

Barrier or Opportunity?

Political Islam and Support for Women's Political Participation in Morocco

Lindsay J. Benstead

Women face a myriad of barriers to labor force participation in the Arab world, including discriminatory social attitudes which hinder their access to elected office (Norris & Inglehart, 2001). Scholars differ about why women's empowerment lags behind in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). Inglehart and Norris (2003a) argue that the gender gap in women's political participation is explained by a dearth of democratic values, including support for women's rights, which they show is lower in the Middle East and North Africa than in any other world region (Inglehart & Norris, 2003a; 2003b, p. 33). This belief is reinforced by data from the World Values Survey (1995-2007), in which respondents in 20 Muslim nations expressed negative stereotypes about women as political leaders. In more than 60,000 surveys conducted between 1995 and 2007, nearly 69.7 percent (N=54,894) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that "Men make better political leaders than do women" (Benstead, 2010). These data are also supported by evidence from field research, in which an unsuccessful Algerian candidate in the 2002 parliamentary elections noted that "people will not vote for a list if they see that there is a woman at the head. Algerians do not vote for women" (personal communication, May, 2007).¹

Yet, while these data to some extent reinforce conventional wisdom that popular support for gender equality and interest in voting for diverse candidates is limited, they also wash out variation both across and within Muslim countries with regard to attitudes toward women as political leaders. Further, they raise questions about whether and why ordinary citizens are more or less supportive of inclusive work and political environments. Modernization theory suggests that attitudes towards women's rights are determined by monolithic cultural and religious values (Inglehart & Norris, 2003a). Yet, while there is strong cross-national evidence for a relationship between religiosity and support for patriarchal values (Benstead, 2010; Norris, 2009), these studies do not fully explain within and across country variation in attitudes. As evidenced by data from the World Values Survey (1995-2007), presented in Figure 1, support for women as political leaders varies widely across Arab countries included in the study, with mean support highest in Morocco (2.05), followed by Algeria (1.96), Saudi Arabia (1.82), Jordan (1.59), Egypt (1.50), and Iraq (1.43).² This variation is also evident in data from the Arab Democracy Barometer (2006-2008), presented in Figure 2, which asked the same questions about women as political leaders. Support was highest in Lebanon (2.39), followed by Morocco (2.34), Kuwait (1.94), Algeria (1.89), Jordan (1.84), Yemen (1.73), and Palestine (1.72).³ Yet, women

1. Interview conducted by the author in Algiers.

2. Detailed information and data for the World Values Survey (Inglehart and Tessler) are available at: <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/>

3. Detailed information and data for the Arab Democracy Barometer (Jamal and Tessler) are available at: <http://www.arabbarometer.org/>

have been active in Moroccan politics, including in the Islamist Party of Justice and Development (PJD), offering new opportunities to redefine the role of women in Muslim public space. The impact of these contextual conditions on societal attitudes has not been systematically investigated.

In view of this gap, this paper uses data from the Constituent Survey, a nationally-representative survey of 800 Moroccan men and women conducted by the author to investigate whether and why ordinary Moroccans support gender equality in

