Challenging Patriarchy: Moroccan Women and Political Leadership

Khalid Abartal[1] and Soumia Boutkhil[2]
[1]Department of English Studies, Mohamed Premier University, Oujda, MOROCCO.
[2]Department of English Studies, Mohamed Premier University, Oujda, MOROCCO.

Corresponding Author: Khalid Abartal

www.ijrah.com || Vol. 3 No. 4 (2023): July Issue

ABSTRACT

This paper studies the involvement of Moroccan women in political leadership in the light of the new family code and constitution. It starts with analyzing Fatima Mernissi's *the Forgotten Queens of Islam* to refute the belief that Muslim women were never political leaders and can never be. Then, it examines the perspective of the Party for Justice and Development toward the engagement of women as leaders since the latter is a party with an Islamic background leading the Moroccan government from 2011 to 2021. Finally, the research investigates the Moroccan school programs' representation of women as politicians in history and civic education from the fourth to the ninth grade. This study is urgent because it attempts to understand why Moroccan women are still uncapable of reaching higher political positions though the efforts Morocco is taking to facilitate their integration into politics. The feminist political approach is used in this article since it is concerned with critiquing inequality and political subordination of women while the content analysis method is utilized in investigating the reasons why women are not engaged as political leaders. The research concludes that the Moroccan sociopolitical conditions directly contribute in hindering women from reaching higher political positions.

Keywords- politics, political leadership, women as political leaders, feminism, patriarchy.

I. INTRODUCTION

In contrast to what is expected, Moroccan women are still confronting challenges to become political leaders. This dilemma is because Morocco since the late nineties has launched radical changes in its family code (*modawana*) thanks to the struggle of Moroccan women exemplified in the organized campaigns like the one million signatures in 1992 which resulted in Morocco's adoption of the CEDAW treaty with reservations in 1993. Additionally, in 1997 the national plan for integrating women in development was introduced by the party of Progress and Socialism but confronted harsh opposition from Islamic parties like the party of Justice and Development (PJD) and other women's association who mobilized a huge campaign in 2000 in the city of Casablanca against this plan accusing it of being against Islam. After this conflict between the 'progressivists' and 'conservatives,' the king Mohamed the Sixth appointed a committee of religious scholars,

academicians, women rights activists and legal experts to agree on the changes needed to be included in the new family code to improve the conditions of women. The new *modawana* of 2004 was seen as revolutionary since it granted Moroccan women more rights than most women in the MENA region. Besides the new *modawana*, the constitution of 2011 confirmed in article 19 that men and women enjoy equally the freedoms of civic, political, social, economic, environmental rights. But in spite of these new rights, Moroccan women are still struggling to reach higher political positions like ministers or leaders of political parties. This is ascribed to the patriarchal mentality that dominates the Moroccan culture which still believes that women lack political agency. In short, women are seen as docile political figures who must be used either to vote for or against a law and never seen as independent politicians that have the right to express their vision toward a certain issue.

Worse still, others quote sacred texts like prophetic sayings to claim that Islam is against women

as political leaders and try to make people repugnant toward women holding political power. For all this, this study aims to understand why Moroccan women are denied access to high positions in politics which affects Morocco's international engagement toward gender equality besides creating a toxic environment where women see themselves as oppressed since they are still uncapable of affecting the political scene in Morocco compared with men. This political oppression has been discussed by the feminist political theory which sees that political theory has not taken the gender equality seriously though it keeps talking about the importance of justice and freedom. So, since this research is interested in understanding the reasons why women are unable to become political leaders, this theory is very beneficial and for that, a section is devoted to its discussion. In general, the qualitative approach is used since it enables the research through the content analysis method to analyze, firstly, the book of Fatima Mernissi, secondly, the involvement of women as political leaders and, thirdly, the portrayal of women as politicians in the Moroccan school's curricula.

Firstly, the research —relying on *the Forgotten Queens of Islam*— examines the claim that Muslim women were never politicians and that Islam is against their engagement in politics to conclude, in the end, that many Arab and non-Arab Muslim women were political leaders (queens and rulers) and Islam has never been against their participation. So, after more than thirty years of Mernissi's book, the research, secondly, attempts to assess women's engagement in politics as leaders taking the PJD as a case study. This research chose the PJD since it has an Islamic background which is more pertinent since most people opposing the engagement of women in politics rely on Islamic sacred texts to justify their point of view and because it led the Moroccan government from 2011 to 2021. Thirdly, the last section investigates the representation of women as political leaders in history and civic education of the Moroccan's primary school program. It shows that such subjects didn't represent women as political leaders while they portrayed men as leaders exemplified in kings or sultans. This is thought to contribute in the reinforcement of the stereotypical image about women being inefficient to become political leaders.

II. THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter starts with the feminist political theory which is seen as intertwined with feminism since the latter according to Tucker 'works to fight inequality and the social, cultural, economic, and political subordination of women' (2015, 1). So, political feminist theory is concerned with power relations between the sexes in politics. In general, political theory is seen as dominated by male philosophers who excluded women when theorizing concepts like equality, freedom or democracy. Tucker argued that 'women's natural subordination and inequality was taken for granted or affirmatively argued for by most liberal political philosophers of the western canon' exemplified in Kant who believed that 'women's inability to control their emotions and, thus, their inability to be impartial or rational, requires their exclusion from political participation' (2015, 3). For that reason, feminist political theory aims to enlarge the scope of the political theory through rethinking it with feminist lenses in order to achieve political equality between the sexes and guarantee that women can become political leaders just like men.

In addition, this research sees that it is necessary to discuss the term patriarchy which is very important being perhaps the main factor for the rise of feminism. In simple terms, patriarchy is thought to be a social, economic, political system in which men hold ultimate power while women are expected to be submissive and obedient. Similarly, Walby echoed that patriarchy is a system of social relations, 'structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women' (1989, 214). Further, Veronica Beechey tried to highlight the different feminist perspectives like the radical and the Marxist, for instance. For radical feminists, Beechey quoted Kate Millet who stressed that patriarchy simply refers to a society in which 'male dominate female; and that older male shall dominate younger male' (1979, 68). Yet, radical feminism described the nature of this power relationship between males and females but couldn't explain the foundations of it or what led to such unfair power relations. Then, Marxist feminism believed that 'the specificity of patriarchy lies in the relations of reproduction, which are in turn located within family' (1979,76).

In other words, women are seen as a factory for making babies (workers later) in the capitalist system besides being domestic servants in their houses. Women in this case, asserted Marxist feminists, women suffer from the oppression of capitalism in the public space and the oppression of the males (husbands or fathers) in the private space.

Though they differ in the perspective, feminists in general agree that patriarchy is based on an unjust system of power relations that empowers men and subordinate women. In the end, shedding light on patriarchy was very important to make readers familiar with it since this article holds it to be one of the main reasons behind women's inability to become political leaders. After talking about the feminist political theory and patriarchy, the research moves to discuss the term 'political leaders' mentioned many times in the coming paragraphs. When talking about women as political leaders, the article refers to chiefs of the Moroccan government, ministers, leaders of political parties, heads of parties in the parliament, or parliament members. Now that I finished with the theoretical and conceptual framework, I move to test the claim that Muslim women

were never political leaders and that Islam is against their engagement in politics.

III. *THE FORGOTTEN QUEENS OF ISLAM*: POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND WOMEN IN ISLAM

Mernissi was influenced by what happened in Pakistan in 1988 when Benazir Bhutto won the elections and became Prime Minister. Then, the leader of the opposition Nawaz Sharif and others condemned her victory under the pretext that a woman was never and can never become the leader of Muslims. In *the Forgotten Queens of Islam*, Mernissi took the role of the historian in order to examine 'the women who maybe never existed - the women who directed Muslim affairs of state between 622 and 1989' (1993, 2) but were muted because history was exclusively written by men. Opting for the historical sociology approach which is a 'term commonly applied to sociological analysis based on historical data sources—either primary (such as original documents in archives) or secondary (the written history produced by historians themselves)' (Scott and Marshall, 2009, 311), Mernissi quoted Muslim historians' books to affirm that women were indeed political leaders (see al-Maqrizi,1997; Ibn al-Athir, 1994; Mas'udi, 2005; Amin, 1950; Ibn Khaldun,1377; Ibn Battuta, 1976). The use of Muslim historians is intentional since it is thought to be more persuasive to most Muslims compared with non-Muslims who may not be trusted by many others.

There are many studies concerned with the same topic especially those talking about the masculinist interpretation of the sacred texts being among the reasons behind people's belief that Islam is against women's involvement in politics. Rifaat Hassan (2005) discredited the sanctity of the male interpretation of the Quran and *Sunnah* and called for a feminist reading of the sacred texts. This, she continued, will end the exclusion of women and include their understanding of the Quran to the body of exegesis. Arif Rohman corroborated this when asserting that 'those who disagree with the idea of women in leadership, called conservative or fundamentalist, have used the Quran text and the hadiths strictly to support their arguments' (2013, 46). Therefore, women should, in return, interpret the religious texts from their perspectives to eliminate the mono-patriarchal interpretation and assert that Islam is not against women's becoming leaders. This is because leadership —being 'the most important factor in the continuity and growth of any organization and, for that matter, any nation' (Ali, 2011, 86)— is crippled without the engagement of women as political leaders. Further, Blackburn attempted to compare between what she called radical and moderate Islam's attitude from the involvement of women in politics. Giving the example of Indonesian women, she highlighted how "radical Islam" rejected any attempt to reinterpret the sacred texts while "moderate Islam" 're-examined their teachings

