who have had contact with the legal system. Government officials, police, and civil society involved in such an investigation will be able to shed more light on the challenges and gaps in law enforcement.

Implementation of Policy: This would mean the assessment of the effectiveness of programs the government has put in place in the process of empowering women. It is done through document analysis, key informant interviews, and focus group discussions with policymakers, program implementers, and beneficiaries. Such research allows one to consider different stakeholders' perceptions of the barriers to effective implementation and to explore opportunities that exist for making improvements.

Civic and political participation by women: This looks at what influences their involvement in political processes. This would be realized through in-depth interviews with women from different walks of life, case studies of women holding leadership positions, and focus group discussions with politically active women. In doing so, by evaluating their experiences and opinions, challenges and opportunities in increasing their participation in politics can be realized.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The chapter elaborates on the overall research design and methodology that was conducted to study complex dynamics in relation to the civic and political participation of women in post-Arab Spring Morocco. In this respect, the various considerations in this research include the design, the target population, sampling techniques, data collection methods, instruments, procedures for data analysis, and ethical considerations.

3.2. Research Area and scope of the study

The paper discusses women's civic and political participation in Morocco, with an emphasis on the post-Arab spring period. It focuses on how the constitutional framework, the legislative measures and their implementation impact on promoting women's civic and political participation. Despite legal reforms and constitutional stipulations that guarantee gender equality, a number of barriers hamper the effective participation of women in political and civic spheres.. Despite legal guarantees of gender equality, various barriers persist, limiting effective female participation in political and civic life. The study primarily centers on Rabat, Morocco, due to its concentration of government institutions, civil society organizations, and activist groups, reflecting the broader national dynamics influenced by Morocco's unique sociocultural and historical context.

Time Scope

The study covers the post-Arab Spring period from 2011 to 2024, allowing for an analysis of long-term trends in women's civic and political engagement.

3.3 Research Design

This research work adopts a qualitative research design. Qualitative research is the process of inquiry understood and interpreted in a meaning brought forward by individuals or groups of people in a situation. The approach will be most appropriate in explaining multifaceted and subtle factors that affect women's civic and political participation in Morocco. Those will be qualitative methods that

will help review nuanced views, experiences, and narratives related to women participating in civic and political spheres (Creswell, 2014).

The methods approach will allow data triangulation from multiple sources, increasing the validity and reliability of the findings. Qualitative data will give rich contextual understanding and further insight into the lived experiences of women and women involved in civic participation in Morocco.

3.4 Target Population

The study encompasses women from diverse regions of Morocco, including Rabat, as well as key stakeholders such as policymakers, activists, civil society leaders, and members of political entities involved in promoting women's rights and empowerment.

The target population comprised of women from Morocco aged between 18 to 65 years and actively or potentially engaged in civic and political activities. They include policymakers, activists, women leaders, and working women in governments residing in various parts of Morocco. The actual total population size is indeterminate.

3.5 Sample and Sampling Technique

3.5.1 Sampling Technique

This study uses a combination of purposive and convenient sampling methods. A purposive sampling technique is used to select participants who meet certain criteria relevant to the objectives of this study. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique where researchers deliberately choose participants on specific criteria relevant to the study (Patton, 2002). This method is widely used when a qualitative study of any certain phenomenon needs to be made in depth. It allows the selection of information-rich cases which will give a significant insight into the research question (Patton, 2002). In the case of purposive sampling, policymakers are identified with the help of official records and networks, the activists from NGO directories, social media, and professional networks, while convenient sampling helps find additional available activists. The women leaders are selected via professional networks, media, organizational contacts. The community members are chosen through local organizations and community groups.

The Snowball technique is very useful for recruiting activists and members of the community, using initial contact to identify other participants. This technique is useful when one is dealing with a population that is hard to access or even identify and involves a hidden population or a segment of the population that is stigmatized or marginalized. Snowball sampling may work well for conditions or situations in which participants may not readily be accessible through other sampling techniques. Therefore, the researcher identified the first relevant participants then they referred to other participants.

The dual approach ensures coverage and representation of the sample in both the most important informants and the diverse perspectives on women's civic and political participation in Morocco.

3.5.2 Sample Size

To ensure data saturation and representativeness across different sub-groups, the sample size will be carefully planned as follows. A total of 10 in-depth interviews will be conducted.

Table 3.1: Sample Size

Group	Sample Size
Policy Makers	1
Activists	2
Women leaders	4
Total	7

3.6 Data Collection Methods

Various techniques of data collection were employed, which provided an avenue for the finding of data to be triangulated, hence making the research more credible. These include:

In-depth interviews: Semi-structured interviews with policymakers, activists, women leaders, and community members were conducted to discuss their experiences, opinions, and challenges with regard to women's civic and political participation.

Document analysis: Governmental documents, reports, media articles were analyzed. This helped provide some context to the study and served to provide supporting information for data that emerged from the interviews.

3.7 Research Instruments

The research Instrument used in this study were an in-depth interview guide and a document analysis framework. The interview guide was specifically designed according to the objectives of the study, which focused on women's civic and political participation, constitutional amendments and institutional reforms in Morocco after the Arab Spring. The interview guide included 12 open-ended questions that allowed participants to freely share their experiences, opinions and recommendations. These questions are explored the main topics such as the trajectory of women's civic and political participation in Morocco since the Arab Spring, impact of constitutional amendments on gender equality, institutional reforms, and the evolving role of women in government and society. In addition, the document analysis framework facilitated a systematic review and analysis of secondary data to complement the interviews and ensure a comprehensive understanding of the issue.

3.8 Validity and Reliability

To enhance the validity of the study, several measures were used which included member checking, peer review, and data triangulation. Member checking was conducted to present early analysis of the study results back to the participants to ensure that their views were captured correctly. Peer review was conducted by two researchers with qualitative research background and familiar with the study's topic who assessed the methodological quality of the study including the research design, data collection and thematic analysis. This feedback was then incorporated into the research and helped to increase the validity of the results. Triangulation was used whereby data from different sources were compared. This process included the use of reliable data collection procedures for all the cases, giving a clear account of the research process, and the use of inter-observer reliability checks during coding to enhance reliability in the study.

3.9 Field Work and Interviews Timeframe and Procedure

Fieldwork and interviews were carried out from mid-May to end of July 2024. The researcher identified government institutions, NGOs, professional associations and individual activists in Rabat,

Morocco and purposively and snowball selected participants. The initial participants were purposively contacting them via email and phone. The rest of the participants were reached through snowball sampling. This approach made it possible to have a diverse representation of the policymakers, activists, and women leaders.

Scheduling of interviews was done based on participants' availability; face-to-face interviews were conducted in Rabat. Out of the 13 people that were contacted, 7 consented to participate in the study while 6 declined to participate in the study. Nevertheless, the data collected in this study was useful in understanding the level of women's civil and political engagement in Morocco after Arab Spring.

3.10 Data Analysis

Qualitative data from the interview are subjected to the process of thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is the process that involves identifying, coding, and categorizing patterns within the data to develop overarching themes. It is as described by Braun and Clarke in 2006, Document analysis was done in respect of content analysis to extract relevant information and support findings from interviews. The thematic analysis was facilitated by the use of Taguette, an open-source qualitative data analysis software, which allowed for efficient coding and organization of the data.