Figure 1

Mean Level of Acceptance of Women as Political Leaders

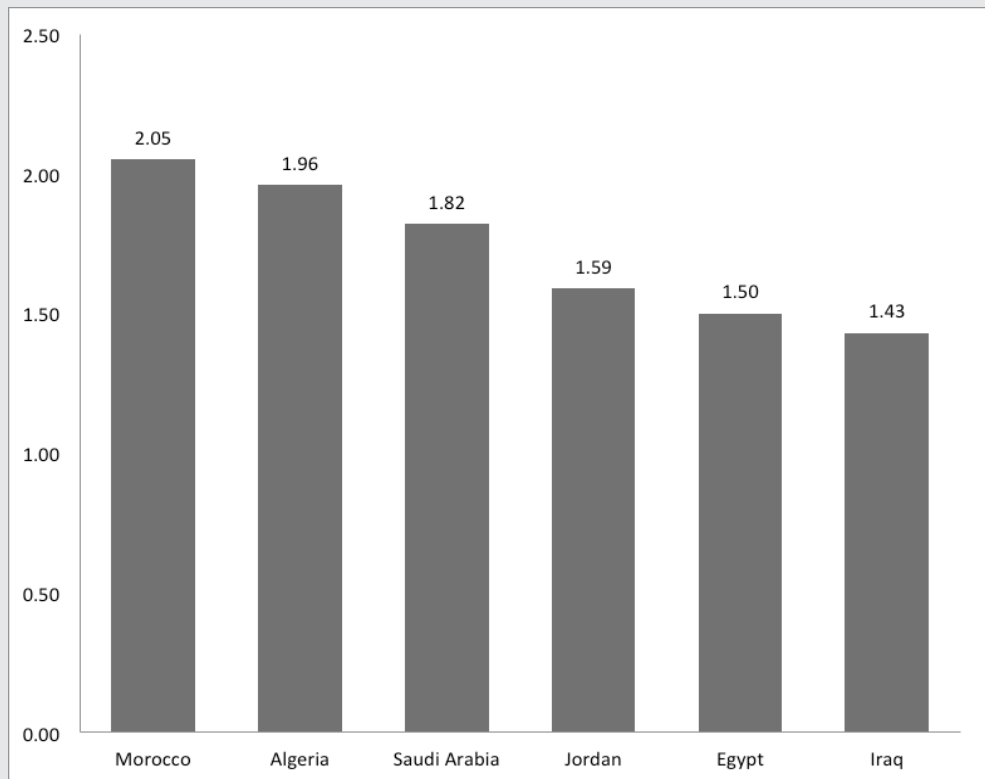


Figure 1 shows mean support for women as political leaders by country. Question: "Men make better political leaders than do women. Strongly disagree [=4]; Disagree [=3]; Agree [=2]; Strongly Agree [=1]." Source: World Values Survey, 1995-2007.

4. I am grateful to Ellen Lust and Mhammed Abderebbi for their collaboration on the survey and to the Charles Cannell Fund in Survey Methodology, the William Davidson Institute, and the Nonprofit and Public Management Center at the University of Michigan and the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada for funding the survey.

formal politics.⁴ The data suggest that the more religious Moroccans tended to be less supportive of gender equality, on average, than the more secular Moroccans, as predicted by modernization theory. Yet, confidence in the PJD predicted higher support for gender equality. This finding suggests that the views of religious Muslims are not monolithic. Norms and values about women's role in political life may, through a process of socialization, change as a result of women's visibility in politics.

Literature Review

A robust social science literature examines why the Arab and Muslim world lags

Figure 2

Mean level of Acceptance of Women as Political Leaders

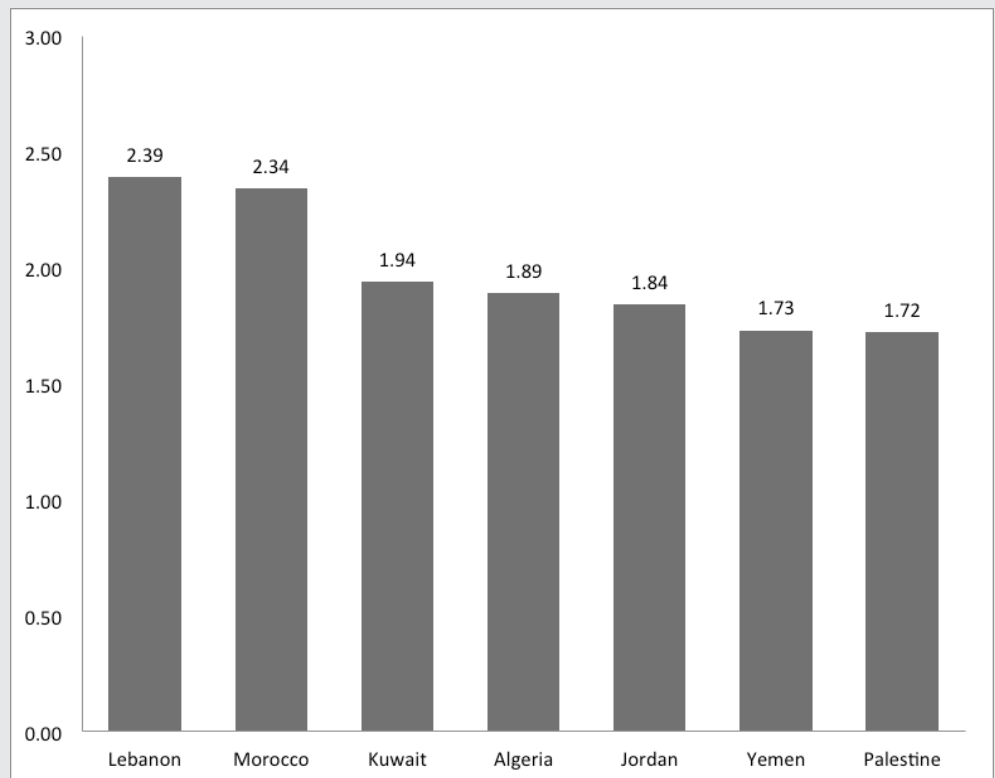


Figure 2 shows mean support for women as political leaders by country. Question: "Men make better political leaders than do women. Strongly disagree [=4]; Disagree [=3]; Agree [=2]; Strongly Agree [=1]." Source: Arab Democracy Barometer, 2006-2008.

behind other regions in support for gender equality (see, for example, Norris, 2009). Conventional wisdom attributes strongly patriarchal attitudes in the Middle East to Islamic culture and religion, which is viewed as incompatible with gender equality (Inglehart & Norris, 2003a, 2003b). Theorists espousing a "cultural interpretation" regard the lag as due in part to an inherent, immutable feature of Muslim identity and society (Alexander & Welzel, 2011). This view stems from modernization theory, which suggests that socioeconomic processes, such as education, urbanization, and economic development, shape culture and religious values, which in turn come to bear on individuals' values, including tolerance, acceptance of personal liberty, and support for gender equality (Jamal, 2006; Lerner, 1958; Lipset, 1959).