and made considerable interpretative revisions to accommodate modern concerns that Islam has been too restrictive towards women' (2008, 83). Equally important, Leila Ahmed in *Women and Gender* was interested in referring to the status of Arab women through investigating the discourses on women and gender in the Middle Eastern societies. She started with the pre-Islamic discourses on women and then the Islamic besides the nowadays' discourses to comment on the differences between what she called the Islamists who used the sacred texts to impose the veil on women and the secularists who defended women's right not to wear the veil. In short, her objective was 'exploring the core Islamic discourses on women and gender and exploring the key premises of the modern discourses on women in the Middle East, served to set the geographic and historical limits' (1992, 3).

In addition, Delia Cortese in her *Women and the Fatimids in the World of Islam* and Nuriman Abdelkarim's *al-Mara' fi Misr fi 'Asr al-Fatimi* (Women in the Fatimid Era) talk about the situation of women politically, economically, and socially during the Fatimid Age and the status of the califs' wives, as well. But as mentioned above, this section focuses on — relying on *the Forgotten Queens of Islam*— the claim that Muslim women were never rulers. So, in the coming paragraphs, the study tries to list the names of some female political leaders including non-Arabs and Arabs who were political leaders long time ago.

a- Non-Arab Queens

The first queens that Mernissi starts with are the Maldivians who were converted from Buddhism to Islam thanks to a Moroccan man named Abi al-Barakat al-Barbari who convinced their king Shano Razza of converting to Islam, recalls Ibn Battuta. So, when he converted to Islam, his family and the entire population converted as well. Ibn Battuta, then, expressed his surprise to realize that a woman named Sultana Khadija was entrusted to rule and govern (1976). For 33 years, orders were issued only in her name. She was succeeded by her sister Myriam and, then, her daughter Fatima. This shows how for forty years 'the Muslims of the Maldive Islands were governed by women' (Mernissi, 1993, 108). These queens inherited the throne from their fathers and great fathers and never used a man/king to become sultanas. For Mernissi, this is very crucial in asserting that Muslim women were indeed rulers and their people never resisted them simply because they were women but supported them.

In addition to the Maldivians, Mernissi engages the Mamluk queens exemplified in Shajarat al-Durr who 'mounted the throne of Egypt […] in 648/1250' (1993, 89). The Mamluks which etymologically mean 'the owned' were former slaves bought by Arab sultans like the Abbasids. Most of them were Turks from Middle Asia and they succeeded in establishing their first dynasty under the Ayyubid Sultanate and ruled Egypt and Syria from 1250 to 1517. Shajarat al-Durr in the

beginning was king Malik al-Salih's concubine and became, later, his wife to succeed him after his death. When he died, she agreed with the army's generals to keep it a secret to avoid any political unrest and directed them, instead, toward the French. Under their king St Louis, they were besieging Egypt from 1259 to 1260. After prevailing over them, she turned to the problems of succession (Mernissi, 1993). Obviously, this shows her political cleverness and refutes the claim of deficiency associated, usually, to women as political leaders.

When the Mamluks agreed to point Shajarat al-Durr as their queen, she chose the title of 'Queen of the Muslims/ The Blessed of the Earthly World and of the Faith/ The Mother of Khalil al-Musta'simiyya/ The Companion of Sultan al-Malik al-Salih' and for many historians, 'to introduce the name al-Musta'simiyya into her titles was more than a gesture of allegiance to Caliph al-Musta'sim, the 37th Abbasid caliph, who refused to acknowledge her. It was a pathetic admission of her weakness, a desperate attempt to gain his goodwill' (Mernissi, 1993, 90). Unlike the Maldivian queens who didn't need someone like a calif to recognize them, Mamluk sultanas needed the approval of the Baghdad caliph in order to rule. This is because the calif is thought to hold spiritual and earthly power since he is God's shadow on earth. So, anyone desiring to hold the earthly power and become sultan must have the calif's spiritual ratification. He was, always, a man who, mostly, opposed any woman desiring to become sultana. Consequently, despite their admiration, the army was forced to withdraw its support from Shajarat al-Durr and deposed her after few months.

She never gave up but kept looking for a way to maintain power and when she found the name of the general chosen to become the sultan of Egypt, she married him. This general was 'Izz al-Din Aybak and he was one of the most powerful and trusted Mamluk generals. Shajarat al-Dur's, observes Mernissi, 'main concern was to avoid returning to the bleak shadows of the harem. In order not to fall back into the anonymity of female space, she saw to it that in all the mosques of Cairo the *khutba*[1] was said in her name and that of her husband. She made certain that coins were minted in the names of the two sovereigns, and that no official document left the palace without their two signatures' (92).