3.11 Ethical Considerations

The design and execution of the study were ethical. Subjects gave informed consent. Participants were anonymous and confidential. The data was secure, and the study had ethical approval from the institution.

Chapter Four

Results and Data Analysis

4.0 Introduction

This chapter analyzes the dynamics and trajectories of women's civic and political participation in Morocco with special reference to the period pre and post Arab spring. The structure of the analysis is based on the key areas such as the historical experience of women's engagement, the results of the constitutional changes of 2011, and the social, cultural, and economic conditions affecting women in general. This analysis will explore how these factors have influenced women's roles in public life, noting both progress and persistent barriers. At the same time, the chapter links these themes to the overall research question and objectives, that is, to examine how the legal and institutional changes, as well as cultural factors, have influenced women's political participation in Morocco, this includes the experiences and the observations the respondents shared during the interviews.

4.1. Trajectory of Women's civic and political participation since Arab Spring and after

Women civic and political activity was prominent prior to the Arab Spring phenomenon; however, deep shortcomings exist as the impact of this participation remains mitigated.

For instance, in our interview with a Government Official, the interviewee remarked that the Arab Spring did not impact this participation by much as: *"Women have always been there leading associations, and non-governmental organizations"* before the Arab Spring; further adding that *"We had women as a president and elected as the head of a political party. For unions, it's still men at the top."* However, this pre-Arab Spring participation had been largely undemocratic, as most *"women and vulnerable communities lacked constitutional rights...[which] were excluded from the decision-making processes that shaped their lives"* according to the experience of a Moroccan political activist.

Indeed, despite the official's claim that women were already active before the Arab Spring; she did, however, note that there were still limitations in top leadership roles within unions. This was observed in lingering significant barriers, namely cultural and social, which are being counterbalanced by the introduction of the quota, according to the expert assessment of a judicial representative.

After the Arab Spring, women's representation in governmental and political positions gradually increased, though the changes remain rather ambiguous. A political activist was very clear in stating

that with the Arab Spring's awakening, it *'brought about an overall enhancement of women's citizenship and politics in Morocco*, which was largely sought after by feminist organizations demanding the recognition of women's rights and political freedoms, in addition to the legislative reforms. The political activist noted, *"More women became involved in public life and politics, taking on leadership roles and participating in various initiatives aimed at promoting gender equality."* This points to an increase in women's active involvement.

Since the Arab spring, the trajectory of women's political participation has shown positive trend. According to a social activist, *" There is a notable increase in the number of women holding public office and participating in civil society organizations but still we don't have what we expected I can say even we are not close to 50% of participation.* On the other hand, a Member of Parliament, who highlighted the long way Morocco has come since the start with democratic participation and gender equality in the Arab region, said *"The trajectory has been generally upward, with more women being elected to parliament and local councils... For example, she added her own example, "When I came here there were challenges, but the introduction of quotas has also played a crucial role in ensuring women's representation, and also motivated a lot of women to come the parliament"*.

According to the estimation of one political expert on Morocco, the trajectory of women political participation remains slow and fretted by challenges: some are linked to the cultural and religious norms, societal and institutional resistance (as some mentioned, of whom one parliament official, a social activist and); others to some women's reluctance to participate in politics (which could be due either to their own deep-rooted beliefs or cultural pressures). Thus, sharing a more pessimistic view, she noticed that *"Many changes are more symbolic than substantive"*

Women's Civic and Political Participation in Morocco: Before and After the Arab Spring (2000-2024)

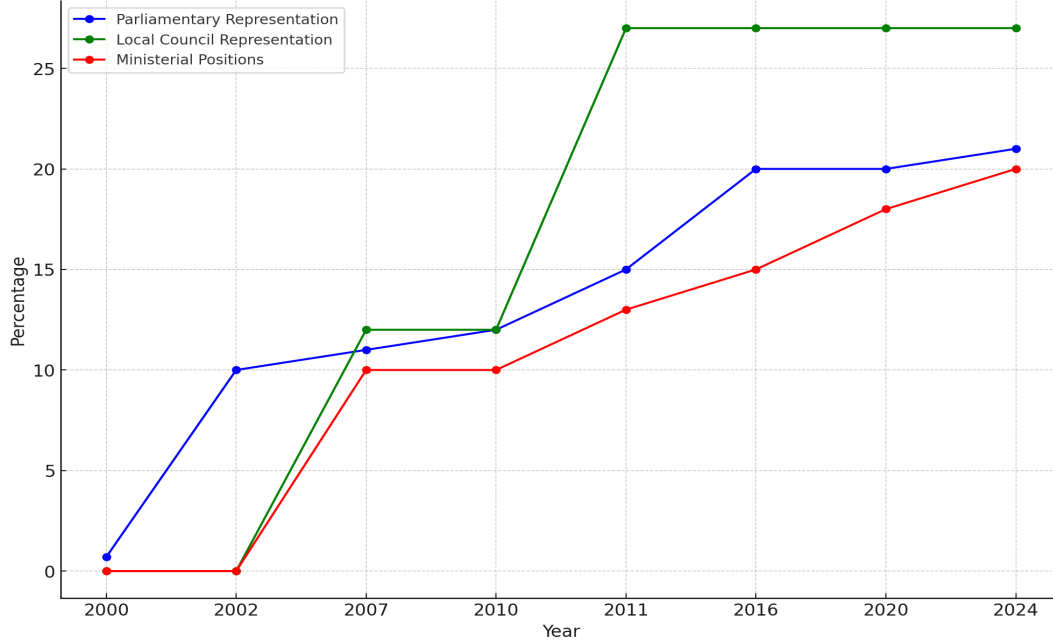


Figure 1. Women's Civic and Political Participation in Morocco: Before and After the Arab Spring (2000-2024)

Sources: (1) Gender quotas and their impact on parliamentary representation ([GIWPS](#)). (2) Westminster Foundation for Democracy data on local council and ministerial participation before and after the Arab Spring ([World Food Programme](#)) ([World Food Programme](#)). (3): UN Women: ministerial positions and civic participation ([UN Women](#)).

Literature also indicates that there is much improvement that has been made after the Arab spring. The graph depicts the trends in women's civic and political participation in Morocco from 2000 to 2024, focusing on three main indicators: These include Parliamentary Representation, Local Council Representation and Ministerial Positions. Such changes are illustrated by the data in the context of the Arab Spring (2011) which became a starting point for changes in the sociopolitical landscape of the region.

Parliamentary Representation is depicted to increase gradually from about 0% in 2000 to 10% in 2007. However, the percentage of women in the parliament decreases to 10% in 2009 before rising slightly to 11% in the period between 2007 and 2011. But after the Arab Spring in 2011 the growth rate increases and reaches the value of about 20% by the year 2024.

Local Council Representation remains relatively constant until 2007, after which it rises rapidly. The most rapid increase is observed in 2011–2016, which can be explained by the impact of the post-Arab

Spring reforms. By the year 2024 the percentage is expected to be at 25% a factor that shows that there has been a lot of improvement in the involvement of women in local governance.