A second paradigm argues that lower support for gender equality is attributed to structural conditions, such as abundant oil or poor labor market opportunities for women. Theorists arguing for a "structural interpretation" contend that oil and economic conditions, not Islam, explain support for patriarchy (Alexander & Welzel, 2011). Ross (2008) argues that the lag in women's representation in parliament is caused not by Islam, but by the effect of oil production on the economy, which limits

women's participation in the labor force and, thus, skills needed to succeed in politics. In a related study, Blaydes and Linzer (2008) found evidence for an economic basis of support for fundamentalist views, arguing that poor job and educational opportunities for women lead to higher returns for conservative views in the marriage market than of secular views in the job market. Political institutions also play a role in mediating support for gender equality. Authoritarianism was related to higher levels of patriarchal values at the aggregate and individual level (Benstead, 2010; Paxton & Hughes, 2007), suggesting that the lag of democracy in the Arab world might explain lower levels of support for gender equality. Most studies that test the impact of personal religiosity, religious identity, or cultural setting on individual-level attitudes find that Islam is related to support for patriarchy, even controlling for structural conditions, such as democracy and oil (Alexander & Welzel, 2011; Norris, 2009).

While cultural and structural explanations are part of the causal story, these explanations underemphasize human agency and contextual circumstances in shaping attitudes. Modernization theory predicts that higher religiosity and support for Islamist parties will be related to lower support for gender equality. Yet, the prevalence of rights-based claims for equality and the robust participation of women in Islamist parties in Morocco (Salime, 2011) suggest that supporters of the PJD may not be less likely to support gender equality in politics than supporters of non-Islamist parties. They also suggest the possibility of socialization to norms of gender equality as a consequence of women's leadership in Islamist and other parties. Elsewhere, I have found that the implementation of a gender quota is associated with a 5 percent increase in the likelihood of an individual disagreeing or strongly disagreeing that "Men make better political leaders than do women" in 20 countries with a Muslim population of more than 25 percent (Benstead, 2010). This suggests that debate about and implementation of quotas, a key electoral reform, shapes societal attitudes.

Theoretical Framework and Expectations

Women's rights-based activism has a long history in Morocco (Sadiqi, 2008), but an agreement among political parties in 2002 to reserve 30 seats in the upper house of parliament for women significantly enhanced their visibility in politics. With this quota in place, women won two seats in the regular geographical constituencies and thirty on national lists, bringing their representation to 9.8 percent of the 325 seats in the Chamber, one of the highest levels in the region at the time. The agreement had a lasting effect on women's representation in formal politics. After the quota was abolished in 2007, 34 women were elected to 325 seats, in part because the Socialist Union of Popular Forces (USFP) adopted a party quota, fielding women in at least 20 percent of its electoral list positions (IDEA). In 2012, 66 (16.7 percent) women were elected to parliament, which increased in size to 395 seats (Women in National Parliaments, 2005).

Yet, the representation of women in parliament was not dominated only by secular or socialist parties, such as the USFP. The Islamist PJD has been active in including women in its membership, party offices, and electoral lists and was the only party in which women won seats in regular constituencies in the 2002 parliamentary elections. The data presented in Table 1 shows that, at the time of the Constituent Survey in 2006, six women represented the PJD in the upper house of Parliament, giving it

among the highest proportion of female deputies among the parliamentary groups and parties. Further, women increasingly joined the PJD over time (Wegner, 2011) and now make up one-third of the party rank and file (Salime, 2011). While Islamist parties in Jordan and Yemen also surpassed their secular counterparts in terms of the inclusion of women in their decision-making bodies (Clark & Schwedler, 2003), these parties segregated women in women's sections and excluded them largely from party offices (Wegner, 2011). By contrast, according to extensive field research conducted by Wegner (2011), the Moroccan PJD allowed access by women to party offices. In 1999, the PJD set a 15 percent quota for female delegates at the party congress and its General Secretariat had one female member. Women have also been elected at the municipal level for the PJD (Wegner, 2011).