Mernissi celebrates this persistence which shows that women –just like men- clenched to their right of ruling and took their opponents, sometimes, assassination to get rid of them. This affirms, as well, that Muslim women were deeply involved in politics and, hence, becoming politicians today is not a *bid'a* (innovation) that was imported from the non-Muslims but existed always in the Islamic world. Besides the non-Arab queens, Mernissi involves the Arab queens to support her argument that women were indeed rulers.

---

[1] The Friday sermon.

b- The Arab Queens

She starts with queen Sheba of Yemen to affirm that Quran expressed no sign of resentment while narrating her story with the prophet Solomon. Then, Mernissi talks about Malika Asma and Malika 'Arwa who had the *Khutba* proclaimed in their names. No other Arab woman affirms Mernissi, 'had this honour in any Arab country after the advent of Islam' (1993, 115). Asma Bint Shihab al-Sulayhiyya was the wife of 'Ali Ibn Muhammad al-Sulayhi, the founder of the dynasty who reigned from 1047 to 1066. For Mernissi, he shared power with his wife through allowing her to attend the meetings with her face uncovered and because the Friday *Khutba* was proclaimed in his name and his wife's, as well (1993). Moreover, 'Ali al-Sulayhi focused on unifying the Yemen that he had forgotten his enemies: the Banu Najah who were still fiercely resisting him since they 'had never forgotten the murder of their father, ordered from San'a by 'Ali (136).

So, in 1066 'Ali was killed on his way from Sana'a to Mecca for pilgrimage by Said Ibn Najah. After killing her husband and controlling their army, Said imprisoned queen Asma and put her husband's head on a pole visible for her to make her suffer. Only after one year she managed to reach her son al-Mukarram who came with 300.000 and managed to rescue his mother besides entering Sana'a as the new king. However, al-Mukarram suffered from a shock when he saw his imprisoned mother and 'emerged from the prison in a state of *falaj*, partial paralysis, and remained so for life' (Mernissi, 1993, 164). As a result, queen Asma was responsible for the management of the country until she died in 1087 when al-Mukarram delegated the political power to his wife 'Arwa Bint Ahmad al-Sulayhiyya. She 'held power for almost half a century (from 485/1091 to her death in 532/1138)' (Mernissi, 1993, 115).

Beside the Yemeni queens, the Fatimid lady Sitt al-Mulk ruled Egypt from 1020 to 1024 as the regent of her nephew al-Dhahir. She was the daughter of caliph al-Aziz and the sister of caliph al-Hakim who succeeded his father from 996 to 1021. The latter was known for his insane and inexplicable requests like ordering the killing of all the dogs in Cairo and then throughout Egypt claiming that they had disturbed his sleeping.

In 1020, this caliph disappeared and couldn't be found by the people who looked for him. Due to his terrorization of Egypt and its people, many of his subjects were happy and wanted him gone forever. For Mernissi, people were desperate that they caused no trouble in the succession of the young caliph and, surely, expressed no resentment since Sit al-Mulk was in charge of running the country. Though the *khutba* was preached in the name of the young imam, she was the ruler who showed great skills especially in legal matters and made people love her (Mernissi, 1993). She, then, appointed competent ministers and managed to stabilize the country economically and politically. In other words, she was a good political leader compared with her brother

which is another proof of women's efficaciousness as leaders. Sitt al-Mulk died in 1024 because of sickness after four years of ruling.

Throughout the mentioned queens whether Arabs or non-Arabs, Mernissi, as said before, strived to shake the claim that Muslim women cannot become and were never rulers thanks to her reading of Islamic history from the perspective of a feminist and a sociologist. Further, Mernissi tried to refute the prophetic saying that promises failure to any society that entrusts its affairs to a woman following the same hadith scholars'[2] methods. The narrator of this hadith is Abu Bakra who was accused of slander during the reign of Omar Ibn al-Khattab. So, since trustworthiness is compulsory in accepting or rejecting a hadith, Abu Bakra, echoes Mernissi, can never be trustworthy. He was flogged by the calif Omar Ibn al-Khattab while testifying that al-Mughira Ibn Shu'ba, a companion of the prophet, was fornicating. In Islam, it is mandatory to have four witnesses who certify seeing clearly someone fornicating before punishing them but in the case of Abu Bakra, one of the witnesses was not sure whether he saw that companion fornicating or not. Therefore, Omar Ibn al-Khattab flogged the four of them for slander. So here Mernissi used the same criteria to reject a fake hadith that discourages Muslims from having female political leaders. Then, after asserting that Muslim women were political leaders and that Islam has never been against their involvement in the political game, the study moves to examine the involvement of Moroccan women in politics taking the PJD as an example after more than 31 years of the book's publication.