Ministerial Positions are at 0% in 2000 and then increases up to 2007. It increases from about 10% in 2011 to nearly 15% in 2024 with a rather consistent trend after the year 2011.

Overall, the Arab Spring seems to have led to significant improvements in all three measures.

Despite advancements, according to the information provided by study participants, several factors influence women’s political and civic participation. These factors include the following themes:

4.2 Political & Legal aspects

There have been several legal changes to improve gender equality. The below table provides a clear overview of the key legal frameworks developed or amended in Morocco to award gender equality, their intended areas of impact, and the challenges faced in implementing them effectively.

Legal Provision	Description	Area of Impact	Implementation Challenges
Morocco Constitutional Amendment 2011 (Article 19 & Article 30).	Guarantees equality between men and women in civil, political, economic, social, cultural, and environmental rights. Ensures equal voting rights and participation in elections for both men and women. Encourages gender parity in elected positions.	Gender Equality and Civic Participation	Ambiguities between progressive policies and traditional norms; limited practical enforcement. Societal attitudes and institutional biases continue to favor male candidates.
Gender Quotas in Parliament	Introduced quotas reserving seats for women in the Parliament and local councils to enhance political representation.	Political Participation	Implementation is often symbolic, with real political influence remaining limited for women.
Moudawana (Family Law) Reform 2004	Improved women’s rights in marriage, divorce, and child custody, recognizing more equitable treatment in family matters.	Social and Family Perspective	Cultural resistance; continued dominance of patriarchal interpretations.
Electoral Laws (Organic Laws	Mandated gender quotas in electoral lists, regional councils,	Political Representation	Resistance from political parties;

Legal Provision	Description	Area of Impact	Implementation Challenges
04.21, 05.21, 06.21)	and local governance to ensure women's representation.		limited effect on actual decision-making power.
Law 19.20 on Public Limited Companies (2021)	Introduced quotas for women in corporate governance, aiming for 30% female representation by 2024, and 40% by 2027.	Economic Participation and Governance	Slow progress in implementation; resistance in male-dominated corporate sectors.
Authority for Parity and the Struggle Against Discrimination	Created to enforce gender equality and combat all forms of discrimination as mandated by the 2011 Constitution.	Anti-Discrimination and Parity	Limited authority and effectiveness in challenging deep-seated societal norms.

4.2.1 Constitutional and Institutional Reforms

Constitutional reform was passed in 2011, and this was critical in supporting gender equality and women's rights in Morocco. The main change, the Article 19 is aimed to provide gender equality, equal rights and freedoms of men and women and also approved the Authority for Parity and the Fight against All Forms of Discrimination (APALD) and electoral laws. According to Judiciary representative, the 2011 Constitution of Morocco introduced several articles aimed at ensuring gender equality and combating discrimination. Mentioned Key amendments included provisions for the equality of men and women in family perspectives, civic, political, and economic rights, and laws specifically addressing violence against women. After ratifying the APALD, there was a change, a judiciary representative stressed, " *because some women have decided to face this challenge, and they made it.*" Furthermore, a Judiciary representative mentioned that " *The 2011 Constitution of Morocco introduced several articles aimed at ensuring gender equality and combating discrimination, including laws addressing violence against women.*" According to judiciary representative these articles are included: law number 103.13, debated from 2013 to 2018, that defined various types of violence against women and provided a legal framework for better protection against such violence. Another meaningful legal provision is the Moudawana (the family law). The judiciary representative stressed that Moudawana brought improvements for women. However, issues related to custody and divorce still need to be addressed.

There is also concern about the implementation of gender parity. As stated by a political analyst "the promise of gender parity is more of a theoretical commitment rather than a practical reality."

Even though there was a legal framework in place, full enforcement of the provisions has remained a challenge. A Judiciary representative said this, "*The 2011 Constitution brought new articles concerned with gender equality, however, the practical application is somewhat irregular.*" In addition, "*Election laws do not align with the recommendations and philosophy of the 2011 Constitution, which speaks of parity while election laws do not. There is legal ambiguity that allows for interpretative and discriminatory implementation.*", Government official emphasized. According to the governmental participant, the percentage of women who managed to access Parliament and the two chambers is only 24%. Specifically, women make up 26% of the House of Councilors and 26% at the level of local authorities. This falls short of the 30% or 35% threshold needed to break the glass ceiling.

On the other hand, concerning quotas, politicians and commentators see them as a short-term solution and not an ideal form of change. According to one governmental participant, "*We always use the quota system to gain entry, quotas are a measure but should not be permanent.*" This shows that in order to solve the issue of gender parity, more effective and long-term solutions have to be implemented.

The constitutional amendments have affected the role of women in politics and other civil activities in various ways. The proportion of women in parliament and local councils has risen sharply as a political activist said. In this interview, it was noted that "*The proportion of women in the Moroccan House of Representatives has increased from 10.5% in 2011 to 20.5% in 2021.*" This shows that there is a progressive change in the Moroccan political arena in terms of gender parity. Referring Morocco gender-sensitive observation report on the 2021 elections. The Activist further noted that "*Women's representation in local councils rose due to the introduction of a 12% gender quota.*" This indicates specific legislative measures that contributed to the increase.

Changes in institutional structures have also entailed the creation of APALD, gender-sensitive budgeting, and capacity-building programs. A Judiciary representative said that institutional reforms include the establishment of two authorities for parity and against violence and discrimination to the employees. These align with broader national strategies such as the Ikram plans (Ikram 1, Ikram 2, and now awaiting Ikram 3) A Government Official said that "*The Ikram plans (Ikram 1, Ikram 2, and*

now awaiting Ikram 3) are national strategies for equity and equality.” According to Women’s right advocate, while national strategies for gender equity are ongoing, this national strategy can help institutions in the formulation of policies that are in correspondence with the national strategies. It can also lead to all the institutions having the same number of department heads of each gender. This can help to increase the representation of women in decision-making processes and hence increase the chances of parity in all the parts of society. Thus, focusing on the implementation of this national plan, organizations will be able to contribute to the enhancement of their objectives regarding the enhancement of the role of females.

However, the above-mentioned reforms have not been implemented fully and uniformly. In one interview, a Member of Parliament stated, *“These reforms have not been fully and fairly enacted across the country, the national level has made some progress, but local governance structures are deficient.”* The civil society organizations have been very active in demanding for these reforms and ensure that the government implements them as required. A Social Activist highlighted the fact that Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) *have played a big role in advocating for women rights and ensuring that the changes are implemented.”*

4.3 Social & cultural Aspects:

4.3.1 Cultural divide between conservatism and liberalism, rural-urban

Due to cultural hinders the constitutional and institutional reforms made are more apparent than substantial. The Political Analyst believed, that *‘The advancement of women is often exaggerated because the culture still poses major hurdles.’* Despite the many women being in political positions, cultural barriers are still a major issue. A Women’s Rights Advocate further emphasized that, *“Women are still denied their right to participate in politics due to traditional roles and lack of resource.”* This shows that there is a need to go further than legal reforms.