Table 1
Female Member of the Seventh Chamber of Representatives (2002-2007) by
Parliamentary Group

Party/Parliamentary Group	Seats	Number of Female Representatives	Proportion of Seats Held by Females
Parliamentary Groups*			
Movement Group (MP)	72	5	6.9
Independence Group of Unity and Equality (Istiqlal)	60	6	10.0
Group of the National Rally of Independents (RNI)	39	4	10.3
Group of the Constitutional Democrat Union (CD)	28	2	7.1
Socialist Group (USFP)	48	5	10.4
Group of the Socialist Alliance	21	2	9.5
Justice and Development Group (PJD)	42	6	14.3
Small Parties and Independents			
Deputies of the Democratic Forces Front (FFD)	8	2	25.0
Deputies of the Unified Socialist Left (GSU)	3	0	0
Deputies of the Alliance of Freedoms	1	0	0
Deputies without Party Affiliation	3	0	0
Total	325	32	9.8

* Parliamentary group composition at the time of the Constituent Survey, April to August 2006.

For the results of the 2002 parliamentary election by party, see Wegner 2011, p. 80. Parties for parliamentary groups and members may switch groups during the mandate, which alters the figures given in the table.

Observers disagree about whether the cause of women's empowerment in the PJD is women's rights-based discourses in Islamist movements or strategic instrumentalization of women after 9-11 and the 2003 Casablanca bombings (Salime, 2011). Yet, just as mosque attendance might reinforce patriarchal attitudes (Alexander & Welzel, 2011), public engagement with PJD party structures and the party in the media might

strengthen supportive attitudes about women in political life. The prominent role of women in the PJD suggests that support for the party should not be incompatible with acceptance of gender equality in politics.

Accordingly, as summarized in Table 2, modernization theory suggests that support for gender equality in Morocco will be higher for individuals who are wealthier, live in urban areas, are more educated, are less religious, and who have lower support for Islamist movements. These predictions are consistent with evidence linking higher support for gender equality with higher educational attainment; younger age; higher income; and, employment (Blaydes & Linzer, 2008; Inglehart & Welzel, 2005; Norris, 2009; Norris & Inglehart, 2001). A large literature also supports a link between female gender and egalitarian values (for example, Benstead, 2010), particularly for unmarried women (Blaydes & Linzer, 2008).

Table 2
Expected Relationship Between Independent Variables and Higher Support for Gender Equality

	Hypothesized relationship (Modernization theory)	Result (Model 2)
Education	+	Not significant
Urban Residence	+	+
Religiosity	-	-
Support for Islamist parties	-	+

Data and Methods

In order to test the hypotheses summarized in Table 2, I use data from a 2007 nationally-representative survey conducted face-to-face with a sample of 400 residents of Morocco, 18 years and older. Implemented in Arabic by a local team of faculty and students, the survey comprised 174 questions related to political behavior and attitudes and took 60 minutes to complete. The minimum response rate was 42.9 percent.⁵ A two-stage sampling strategy was used, with a random stratified sample of electoral districts at the first stage and quota sampling in systematically sampled households at the second stage.

The survey contains nine items related to the participation of women in politics. The items were asked in the following order, with no intervening questions between items 2 and 7:

- Item 1: "If the party list you would like to vote for has a woman at the head of the list, would you be more likely to vote for that list, a little less likely to vote for that list, or, would it have no influence?" (3=More likely, 2=Not influence, 1=Less likely)
- Item 2: "The participation of women in political life has not yet reached a satisfying level." (4=Agree strongly, 3=Agree, 2=Disagree, 1=Disagree strongly)
- Item 3: "In general, social and economic problems would improve if there were more women in politics." (Categories as Item 1)
- Item 4: "The government should take care to make sure women accede to top political positions in our country, up to and including Ministers." (Categories as Item 1)
- Item 5: "In general, would you have more confidence in a man or a woman to represent your interests in Parliament, or, would you say there is no difference?"

⁵ Response Rate 1, calculated according to the guidelines of the American Association of Public Opinion Research.

- (3=More confidence in a woman, 2=No difference, 1=More confidence in a man)
- Item 6: “As you may know, there are presently 35 women elected to the Chamber of Representatives. In your opinion, would it be best if this level were to decrease, increase, or stay about the same?” (3=Increase, 2=Stay the same, 1=Decrease)
 - Item 7a and 7b: Coded: 1=Oppose quotas, 2=Support 25 percent quota, 3=Support 50 percent quota
 - “Would you support or oppose a quota requiring 50 percent of the Chamber of Representatives to be women?” (2=Support, 1=Oppose)
 - “Would you support or oppose a quota requiring 25 percent of the Chamber of Representatives to be women?” (2=Support, 1=Oppose)

Responses to Items 2-7 were combined into a scale of support for gender equality, which is approximately normally distributed and ranges from 0.26 to 1.00.⁶ The items correlate at $r = 0.31$ or higher and the scale has a reliability coefficient of $\alpha = 0.85$. The scale summarizes attitudes toward gender equality in politics, with higher numbers corresponding to greater support for women’s participation in politics.