IV.   THE STATUS OF MOROCCAN WOMEN IN POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND SCHOOL CURRICULUM

a-   Moroccan Women and Political Parties

Morocco granted its women the right to vote after seven years of its independence in 1963. These women were involved in liberating the country from the French colonialism through protecting the nationalists, transporting arms or educating women and making them aware of the importance to stand against colonialism. Nevertheless, the same women were forced to return to the private space —though the king Mohamed V was calling for liberating women— by men who thought that politics is exclusively for them.   Moroccan women became parliament members only in 1993. Presently, there are women as parliament members but are they affecting the Moroccan political scene? In other words, are women reaching higher political positions?

---

[2] *Hadith* scholars are specialized in investigating the authenticity of the prophetic saying through focusing on the chain of narrators and the content of the hadith.

1-   The Participation of Women in Politics from 2011 to 2021

After the constitution of 2011, Moroccans for the first time elected a political party with Islamic background named the PJD to lead the 'governmental majority' from 2011 to 2021. In these ten years, nine women were proposed by this majority as ministers or delegated ministers to the king Mohamed the Sixth who appointed the following: Basima Haqqaoui was at the head of the solidarity, woman, family and social development ministry and was succeeded by Jamila Almosali in 2019 who was before the minister delegate to the minister of tourism, air transport, handicrafts and social economy in charge of handicrafts and social economy, Mbarka Bouida was the minister delegate to the minister of agriculture, fishing, rural development, waters and forests, in charge of fisheries, Nezha Alwafi the minister delegate to the minister of energy, minerals and sustainable development in charge of sustainable development. Lamiae Boutaleb minister delegate to the minister of tourism, air transport, handicrafts and social economy in charge of tourism, Fatna Lkihel minister delegate to the minister of national territory preparation, urbanization, housing and city policy in charge of housing. Rouqaya Addarham minister delegate to the minister of industry, investment, trade and the digital economy in charge of foreign trade. Sharafat Afilal minister delegate to the minister of equipment, transport, logistics and water, in charge of water and Soumia Benkhaldoun minister delegate to the minister of higher education, scientific research and executive training.

Though the presence of women is still unsatisfactory, the party of Justice and Development never objected women's participation in the government. With its Islamic background, the PJD asserted that women have the right to become politicians just like men. Yet, it is very problematic that only two of the mentioned women were the heads of ministries while the other women were delegates for other ministers. This is because of the patriarchal mentality that still sees women inefficient to hold higher positions like ministers or leaders of political parties. In other words, women can become members of political parties or governments but, always, under the supervision of a male figure. Moroccan women, additionally, are integrated into politics to be contained since they are rallying, demonstrating and using international associations for support. So, what is the best way to contain their anger and to show other international organizations and countries that Morocco is modern than to integrate them into political parties? Still, this integration never meant that Moroccan women have full access to political leadership like men but, rather, meant that male political leaders can use women to show that their parties are modern since they have a high percentage of women affiliated to the party and to control them when they become parliament or government members while voting for or against a law. In general, women are seen

as underaged politicians who need supervision and guidance from men or, simply, women are exploited to serve certain political interests. In the coming paragraphs, I discuss the integration of women in the PJD.

2- *The Presence of Women in the PJD*

In 1967, Abdelkarim Alkhatib founded the Popular Constitutional Democratic Movement (al-Haraka al-Sha'bia al-Dostoria al-Dimoqratiya) but was politically harassed from the state because of many events that happened during what is known as 'the Years of Lead'[3] especially in 1965 when king Hassan II declared the state of emergency and dissolved the parliament. Consequently, Alkhatib who was back then a member of the Popular Movement Party and the president of the parliament condemned this decision and left the party to found the PCDM party. In the coming years, however, the party stopped its political activities claiming that elections lacked transparency and were manipulated by the state. Later, Alkhatib was approached by some leading figures of the Unification and Reform Movement (Harakat al-Islah wa Tawhid) in 1996 who wanted to become part of the PCDM since they share many ideas and thoughts and because they were prevented from establishing a political party. As a result, the PCDM called for an exceptional summit and integrated the new members in the party that will be renamed in 1998 as the Justice and Development Party.

This introduction is important to understand, first, the history of the PJD and, second, to highlight that it started only in the late nineties when the first woman joined the leadership of the party in 1999 besides two others in 2001 (Allajnat al-Wataniya Lil'amal Annisaei, 2011). This women's involvement was very important for the image of the party which was accused by its opponents of being reactionist and too conservative. Women of the PJD, however, still proudly recall the speech of Alkhatib who affirmed that women are equal to men in politics starting from the Islamic belief that women are the equal of men and refusing, therefore, to exclude them from the political world.

In 2002 and 2007, six PJD women were elected as parliament members to become the first suggestive women power in the house of representatives. Besides, their suggestions reached 26% of the suggestions proposed by their party from 2002 to 2007 (Allajnat al-Wataniya Lil'amal Annisaei, 2011) and some of them became the first women to preside some very important committees like the foreign affairs committee and the social sector committee.