Cultural and socially related factors are more prominent in rural areas compared to urban. A Judiciary representative pointed to the, *‘Societal and cultural barriers especially in the rural areas have been a being major challenge to their [the reforms] full implementation.’* A Judiciary representative added that, *‘Several barriers exist today – they are mainly rooted in rural areas and among recently urbanized populations where stereotyping of women is still extensive. ‘The social cultural practices that are hostile to women and their participation in the economy, despite legal provision being in place, still remain a challenge, in addition, she added, “Some women are still afraid to show up their interest*

towards politics and participate in their rights. There are also still harassments related to women when they are showing up as candidates because some men create nicknames, causing women to experience a lot of social pressure."

Regarding to the most of response to the constitutional and institutional reforms, has been positive from one hand for progressive groups, and negative from the side of the conservatives. A Member of Parliament noted the different reception between both groups by saying that, *"Political and civil society organizations, especially those of the progressive liberal leaning, have embraced them as a positive move towards the realization of gender mainstreaming"*. This is an observation agreed to in an interview with A Political Analyst as well who said that *"On the one hand, social progressive movements embrace such changes, while on the other hand, conservatism in society and politics does not approve them."* This acceptance by progressive political institutions shows the increasing consciousness of gender mainstreaming. In this respect, one Political Activist noted that *"Morocco was different because the king acted swiftly to address the demands of people, thus there was a general enhancement of women's political and civil activism."*

However, political discourse has also contributed to how these changes are perceived and how they are to be conducted. A women rights advocate mentioned *"there are still major women's issues in political discourse and the formation of women's coalitions and advocacy groups."* The Islamic scholars' debate on whether women should be allowed to be presidents or members of parliament shows how culture and religion shape political discourses. There are scholars who oppose women's participation in politics, while others encourage it, and therefore create controversies that influence the level of policy integration. This ideological divide within the political discourse persists as a major factor that hampers the expansion of gender reforms in areas that are still conservative. Pointing to the fact that rural areas are more conservative in their approach to change than are urban areas.' The fact that the reforms have not been well received in the rural areas shows that implementing gender equality is not a smooth process.

4.4 Economic aspects

4.4.1 Support systems, such as childcare and family support

According to the literature and what researchers said there is another factor that hinders women's political participation is the economic factors as well. The lack of financial resources and support

systems, such as childcare and family support, restricts many women from engaging fully in political activities. One of the members of parliament said, *“It is feasible to enhance women candidates’ engagement by providing them special training and assistance.”*

4.5 Women Civic and Political Participation and Their Personal Journeys

The specific cases described also reveal both the advancements and the setbacks in women’s citizenship and political empowerment. A Government Official reported from personal experience to her involvement in capacity-building and advocacy, said *“I have always participated in politics but not as a member of a particular party. I have been involved in the capacity-building of women in the aspect of political participation.”* This involvement reveals the active participation, at least some women are taking in the improvement of their political participation. A Member of Parliament mentioned as well *“My journey into politics was greatly influenced by the changes brought about by the Arab Spring. Initially involved in grassroots activism, I was motivated by the new constitutional framework to run for public office.”* This may be an indicator to the direct impact of constitutional changes on individual political engagement.

Organizational support systems and networks have helped women to overcome the resistance that exists in society today and assume leadership positions. A Member of Parliament said, *“I have been able to push for change and engage in policy making and advocating for women’s rights from within the system, but it is not an easy fight as culture and gender discrimination are always around the corner.”* A Women’s Rights Advocate said, *“My journey has been one of resilience and determination, fighting for a more inclusive and equitable society.”* A social activist responded that the changes supported to engage civic activities *“Personally, I have experienced a supportive environment for my civic engagement activities. The changes have allowed me to take on leadership roles in community organizations and participate in policy discussions, which was much harder to achieve before the reforms.”* Despite this woman made progress in the civic and political engagement the journey was not smooth according to a political analyst *“My journey has been fraught with challenges. Despite the supposed progress, I have faced significant obstacles, including gender discrimination and societal pushback.”* These narratives the power and the strength of women for political and civil liberties.

4.6 Strategies for promoting Women’s representation

Interviewees highlighted recommendations to enhance the status of women’s representation in the civil and political realms. Education for women must be improved and this is why; A Government Official was particularly passionate when said, *“We must fight against the dropping out of school of*

young girls.” In addition, a member of parliament added *“To further promote women's representation, it's essential to enhance educational opportunities for women.”*

So also, is the proper enforcement of gender equality laws, as well as dealing with cultural and societal factors. A political activist said, *“There is need to strengthen the compliance of the laws on gender equity as well as work on culture and social norms.”* A Judiciary Representative suggested, *“Change of perception by society and media to portray women in leadership positions and funding and training of female candidates.”* This recommendation emphasizes the role of media and funding in changing societal perceptions and supporting women in leadership.

4.7 Summary

The experience of Moroccan women in the post-Arab Spring period in terms of their civic and political engagement has revealed both progress and ongoing obstacles. The Arab Spring did trigger some constitutional and institutional reforms, paving the way for some changes in favor of inclusiveness and women participation in civic and political spheres.

However, there are still barriers that hinder women from fully participating in society, such as cultural and social barriers that are evident in the current society, rural areas in particular, though there have been improvements such as visibility and leadership. Although legal changes have been made to provide the basis for change, more profound cultural transformations and the practice of these reforms are required to make these changes real equality throughout the country.

Prior to the Arab Spring, Moroccan women have been involved in civil society, leading associations and non-governmental organizations, whereas their presence in the leadership positions within unions remained rather low. The Arab Spring contributed to the further strengthening of women's citizenship and political participation because the feminist organizations actively insisted on the recognition of women's rights and political liberties. This period was characterized by the enhancement of women's visibility and engagement in public and leadership positions, which marked a major change in their engagement in the fight for gender equity.

However, cultural and social barriers remain a challenge, especially in the rural areas, which still limit women's participation. Stereotyping and socio-cultural practices that are unfriendly to women are still in practice, thus, women cannot fully champion their rights and participate in politics. These challenges are worsened by harassment and social pressure that discourages most women from

participating in politics. Despite the ratification of the Authority for Parity and the Fight against All Forms of Discrimination (APALD) has led to some improvements; further work is required to solve these problems that are rooted in society.

Others are economic factors that hinder women from participating in politics for instance; they do not have capital, or any financial assistance compared to men. The struggle for the actual equality of the genders will continue through the implementation of gender equality laws, shifting social paradigms, and providing women with all the necessary assistance in their desire to engage in political and civil activities.

Chapter Five

Discussion

5.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a comprehensive discussion and interpretation of the research findings in relation to the study objectives. We attempt to bring out and put in relation with our findings, prior literature and theoretical frameworks to understand the factors that shape women's civic political participation in Morocco after the constitutional changes of 2011. The findings are discussed across three major themes: the effect of constitutional provisions, the function of the legislative provisions and the obstacles of policy implementation to enhance women's empowerment. Each theme is discussed in terms of the socio-cultural, political, legal, institutional and economic factors that influence the civic and political experience of women in Morocco.