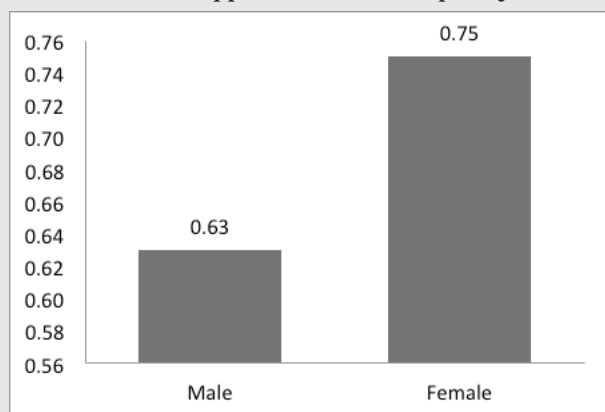
Bivariate Analysis

The bivariate data presented in Figure 2 show that female respondents were more likely to support gender equality in politics than were men. The mean response of females was 0.75, compared to 0.63 for males. The difference is statistically significant ($p < 0.000$).

The data presented in Figure 4 suggest that more religious people were less likely to support gender equality, as predicted by modernization theory. The mean response on the gender equality scale for those who were very religious was 0.64, compared to 0.69 for those who were religious; 0.70 for those who not religious; and, 0.70 for those who were not religious at all. The mean response for those who refused to answer the question was 0.75, suggesting that secular individuals were less likely to respond to questions about religiosity than were more religious individuals, perhaps out of fear of

Figure 3

Mean Level of Support for Gender Equality in Politics by Respondent Gender



6. Item 1 could not be included in the scale because the survey was conducted in two forms, with Item 1 asked on form A and Items 2 through 7 asked on form B.

Figure 3 shows the mean level of support for gender equality in politics by gender of respondent
Source: Constituent Survey, 2006.

Figure 4
Mean Level of Support for Gender Equality in Politics by Level of Religiosity

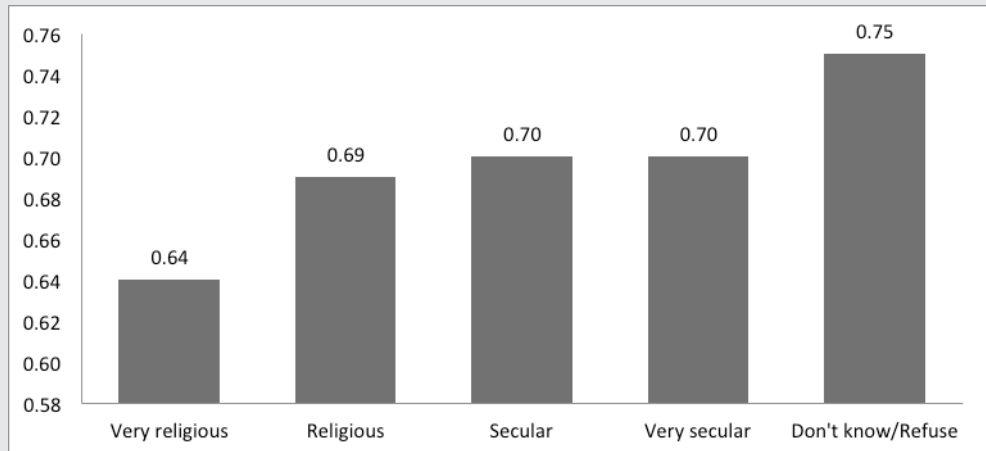


Figure 4 shows the mean level of support for gender equality in politics by level of religiosity. Question: "Religious leaders should have no influence on the decisions of government: 1=strongly disagree (most religious), 2=disagree, 3=agree, and, 4=strongly agree (most secular)." Source: Constituent Survey, 2006.

social sanction. The difference was statistically significant ($p < 0.035$). This relationship is consistent with the predictions of modernization theory.

The data presented in Figure 5 suggest that those with left-leaning political preferences were more likely to support gender equality. The mean response on the gender equality scale for those who did not have much confidence in left or socialist parties such as the Socialist Alliance or the USFP was 0.69, compared to 0.69 for those who had some confidence and 0.84 for those who had a lot of confidence. The difference was statistically significant ($p < 0.000$). This relationship suggests that preferences for socialist parties correlate with higher support for gender equality.

The data presented in Figure 6 also suggest that those who have confidence in the PJD were more likely to support gender equality in politics. The mean response on the gender equality scale for those who did not have much confidence in the PJD was 0.67, compared to 0.70 for those who had some confidence, and 0.71 for those who had a lot of confidence. The difference was not statistically significant in the bivariate analysis ($p < 0.259$). While higher religiosity was related to lower support for gender equality, there was no evidence of a link between support for Islamist parties and lower support for gender equality. Tentatively, this may indicate that the views of religious Moroccans are not monolithic with regard to gender equity in politics.