According to the PJD's National Committee of Women's Work, the party was very supportive to the enlistment of its women in the leadership of the party and the parliamentary elections. This presence is still seen as powerless since they cannot affect decision making whether from within the party or outside it.

This is because of the patriarchal mentality, as said above, that still thrives in the Moroccan political arena, in general, and in the PJD, in particular. Further, other PJD women like I'timad Azzahidi and Amina Maelainine (Télé Maroc, 2020; Aboujhisha, 2021) have launched an attack on the party accusing it of being politically stagnant and controlled by the same people (usually men) who are unwilling to give up their seats for young men and women to bring change to the party. For all these reasons, women were included in the political parties as miners who can make no big decision without the consent of the big brother, using Gorge Orwell's term. In an attempt to understand the reasons behind this attitude toward women, this study attempts to investigate the school curriculum and see the extent to which the latter is supporting the political empowerment of women through representing women as political leaders and through talking about the history of Muslim women as political leaders.

b- *The Representation of Women as Politicians in the Moroccan Curricula*

Curriculum 'refers to the total learning experiences of individuals not only in schools but in society as well' (Bilbao et al., 2008, 5). Family and school are expected to be both responsible for educating the children and preparing them to become the men and women of the future. In this research, we focus more on the image of women in the Moroccan curricula and the extent to which they are represented as political leaders. There are many studies conducted in other Arab countries like the research of Bahri Mouna (1985) about the representation of women in the school's curricula in Iraq and Qatar. Following the comparative analysis and analysis method, she concluded that in both countries women are less portrayed in working positions compared with men. Besides, men are given more positive qualities like courage, strength or proud while women are given fewer positive qualities.

In Bahrain, Assada (1993) focused on the school programs of civic education, family education besides history and geography to show how these programs are not tackling the issues of women and the economic, social, or political problems they are confronting in their daily lives. Further, Ayoub's research (1993) about school and sexism in Kuwait assessed the representation of women in the primary and middle school's Arabic reading texts. He found out that boys are cherished and praised in these books much more than girls especially when it comes to patriotism and defending the country. This of course undermines the great role women played in defending their territories and fighting invaders. Following the same content analysis method, Arobaie (1994) studied the image of women in the school programs of Jordan to conclude that women appeared in diversified roles which reflects the progress women's rights achieved in the country. In

---

[3] Are the years from 1962 to 1999 which marked the repression of liberties, human rights, assassinations, imprisonments and prisoners' torture.

Palestine, 'Assali investigated the portrayal of women in civic education from the first to the sixth grade. She concluded that women and men help and support each other in the studied texts instead of men giving orders to women. For her, this teaches students the importance of helping each other in the society (Annaji, Arrifai, 2011).

All in all, these studies highlighted the representation of women in the school's programs in some Arab countries. Most studies observed the preference of boys over girls in the number of the roles they can play in society. Girls did not play a central role and were depicted as providing suggestions or advices but never as decision makers. Still, these researches focused more on sex roles or the roles that boys and girls are supposed to play in society but did not emphasize the representation of women as politicians or political leaders. So, in the coming paragraphs, this study tries to focus more on the representation of women as politicians or political leaders.

I focus on the fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth and ninth grade's history and civic education texts to examine the representation of women as politicians. Choosing these grades and these subjects is intentional for several reasons: on the one hand, the students starting from the fourth and fifth grade are mature enough to understand politics and how democracy works. Besides, students in the seventh, eighth, and ninth grades study the same school programs since there are no majors (scientific or literary; for example) to be taken. On the other hand, these school subjects are supposed to focus more on the involvement of women in the political world through recalling women political leaders -like those mentioned above by Mernissi- and explaining to students what politics really mean and how democracy which guarantees the participation of all citizens: males and females works. Finally, it must be stated that the school books under study were chosen randomly.

For the fourth grade's history program, students have twelve lessons starting with the concept of history and its importance in knowing their ages and the age of their cities or villages and moving, later, to talk about the differences between the clothes, means of transportation and education between the past and the present. Then, civic education's twelve lessons are concerned with identity besides the rights and the duties of children in a society. Yet, there is no talking about women as politicians or political leaders neither in history nor civic education's programs. For the fifth grade, students have, also, twelve lessons in history which focus on the Homo-Sapiens (primitive human) and their ways of life to mention, after, the Amazigh[4] people who are considered to be the original inhabitants of North Africa. In civic education, the fifth grade students have twelve lessons

and learn about the importance of engaging in school life like writing the contract of the class and knowing their rights and duties as kids. But, again, no talking of women's involvement in politics. Lastly, the sixth grade's history twelve lessons concentrate on ancient Morocco being the place where the first Homosapien was found, the Amazigh race before the coming of Arabs and, finally, the dynasties that ruled Morocco, as well. In civic education, students in twelve lessons learn about the importance of dialogue and respecting the other's opinion besides stressing on the idea of equality between men and women. Still, like the fourth and the fifth grades there is no talking about women's involvement in politics.