Hence, the researcher assesses the associations of the study, with regards to the achievements and challenges of the legal and policy reforms meant to advance gender equality. The discussion also reveals the limitations of the existing strategies and outlines suggestions for further studies and policies. In addition, the researcher discusses the trajectory of women civic and political participation.

5.1. Trajectory of Women's civic and political participation since the Arab Spring

The trajectory of women's civil and political engagement in Morocco can be characterized as dynamic and diverse of politics and social beliefs. Although the Arab Spring wave did not incite women to take part in the public sphere, since the last constitutional amendments have given women civic participation rights under the quota in 2002 and seats in the parliament, but this step alone was not effective to increase gender equality. But the Arab spring was instrumental in the realization of women's rights and gender equity in any way of life; also, maybe in other countries there were issues more than gender equality like Tunisia but the case of Morocco was just only constitutional amendment and recognition of the language of the Amazigh. On the other hand, the interviewees made clear that Moroccan women were not passive before the Arab Spring but rather leading associations and non-governmental organizations. Nevertheless, their representation in top leadership positions especially in union and political parties' leadership was still negligible.

Also, the respondents have highlighted both the events of the Arab Spring as well as the changes related to the constitutional reforms to having contributed to the improvement of the situation. For

example, if we look at how women leading 7 ministries including the Ministry of finance (Wasaratu Al Maliya) we find it to be very rare to be a women leading such an institutional ministry specially the countries who have the experience of bicritical and primordial community. Therefore, we can say that the Arab Spring has brought about some positive changes in women's representation in the governmental and political positions in the Arab world. The most interesting thing is the realization that women have formed alliances, and have started to take in women empowerment in Morocco after Arab spring, also their engagement is notable.

However, as the data presented in this paper show, this progress is accompanied by fairly large regional and social inequalities. These changes have favored women in the urban setting more than in rural setting due to culture, tradition and lack of education. From these findings it can be concluded that the legal changes that took place and the legal reform have provided women with new opportunities to participate in employment, and public life, however the degree to which these opportunities are realized depends on the geographic and the economic status of the country.

It is also important to stress that the quantity of women's participation is not the only crucial problem; the quality of this participation is also crucial. For instance, prior to the Arab Spring, in the 2007 election, women secured only 10.5% of seats. After the constitutional changes of 2011 which were made with the purpose of increasing the role of women in the society, the representation of women in the parliament also grew the latest data that exist now is showing us that women secured 24 percent in parliament, which is remarkable growth compared to other countries that experienced the Arab Spring, specifically Tunisia, Egypt, and Algeria.

As depicted table 2 which shows the percentage of women elected in different elections in Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, and Algeria over the years that there are variations in the levels of women's political participation. In Morocco, the percentage of women elected has been on the rise from 10% in 2007 to 22.8% in 2021, which shows that there is a slow but steady improvement. Tunisia however had early success with 27.57% in 2009 and increased up to 31.3% in 2014, but then it dropped to 16.2% by 2022. The trend of Egypt was more fluctuating; it fell to 12.7% in the year 2010 to only 1.3% in 2011 it was at 97%, then it dropped to 27% in the subsequent year. 3% in 2020. Algeria made some improvement in the year 2012 with 31.6% but then it reduced and reduced until it reached to 8.1% in 2021. These trends depict the progress and continue struggles of the North African countries in establishing gender balance in political system.

Table 2: Percentage of women elected per election

Morocco		Tunisia		Egypt		Algeria	
Year	Women (%)	Year	Women (%)	Year	Women (%)	Year	Women (%)
2007	10.46%	2009	27.57%	2010	12.70%	2007	7.71%
2011	16.71%	2011	26.27%	2011	1.97%	2012	31.60%
2016	20.5%	2014	31.3%	2012	4.44%	2017	25.8%
2021	22.8%	2019	22.6%	2015	14.9%	2021	8.1%
		2022	16.2%	2020	27.3%		

Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union. (n.d.). Women in national parliaments. <https://www.ipu.org/>

If we specifically look at Morocco, in 2021, the women who got elected to the Moroccan parliament were 90 members (22.8%). However, by 2024 this figure was mentioned as 96 members (24.3%) even though there were no other parliamentary elections in this period. The reasons for this increase might include the occurrence of by-elections, replacements due to resignations or other circumstances, or updates in reporting methodologies. This is in fact a progress.

Nevertheless, women's participation in political parties and civil society organizations is still marginal and they do not have much say in decision-making. This limitation underscores the need for more work to be done to ensure women's engagement is not tokenistic but rather transformative to enable them to influence policies and strategies as desired. Furthermore, the results of the study also highlight the need for further activism and the implementation of further reforms to eliminate the remaining prejudices.

Graph 2

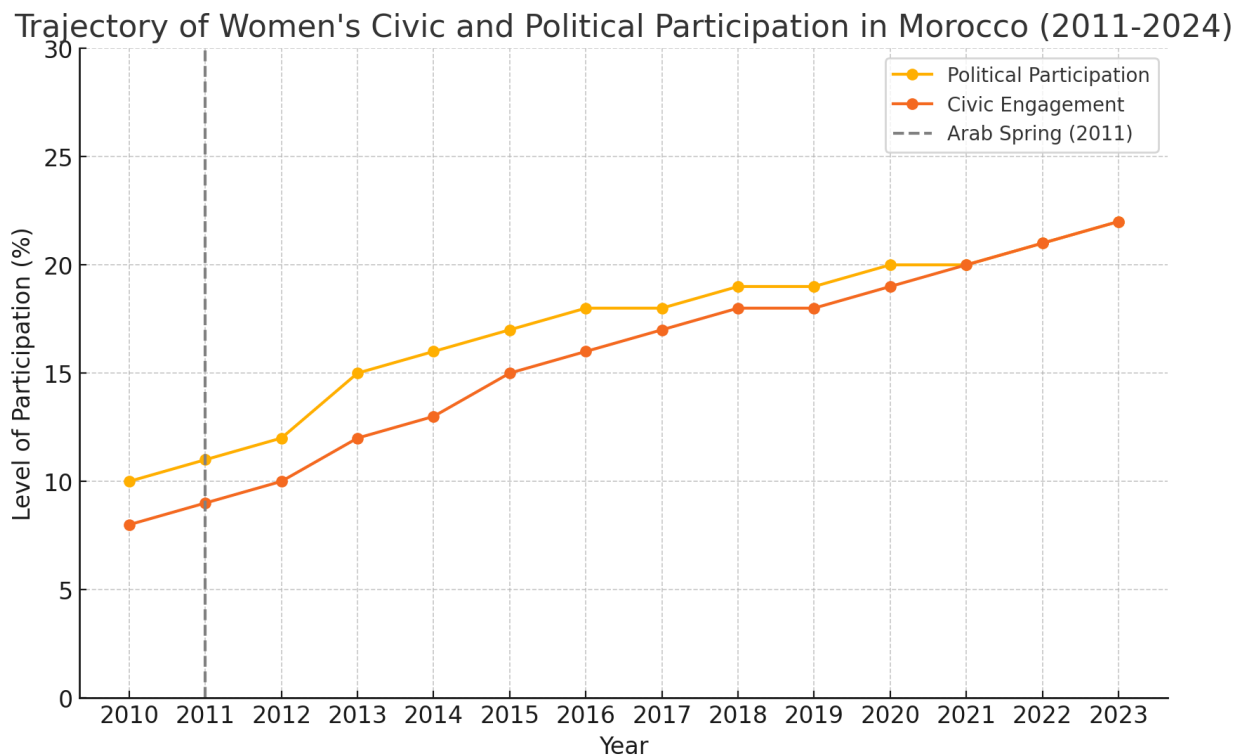


Figure 2. Trajectory of Women's Civic and Political Participation in Morocco (2011-2024)