Results and Discussion

I used ordinary least squares regression to test the independent impact of religiosity and confidence in Islamist parties on support for gender equality. Model 1 includes individual-level variables traditionally included in models of support for gender equality, including a measure of religiosity. Model 2 includes these same variables as well as measures of support for socialist and Islamist parties. I included the following

Figure 5
Mean Level of Support for Gender Equality in Politics by Level of Support for Socialist Parties

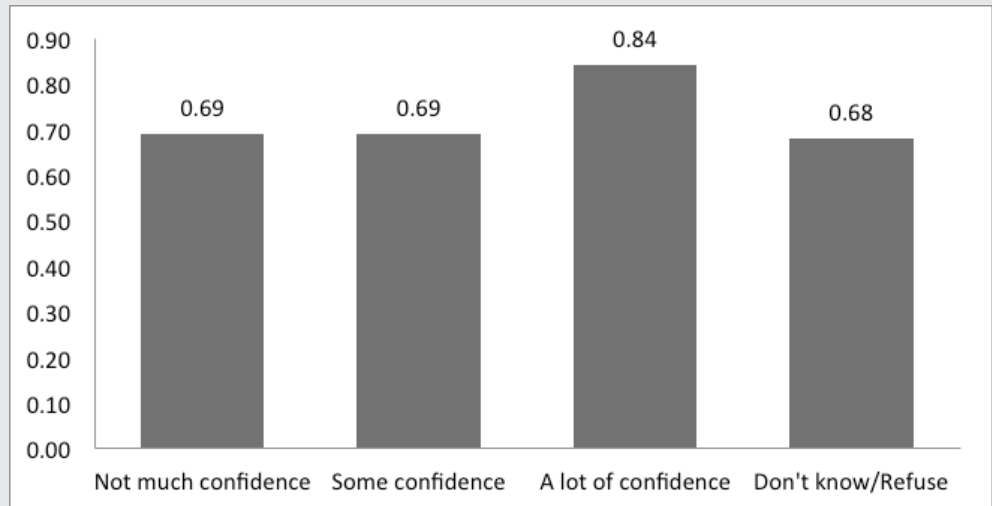


Figure 5 shows the mean level of support for gender equality in politics by level of confidence in socialist parties such as the USFP. Question: "As you may know, more than a dozen political parties and independents held seats in the Chamber of Representatives during the last ten years. For each type of party, please tell me how much confidence you have that it will help Morocco reach its most important goals if it holds a parliamentary majority in the next session (2007-2012). Left or socialist parties such as the Socialist Alliance or the USFP: 3=A lot of confidence; 2=some confidence; 1=not much confidence". Source: Constituent Survey, 2006.

Figure 6
Mean Level of Support for Gender Equality in Politics by Level of Support for Islamist Parties

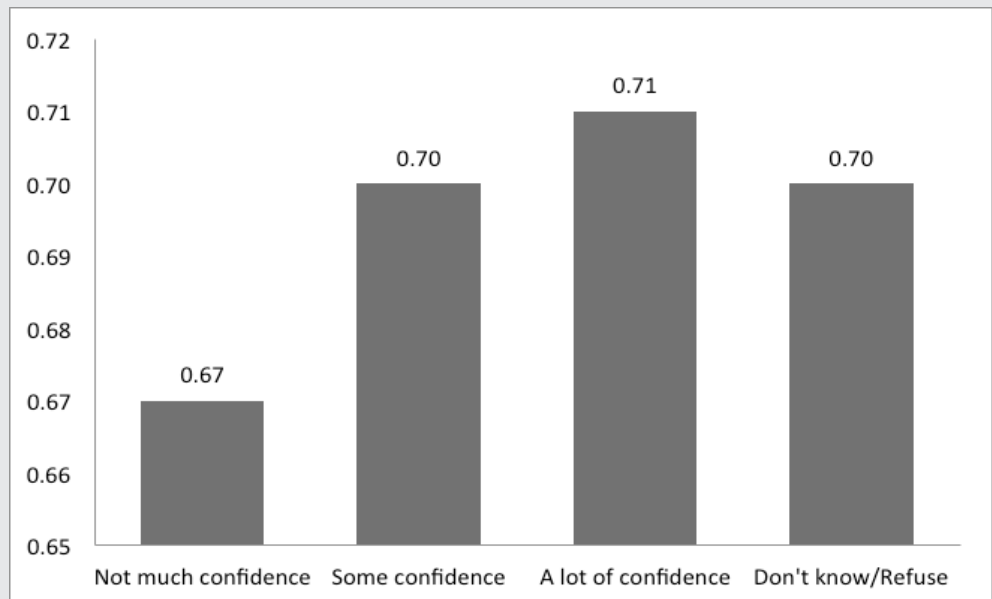


Figure 6 shows the mean level of support for gender equality in politics by level of support for Islamist parties. Question: "Moderate Islamist parties such as the Party of Justice and Development: 3=A lot of confidence; 2=some confidence; 1=not much confidence". Source: Constituent Survey, 2006.