For the seventh or first middle school year, students in history program are introduced to some ancient civilizations like the Egyptian, Amazigh empires and their resistance against the Roman invaders besides the Islamic civilization: its birth, evolvement and its influence on the world. In civic education, students get an idea about many concepts like equality, democracy, and freedom but, also, there is no mention of women as politicians or political leaders. The eighth grade's learners start in history with more discussion of the dynasties that governed Morocco and move, later, to talk about other events that changed the world like the European renaissance, the discovery of the new world and the birth of the United States of America. In civic education, students learn more about politics like parliament, government and judiciary system. Further, students are acquainted with the role of the press and trade unions in the practice of democracy. Finally, the ninth grade's students study more events that changed the world like capitalism, imperialism, colonialism, besides the first and second world war. In civic education, students tackle the importance of engaging in the school activities, the children's rights and duties in school and outside school, the importance of preserving the public property and, finally, tolerance between religions.

In light of this, the research concludes that women are still not present as political leaders in the Moroccan primary school curricula. Most political leaders mentioned are men like kings, sultans or presidents of municipalities. In the fifth grade, students study the Amazigh history and Amazigh kings like Massinissa (203BC—148BC), Jughurtha (118BC—105BC) or Batlimous also known as Ptolemy of Mauretania (40BC—23BC) but there is no reference to any Amazigh queen like Tin Hin of the fourth-century queen of the Tuareg Berber tribe or the famous Dihya of the seventh-century who fiercely resisted the invasion of Arabs in the Maghreb and, hence, was nicknamed *al-Kahina* (the priestess soothsayer). This neglect of Amazigh queens is one of the reasons that students since an early age picture a political leader in the shape of a man and not a woman. Besides, the primary school curricula talk a lot of the Moroccan sultans and kings

---

[4] The Amazigh people are thought to be the first inhabitants of Morocco. They are, also, known as Berbers which is derived from the Roman word barbarian but they identify themselves as *Imazighen* or 'free people'. For more check Michael Brett and Elizabeth Fentress' *the Berbers: the Peoples of Africa*.

that succeeded each other from the Idrissid dynasty to the Alaouite dynasty that is ruling Morocco now but, again, no talking about women as political leaders like Zineb an-Nafzawiyah -Youssef Ibn Tachfin's wife- who played a great role in the expansion of the Almoravid dynasty.

The research, further, remarked that the sixth grade's civic education never represented a woman as the municipal's president compared with eight times for men as presidents. This is another reason for discouraging women from becoming political leaders and society from accepting them as leaders since many people don't think that women are skillful to become leaders and many women, in particular, don't vote for women but for men believing that the latter are better. For the middle school, students continue their discovery journey of many civilizations like the Amazigh but no mention of queens or political leaders. In the seventh grade's civic education, students learn about the concept of equality but only theoretically since there is no picture of a woman as a political leader. This absence can be attributed to many factors like the policy of ratifying some school programs though being written mainly by males. The six analyzed programs are written by 36 writers: 34 men and only 2 females. Worse than that, the fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth are written by 31 men while the fourth grade's program is written by three men and two women which clarifies why there is absence of women as political leaders.

All in all, Morocco is striving to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women in politics through many plans like the gender quota that was adopted in 2002 and guaranteed the entrance of at least thirty women to the parliament to be changed in 2011 and reach sixty seats only for women in the parliament. The political parties, also, engaged in this initiative and created the women's national list which guaranteed the election of women from all the countries' regions. Yet, this quota boosted the accessibility of women into the parliament but never contributed in making strong female political leaders, as Maelainin echoed (Maryam Attaydi, 2021). The patriarchal mentality besides the absence of a political culture is among the causes why people still believe that women lack political agency and cannot become leaders.

V. CONCLUSION

To conclude, this research tried to investigate why Moroccan women still find it difficult to become political leaders. It started with Mernissi who strived to shake the claim that Muslim women cannot and were never rulers and affirmed, in return, that women were involved in the political game but were undermined and muted. Mernissi tried to read the history from her perspective as a feminist and as a sociologist through Islamic history. Then, the research tried to examine the engagement of the Moroccan women in politics taking

the PJD as a case study to see to what extent women are engaged as political leaders within the party. The research concluded that the PJD has a big number of female members but compared with men, only few of them are in leadership positions. To answer the question why are Moroccan women unable to reach higher political positions like men, the research studied the extent to which women are portrayed as political leaders in the Moroccan curricula to discover that women are not represented as much as men.