This graph illustrates the level of women's civil and political engagement in Morocco over the period 2011-2024, referring to the findings with reference to the Arab Spring and the changes that have taken place. Political participation gradually increased after 2011 due to constitutional reforms and gender quotas. Civic engagement has also increased due to the increased participation of women in civil society and local government. The Arab Spring is a turning point, resulting in changes that have positively affected the position of women and their representation in the public sphere.

However, despite these achievements, cultural impediments and social opposition remain the main factors slowing down progress. The legal framework has been improved, but its enforcement is not without problems either, especially in rural areas where traditional practices dominate. The graph clearly shows that legal changes are the key to achieving gender equality in Moroccan politics and civil society, but cultural changes are also needed.

5.2 The Impact of the Constitutional Framework on Women's Political Participation

The purpose of this study was to assess the impact of the policy framework on women's civil and political engagement in Morocco in the post-Arab Spring period (2011-2024). The findings of this study confirm the existing literature (for example Sater, 2007) which argues that despite the constitutional reforms, Moroccan culture and conservative attitudes, particularly in rural areas, remain an obstacle to women's rights.

The study shows that although the constitutional reforms are welcomed in principle, they are not effective in improving the lives of Moroccan women, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds. This is in line with the assertion made by Madani, Maghraoui, & Zerhouni (2012) and Manal (2020) that the tension between modern gender policies and religious culture has been a major factor that has hampered the implementation of these reforms. A comparison of constitutional rights and actual outcomes shows that despite the legal changes, traditional values and perceptions of society remain paramount, undermining the legal reforms. Despite the introduction of Article 19 of the Constitution, which proclaims the equality of women in all spheres, the existing barriers due to gender roles and the continuing influence of patriarchal norms do not allow many women to exercise the rights and privileges that the Constitution offers them. The cultural and social barriers that prevent women from participating in politics are deeply rooted and resistant to change.

This finding is in line with the work of Ennaji (2010), who pointed out that there are legal frameworks that exist alongside cultures that do not change. The culture of Moroccan society and the religious beliefs that dominate the country still keep women away from political power. Even where gender quotas have been introduced, it is clear that the measures are not as effective due to social resistance. For example, women who are elected to political positions end up being sidelined or given ceremonial positions with little power. This is a trend that has been seen in other countries that have been part of the Arab Spring: legal changes do not always mean real changes in gender relations. It can therefore be concluded that cultural barriers are still prevalent today, which means an approach is needed that is not limited to legal changes alone especially in rural areas .

The study found that community-based education and awareness-raising programmes, particularly in rural areas, could help to bridge this gap. Several studies have also found that if women voters and youth are not educated, supported by laws and other mechanisms, it would not suffice to break the barriers; however, increasing awareness might be one helpful step. For example, community-based

programmes that involve community leadership and encourage discussion about changing gender inequalities can help change social norms over time. There is also a need for more specific and gender-sensitive activities that enable women to participate in politics, including leadership and civic education. Overall, without such interventions, it is feared that constitutional provisions will remain mere formality that do not work enough to make much difference to most women. Furthermore, this study points out that the Moroccan government has struggled to fully decentralize power in a manner that would enhance women's participation. The failure of the Moroccan government to decentralize power effectively has particularly limited women's participation in rural areas. The centralization of power within the monarchy, as noted by Booley (2021), sets the parameters within which political actors such as women are allowed to operate.

In addition, this study finds that the Moroccan government has failed to decentralize power in a way that would enhance women's participation because women in the rural areas are not empowered compared to those in the urban. The findings of this qualitative study provide empirical support for the proposition that the monarchy often plays a role in constraining constitutional changes aimed at empowering women, where the king's influence tends to set the parameters within which political actors such as women are allowed to operate. As we may have noted in the result's section, women's political engagement remains a marginal phenomenon that does not challenge power relations and hierarchies, but this concentration of power is one of the areas that needs to be changed if constitutional changes are to improve the status of women in politics.

On the other hand, the paper has shown that the problems of gender equality in Morocco are intertwined with constitutional reforms and socio-cultural factors. Although the 2011 reforms were partial and progressive, they do not seem to be enough to remove the structural barriers that still exist and prevent women from participating in politics. The findings suggest that there is a need for a combination of state and legal regulation on the one hand, and social change on the other.

6.0 The Role of the Legislative Framework in Shaping Women's Political Participation

Morocco's 2004 reform of the Family Code (Mudawana) and the introduction of gender quotas in the electoral system were intended to eliminate systematic discrimination against women and other legislatives changes were seen as a major step forward in improving the position of women in the civil and private spheres. However, the results of this study indicate that these reforms have not been effective in practice, due to enforcement and cultural problems and social beliefs. The nature of the

findings is consistent with the assertion that the impact of legal reforms depends on the social and cultural factors in which these reforms are introduced (Sadiqi, 2008).

Even more intriguing is the fact that although the introduction of gender quotas has increased the number of women elected to parliament and local councils, these women function still as a mere appendage of the political parties to which they belong and are rarely given the opportunity to participate in policy formulation and decision-making. These findings are in line with Smith (2018), who observes that the use of quotas is undermined by internal party politics and the resistance of patriarchal structures to the transfer of meaningful power to women. This is a very important weakness of quotas as a tool for increasing women's representation in decision making positions, as the fact that women are present in political institutions does not necessarily mean that they have a real say.

It also shows that legislative reforms are not applied equally in all regions and outlines the problems associated with the reforms. These reforms benefit those areas with better literacy and legal awareness, the urban areas, while the rural areas remain in the same poor state. These findings are also consistent with the study by Ftouhi et al. (2020), which calls for context-specific interventions that take into account women's experiences in their different settings. In rural areas, where patriarchal norms are stronger and resources are scarce, legal changes are least effective. This study provides evidence for the proposition that greater specificity is needed to ensure that legislative changes benefit women in all regions of Morocco.

Another important factor is the quality of the institutions that are supposed to implement the legislative changes. Our research shows that in Morocco these institutions are not sufficiently equipped or empowered to enforce gender parity laws. This finding could be attributed to the notion that bureaucratic problems, corruption and political interference undermine the effectiveness of these reforms. As a result, women, especially those from the lower classes, continue to be excluded from the benefits of these legal reforms. This is in line with Wuerth (2005), who points out that legal reforms need to be followed by strong enforcement measures in order to be effective.