independent variables in the regressions, in addition to district-level fixed effects:

- Gender, where 1=female and 0=male.
- Age, where 1=18-24 years, 2=25-44 years, 3=45-59 years, and 4=60 or more years.
- Education: “What is your highest level of education”, where 1=no schooling, 2=grade 1-9, 3=grade 10-high school diploma, and 4=baccalaureate-doctorate.
- Economic satisfaction: “How satisfied are you with the present financial situation of your household?” where 1=very dissatisfied, 2=dissatisfied, 3=satisfied, and 4=very satisfied.
- Secular orientation: “Religious leaders should have no influence on the decisions of government,” where 1=strongly disagree (most religious), 2=disagree, 3=agree, and, 4=strongly agree (most secular).
- Rural residence: 1=rural housing and 0=apartment, Moroccan home, bidonville, or villa.
- Language: “What language do you normally speak at home,” where 0=Arabic and 1= Tamazight, Tamazight and Arabic, French, or Spanish.
- Marital status, where 1= married and 0=never married, engaged, separated, or divorced.
- Interest in elections: “On a scale of one to ten where one is that you do not care at all and 7 is that you care very much, how much would you say you personally care about the outcome of parliamentary elections in this district?”, where 1=do not care at all through 7=care very much.
- Support for socialist parties: “As you may know, more than a dozen political parties and independents held seats in the Chamber of Representatives during the last ten years. For each type of party, please tell me how much confidence you have that it will help Morocco reach its most important goals if it holds a parliamentary majority in the next session (2007-2012). Left or socialist parties such as the Socialist Alliance or the USFP: 3=A lot of confidence; 2=some confidence; 1=not much confidence”.
- Support for Islamist parties: “Moderate Islamist parties such as the Party of Justice and Development ” (Categories as support for socialist parties)
- District fixed effects

No data were missing for the independent variables, except for 3 cases for economic satisfaction, 17 cases for interest in the elections, 29 cases for secular orientation, 70 cases for support for socialist parties, and 44 cases for support for Islamist parties. To mitigate bias, “non-response” was included as a separate category for items measuring religiosity, support for socialist parties, and support for Islamist parties. Ordinal variables were included as continuous variables in the OLS model only after ensuring that their effects were monotonic. The addition of a “missing” category for interest in politics did not alter the results and was not included in the final model. Economic satisfaction was used as a proxy for income in order to reduce bias introduced by the large amount of missing data for income.

The results reported in Table 3 supported some observable implications of modernization theory, particularly with regard to the role of religiosity in shaping attitudes toward gender equality. In Model 1, respondents who preferred a closer relationship between religion and politics tended, on average, to be less supportive of women’s participation in formal politics. Compared with the least secular, those

who strongly agreed with a separation between religion and politics responded 0.09 units higher, on average, on the 1-point scale of support for equality. Individuals who refused to answer the question measuring religiosity responded 0.10 points higher, on average, suggesting very secular individuals were most likely to refuse to answer questions about religious orientation. Arab language spoken at home was also strongly correlated with lower support for gender equality. Individuals who spoke Tamazight exclusively or as one language at home scored, on average, 0.06 points higher on the scale of support. Rural residence was associated with lower support for gender

Table 3
Determinants of Popular Support for Gender Equality in Formal Politics

	Ordinary Least Squares Coefficients (Model 1)	Ordinary Least Squares Coefficients (Model 2)
Female Gender	0.12 (.02)***	0.13 (.02)***
Higher Age	-0.00 (.01)	-0.00 (.01)
Higher Education	0.01 (.01)	0.00 (.01)
Higher Economic Satisfaction	0.00 (.01)	-0.00 (.01)
Secular Orientation ¹		
Religious (Disagree)	0.05 (.03)†	0.06 (.03)*
Secular (Agree)	0.07 (.03)**	0.09 (.03)**
Most Secular (Strongly Agree)	0.09 (.04)*	0.08 (.04)*
Missing (Don't know/Refuse)	0.10 (.04)**	0.16 (.04)***
Rural Residence	-0.03 (.03)*	-0.06 (.03)*
Tamazight	0.06 (.02)**	0.07 (.02)**
Married	-0.00 (.02)	0.00 (.02)
Higher Interest in Elections	0.01 (.00)	0.00 (.00)
Political Support (Socialist Parties) ²		
Moderate Confidence	-	-0.00 (.02)
High Confidence	-	0.14 (.04)***
Missing (Don't know/Refuse)	-	-0.06 (.03)†
Political Support (Islamist Parties) ²		
Moderate Confidence	-	0.05 (.02)*
High Confidence	-	0.06 (.02)**
Missing (Don't know/Refuse)	-	-0.00 (.04)
Constant	0.40 (.06)***	0.34 (.06)***
N	360	360
F	F (23, 336) = 5.38	F (29, 330) = 5.18
Prob. > F	0.00***	0.00***
R2 / Adjusted R2	0.27 / 0.22	0.34 / 0.28