Moreover, this study shows how political parties contribute to the promotion or otherwise demotion of women's political leadership. Although some political parties have adopted the use of gender quotas and other related measures to increase women's participation, the results have been modest. Women are often relegated to symbolic roles with little power, as the political system mirrors social

relations between men and women. This is particularly evident in the way women are used as 'window dressing' to meet quotas, rather than being empowered to bring about change.

More needs to be done to ensure that women who enter politics through quotas are given the necessary support and opportunities to make a positive contribution. This could include leadership training, shadowing and steps to overcome the organizational culture that most women encounter in their respective parties.

Additionally, our study reveals that there is often a lack of cohesion and coordination between different levels of government when implementing legislative reforms aimed at promoting women's political participation. Local governments, in particular, may lack the resources, capacity, or political will to effectively implement national policies at the grassroots level. This gap between national and local implementation creates significant disparities in the experiences of women across different regions. The present research cannot rule out these challenges, but it highlights the importance of adopting a more integrated approach to policy implementation that includes capacity-building initiatives for local governments and stronger accountability mechanisms.

6.1 Challenges in the Implementation of Policies Promoting Women's Empowerment

The implementation of policies aimed at promoting women's empowerment is fraught with challenges, particularly in Morocco's context . There are at least three potential limitations:

- A first limitation concerns the limited resources and weak institutional capacity, which undermines the effectiveness of these policies, because if a one minister containing 10 departments 2 is women and the entire is leading men that means the reforms is not effective.
- A second potential limitation is the deeply entrenched cultural norms, particularly in rural areas, where women face significant barriers to accessing programs and services designed to support their political participation to consolidate gender equality comes from community not the government.
- A third limitation relates to the inconsistent application of policies across different regions, leading to uneven outcomes for women in urban and rural areas. That means there is no more intention of these issues.

The findings suggest that a lack of policy coherence, i.e. the gap between policy formulation and policy implementation, is a major problem. For example, although Morocco has made considerable progress in formulating gender-sensitive policies, these policies don't necessarily benefit women if implementation does not adequately follow through. This is particularly the case because the policies are not accompanied by proper monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, which are so important in determining whether the policies are being implemented as planned.

In this study, we realised that the reasons why women are not achieving the 30 per cent quota is not being studied nor that the elites are discussing it as an issue. The ministries and departments responsible for implementing gender policies still lack the capacity and resources to do so. This finding is in line with what Ennaji (2010) has postulated about the problem of the policy implementation gap as a significant barrier to women's advancement in Morocco.

Another important issue is the influence of cultural and social factors on the application of gender policies. However, legal changes have not been accompanied by a change in the patriarchal attitudes that prevail in many aspects of Moroccan life. On the one hand, there are conflictual interpretations of religion ; as some women are still afraid to participate in politics because some Islamic scholars argue that women cannot be involved in decision-making while a man is there, but there are also the opposite scholars who believe that women can be president or even khalifa, which means she can even lead the prayer time in the mosque. A renowned female Islamic theologian, named Amina Wadud, , explains to women in her book called "INSIDE OF GENDER JIHAD" how they can participate in social life just like men and she discussed the name of RIJAL (men) which means man and women. If we look at some Muslim countries, women are at the helm of political position. This calls for other scholars who argue that women cannot be leaders or what they call (Khalifa) to rethink their arguments.

Some of the possible implications of these findings are that local officials and community leaders may be unwilling to provide the best support for programmes aimed at empowering women because of the likely backlash from conservative elements in the respective societies. This also supports the contention that there is a need to develop culturally appropriate interventions as socio-cultural characteristics differ from region to region. For example, programmes that seek to integrate traditional cultural values with modern gender justice and equality are more likely to be accepted by the community.

The study also shows that civil society organisations (CSOs) play a very important role in promoting and implementing gender policies and contextualising democracy. However, a limitation of this study is that it did not address the effectiveness of CSOs, which is usually limited by lack of funding, political interference and capacity building challenges, as much stigma and taboo remain with regard to calls to full democracy and criticism of centralised governments. Although there are awareness campaigns, legal aid and policy monitoring by CSOs, these external forces also sometimes affect the work of CSOs, therefore more research is needed to be done on this matter.

The present research does not negate these explanations but emphasises that strengthening the capacity of CSOs and their cooperation with government agencies can help to increase the effectiveness of gender policy implementation. There is also a need to develop networks that would help CSOs to obtain more resources and learn from other organisations that have better practices that can enhance the capacity of organisations in promoting and funding women's empowerment programmes.

The study also highlights the need to formulate better accountability frameworks for the implementation of gender policies. The most important of these is the lack of clear methods for measuring and evaluating the effectiveness of these policies. In the absence of such mechanisms, it becomes almost impossible to assess the extent to which policies are likely to have achieved their intended goals or to determine the likelihood of policy gaps. In this regard, the study suggests that the formation of independent monitoring bodies, comprising members of government and civil society, could help to address this problem. Such bodies would be expected to carry out regular reviews of the extent to which gender policies are being implemented, any current shortcomings and any changes that may be needed.

In addition to these challenges, the decentralization of governance in Morocco poses other challenges for the implementation of gender policies. Although decentralization is a process that can increase the capacity of governance systems to respond to local needs, it also poses difficulties in terms of coordination and funding. The reality is that most local governments lack the capacity and resources to implement gender policies. This is particularly true in rural areas, where most government departments are poorly equipped and staffed. The findings suggest that there is a need for more targeted support to build the capacity of local governments and ensure that they have sufficient resources to implement gender policies.

6.2 Integration of Theoretical Perspectives

The study's findings are closely aligned with the theoretical frameworks underpinning this research about Morocco's women political participation, whether perceived from the angle of women's political rights or democratization of governmental institutions.

Feminist theory, particularly the concept of intersectionality, provides a useful lens for understanding the complex ways in which gender, class, ethnicity, and regional disparities intersect to shape women's experiences in the political sphere. These results are consistent with Crenshaw's (1989) work on intersectionality, which suggests that these intersecting identities create multiple layers of disadvantage for women, particularly those from marginalized communities. For example, rural women not only face gender-based discrimination but also contend with additional barriers related to poverty, lack of education, and limited access to resources. This underscores the importance of adopting an intersectional approach to policy development and implementation, one that recognizes and addresses the diverse needs and experiences of women.

Democratic transition theory also offers valuable insights into the findings. The present study has shown that while the introduction of gender quotas and other reforms has led to an increase in the number of women in parliament, these women often have limited influence due to the centralized nature of power in Morocco. This reflects the broader challenges associated with democratic transitions, where formal legal reforms do not always lead to substantive changes in power dynamics. The findings suggest that more inclusive political processes are needed to ensure that women's voices are not only heard but also have a meaningful impact on policy and decision-making.

Social capital theory provides a useful framework for understanding the role of networks and social structures in shaping women's political participation. The findings indicate that women who are involved in civil society organizations or who have access to supportive networks are more likely to be politically active and to benefit from legislative reforms. This aligns with Putnam's (2000) work, which emphasized the importance of social capital in facilitating civic engagement. However, the study also highlights the challenges faced by women who lack access to these networks, particularly in rural areas. This suggests that efforts to promote women's political participation should include initiatives aimed at building social capital, such as leadership training programs, mentorship opportunities, and the creation of women's networks. Finally, institutional theory provides a valuable lens for examining the challenges associated with the implementation of gender policies. The study

finds that the effectiveness of these policies is often undermined by weak institutional capacity, lack of resources, and bureaucratic inertia. This finding may be explained by the idea that institutional isomorphism, which suggests that organizations often conform to external pressures without making substantive changes to their internal practices, is at play. In the context of Morocco, this means that while government agencies may adopt gender policies to meet international standards or respond to donor requirements, they often lack the capacity or willingness to fully implement these policies. The findings highlight the need for stronger institutional frameworks and more effective mechanisms for ensuring accountability in the implementation of gender policies.

7.0 Implications and Future Research Directions

These findings have the following theoretical and practical implications. First, they emphasize the need to go beyond legal changes to support women's political representation and to include changes in culture and social capital. This could include the establishment of special programmes that provide leadership training for women, especially those in rural areas, and campaigns that aim to educate women about their rights and fight to change the existing culture that sees women as subordinate to men. In terms of future research, it is possible to extend the current study by identifying the issues that may be unique to certain groups of women in Morocco, particularly those in vulnerable positions. Subsequent research could compare the results of rural women, women of colour or women with disabilities in order to develop more specific and helpful interventions. It is also important to conduct further research on political parties' support for women's leadership and the impact of the new civil society organizations that are being formed with the aim of increasing women's political participation.

Summary

However, noting the results and the limitations of this study, it adds to the knowledge of the constitutional and legislative framework and women's civic political participation in Morocco in the post-Arab Spring period. The study adds to a growing list of studies that argue that although there has been a lot of progress in terms of legal change, cultural barriers and problems with policy enactment still pose a problem for women's political participation. Much more needs to be done to get a clear picture of the extent of these problems. However, this research can be seen as a starting point for bringing together legal and cultural approaches to women's political participation in Morocco. It is hoped that this study will stimulate further research in this important area of study and

thus contribute to the development of better ways of achieving the goal of gender equality, in the MENA region and particularly in Morocco.

Conclusion

This thesis analysed the nature of women's civil and political engagement in Morocco after the Arab Spring, focusing on the years between 2011 and 2024. Therefore, this study aimed to explore how these legal and institutional reforms have affected women's position in the public and political spheres by analysing the constitutional, legislative and implementation dimensions. This means that although there has been a positive change in the formulation of constitutional amendments and legislative reforms, women's political power in the political system is still constrained by socio-cultural factors and policy gaps. A closer look at the findings revealed that even in today's society, women still face barriers such as gender discrimination, inadequate resources and lack of participation in decision-making. These problems can only be solved if there are elaborate solutions that take into account both legal and social barriers that hinder women in their struggle for political representation.

The research question guiding this study was whether the legal reforms and institutional changes post-Arab Spring have led to substantial improvements in women's civic and political participation in Morocco. The findings confirm that while these reforms have opened new avenues for women's participation, their effectiveness has been tempered by deep-rooted cultural norms, patriarchal attitudes, and uneven implementation across different regions of the country. The thesis highlights that although the introduction of gender quotas and other legislative measures have increased the representation of women in political bodies, these changes have not necessarily translated into significant political influence or decision-making power for women.

Comparing these findings with the existing literature, it can be concluded that Morocco's experience is not unique to the region, as MENA countries are characterised by the fact that legal reforms often face resistance from traditional and conservative forces. Ennaji (2010) and Sadiqi (2008), for example, point out that cultural barriers and patriarchy are still a major problem in the Arab world and have not been eradicated by existing laws. This thesis fills this gap by presenting the evidence of these challenges in the Moroccan context and in the context of post-Arab Spring.

However, the following limitations of the study should be taken into account. The study is limited to a specific geographical and time period and the data collected is mainly qualitative, which are the

main drawbacks of the study. In addition, the study has excluded other factors that may hinder women's political participation, such as economic factors and global politics. Future research could fill these gaps by using quantitative data and examining the relationship between various socio-economic factors and legal changes. Further studies should also aim to identify the experiences of women in rural areas, as the impact of legal reforms may not be the same as in urban areas. In addition, research could explore how civil society organisations can help to bridge the gap between policy and practice in the area of women's rights, as CSOs are often involved in campaigning and monitoring policy.

In my conclusion, while Morocco has made progress in promoting gender equality and increasing women's political participation, much remains to be done. The findings of this thesis have practical implications for policymakers, activists and international organisations working in the field of gender equality. Continued efforts to address socio-cultural barriers, ensure consistent policy implementation, and promote an inclusive political environment are essential to achieving meaningful and sustainable progress in women's civic and political participation in Morocco can lead social equality and full of gender mainstreaming.

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APPENDICES

Interview Guide

My name is **Hamda Adam**, and I am currently conducting a research study as part of my thesis on "**Women's civic and political participation in Morocco after the Arab Spring (2011-2024)**" at the University of Saint Joseph (USJ) Beirut Lebanon. This study aims to better understand the trajectory of women's empowerment and engagement in the country, and also how Arab Spring affected women's participation in politics with a particular focus on how constitutional amendments and institutional reforms have affected women's ability to meaningfully participate in civic and political life.

I am writing to invite you to participate in an interview as part of this research. Your insights and experiences would be invaluable in building a comprehensive picture of the progress and challenges faced by women in Morocco over the past decade.

The interview will take approximately 35 minutes, and we can schedule it at a time that is convenient for you. Your participation is completely voluntary, and you can withdraw at any time. The information you provide will be kept confidential and will only be used for the purposes of this study. And if it's alright with you, I'll record our interview solely for transcription purposes and then delete it afterward.

Your contribution to this study would provide us with valuable information needed to further our understanding as researchers and provide insights for academics, researchers and the public and would be greatly appreciated.

QUESTIONS

1. How would you describe the overall trajectory of women's civic and political participation in Morocco since the Arab Spring?
2. Can you elaborate on the key constitutional amendments related to gender equality and women's rights ratified in Morocco after the Arab Spring?
3. How have these amendments been received by the public and political entities?
4. What specific impacts have these constitutional amendments had on women's civic and political participation?
5. Are there any notable successes or challenges that have emerged from these changes?
6. What are the major institutional reforms introduced in Morocco to advance gender equality and women's empowerment post-Arab Spring?
7. How effectively have these reforms been implemented at various levels of government and civil society? Like How influenced women's access to political and civic roles?
8. Can you share your personal journey in civic or political participation since the Arab Spring? (Only women)
9. Have these constitutional changes affected your rights or opportunities as a woman? If yes, how? (only women)
10. Have you noticed any institutional reforms aimed at promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in your workplace, specially ministries and any other government institutions? What are they?
11. Are you aware about how many departments are headed by women in any government institution?
12. Is there any policy promoting gender equality in government institutions?
13. What have been the most significant changes in women's engagement in the political sphere during this period?
14. Any recommendation to promote women's civic political representation in Morocco?