† p < 0.10 * p < 0.05 ** p < 0.01 ***p < 0.001 two-tailed test. Standard errors are in parentheses. District fixed effects omitted.

¹ Most religious (strongly disagree) is the reference group.

² Not much confidence is the reference group.

inclusiveness in politics, but the effect is not substantively significant. Those who lived in a rural area on average responded 0.03 units lower on the scale of support for gender equality. Education and economic satisfaction, a proxy for income, were not statistically significant, despite the key role these factors play in modernization theory. Neither more educated, nor more affluent Moroccans, on average, were more likely to support gender equality. Taken together, the effects of religiosity, Arab culture, and rural residence were statistically significant, but substantively smaller than the effect of female gender, which is associated with responses 0.12 points higher, on average, on the scale of support for gender equality than male gender.

Yet, despite the positive relationship between lower religiosity and higher support for gender equality, the data in Model 2 showed that individuals with preferences for Islamist parties were not necessarily less supportive of equality. Confidence in Islamist political parties was associated with an increase, on average, in support for the involvement of women in politics. High confidence in Islamist parties was associated with a 0.06 unit increase in level of support for gender equality compared to low confidence. High confidence in socialist parties was associated with a 0.14 unit increase in level of support for gender equality compared to low confidence. These findings suggest that confidence in Islamist parties is not inconsistent with support for women in politics. Support for majority parties, including the Istiqlal and the Popular Movement (MP), was not a significant predictor of support for gender equality and was not included in the final model. Taken together, these findings suggest that supporters of both the Islamist and socialist opposition were more likely than those who lack confidence in these parties to support an expansion of women in political life. They also suggest that more religious individuals in Morocco hold different points of view with regard to gender equality in politics.

Conclusion and Implications

The Constituent Survey highlights the limitations of modernization theory to explain Moroccans' attitudes about gender equality. More religious respondents expressed lower support for gender equality, yet support for Islamist parties was associated with higher support for women in politics. These findings are also consistent with evidence from Egypt, which suggests that Muslim opinion on women's role in politics varies across a broader category of religiously-oriented parties. With the full opening of the electoral field to parties of all tendencies, Islamist parties such as the Muslim Brotherhood tend to empower women, sometimes by placing them high on electoral lists, while more conservative movements, such as the Salafi Al-Nour party, include women only to the extent required by the electoral law, placing them last on the list and omitting their photos. As the Arab spring unfolds, easing controls on Islamist participation in elections and diversity among Islamist movements on issues such as gender relations may become more evident.

This finding also, more tentatively, suggests that norms and values may change as a result of women's leadership in Islamist parties. More research is needed to understand the mechanism mediating support for Islamist parties and gender equality and to elucidate why support for large parties such as the MP and Istiqlal is not related to higher support for gender equality. Is it the strong, visible role that women play in Islamist and socialist parties? Are women in Islamist or socialist opposition parties

perceived as less corrupt and co-opted by the regime than their male colleagues, while women in pro-regime parties are not considered less clientelistic than their male counterparts? Is right-based political discourse or the mere presence of women most important for shaping attitudes towards women as political leaders? Are supporters of the PJD more likely to favor moderate Muslim politics and to support gender equality through independent reasoning (*ijtihad*), in contrast to traditionalists who reject gender equality?

Taken with the data from the World Values Survey and the Arab Democracy Barometer, these findings suggest that ordinary citizens are much more accepting of female participation in formal politics than conventional wisdom about the Arab world suggests. Indeed, the data suggest strongly that the active role of Moroccan women in human rights advocacy and parliamentary politics has fostered highly positive evaluations, with even some men preferring female over male representatives. Without overstating the commitment of Moroccan parties to women's empowerment or minimizing the struggle of women's rights activists to educate women about their rights under the reformed Personal Status Code, combat sexual harassment, gain wage equality, and narrow the gender gap in politics, these survey results should encourage activists that their work is bearing fruit. Moroccan activists should capitalize on the widespread and perhaps growing support for female leaders, and use these data to support a rights-based policy agenda for inclusiveness in work and public life and to support claims that female candidates can be in the strategic interests of political parties.

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