In the end, the study concluded that the patriarchal mentality is among the reasons why women are discouraged and sometimes prevented from becoming political leaders. Additionally, this research sees that curricula is very important in the process of socialization for the coming generation. Consequently, there must be a change in the curricula through including texts and images about women in higher political positions to encourage young girls and boys to be involved in politics and accept women as political leaders. Besides curricula, media is expected to contribute in making people aware of the importance of integrating women in politics and showing them that their perspective is different from the men's but very important in the development of society.

REFERENCES

[1] Ahmed, Leila. (1992). *Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate*. Yale University Press.
[2] Allajnat al-Wataniya Lil'amal Annisaei. (2011, October, 24). Nisae Aladala wa Attanmia.. Tarikh Hafil Binnidal Almostamir wa al-'Atae Almotawasil. https://www.pjd.ma/node/1839
[3] Alatas, S. F & Sinha, V. (2017). *Sociological theory beyond the canon.* Palgrave Macmillan.
[4] Alhamoumia, A., Bahou, A., Alhsini, Z, M., Addahani, A., Ibn Yakoub, M., & Shajie, M. (2015). *Attajdid fi al-Ijtima'ayat (grade 9).* Dar Attajdid.
[5] Ali, A. J. (2011). Leadership and Islam. In B. Metcallfe & F. Mimouni (Eds.), *Leadership development in the Middle East* (pp. 86-103). Edward Elgar Publishing.
[6] Annaji, H, A., Arrifai, T, S. (2011). Sourat al-Mara' fi Kotobi Allugha Al-Arabia wa al-Mawad al-Ijtima'ya fi Marhalatay Atta'alim al-Ibtidai wa al-Motawasit fi al-Mamlaka al-Arabia Assaudia. *Majallat Jami'at Dimashq*, 27 (1-2), 405-443.
[7] Arrobaie, R. (1994). Sourat al-Mara' fi Manahij Allugha al-Arabia Lialmarhala al-Asasiya fi al-Jordan. [Unpublished master's thesis]. Alyarmouk University.
[8] Assada, H. B. (1993). Sourat al-Mara' fi al-Manahij Addirasia Bimarahil Atta'lim Al'am Bidawlat al-Bahrain. *Almajalla Attarbawiya*, 29 (6), 86-114.
[9] Attaydi, M. (2021, February, 4). *Ba'ada 'Iqdayn Min Tatbiqiha Bi al-Maghrib.. Hal Satahtaj Annisae Daiman "Kota" Attamyiz al-Ijabi fi Siyasa?*

https://www.aljazeera.net/news/women/2021/2/4/-بعد
عقدين-من-تطبيقها-بالمغرب-هل-ستحتاج

[10] Ayoub, F. (1993). Al-Madrassa wa Attahayoz al-Jinsi fi al-'Alam al-Arabi, Tatbiq 'Ala Sourat al-Mara' fi Kotob al-Qira' al-Arabia fi al-Kuwait. *Almajalla Al-Arabia Lil'oloum al-Idariya*, 29 (8), 112-137.

[11] Azzarhouni, N., Alwahabi, L, A., Shakir, H., Zakkour, M., & AAki, S. (2019). *Aljadid fi al-Ijtima 'ayat (grade 4).*

[12] Bahri, M. Y. (1985). *Sourat al-Mara' wa Arrajol fi Kotobi al-Qiraea fi Marhalat Addirasa al-Ibtidaiya fi Qatar wa al-Iraq*. Maktabat al-Mara' al-Arabia.

[13] Beechey, V. (1979). On Patriarchy. *Feminist Review*, 3 (1), 66-82.

[14] Bilbao, P. P., Lucido, P. I., Iringan, T. C., & Javier, R. J. (2008). *Curriculum Development*. Lorimar

[15] Blackburn, S. (2008). Indonesian women and political Islam. *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 39 (1), 83-105.

[16] Driouch, M., Alkarni, H., Lahnikat, H., Hamdoun, Z., Soulih, M., Alas'ad, M., & Klad, M. (2021). *Manar al-Ijtima'ayat (grade 8).* Top Edition.

[17] Hamdani, A., Maroufi, A., Soubla, M., & Abdesamad, S. (2020). *Almoufid fi al-Ijtima'ayat (grade 5)*. Dar Attaqafa.

[18] Hamdani, A., Maroufi, A., Soubla, M., Abdesamad, S., Jilali, N., Belafkih, A., & Elkadri, M. A. (2020). *Annajah fi al-Ijtima'ayat (grade 6)*. Imprimerie Najah Al Jadida.

[19] Hassan, R. (2005). Women's rights in Islam: normative teachings versus practice. In S. T. Hunter & H. Malik (Eds.), *Islam and human rights: advancing a U.S. –Muslim dialogue* (pp. 43-66). The CSIS Press.

[20] Ibn Battuta, A. M. (1976). *The rehla of Ibn Battuta (India, Maldive islands and Ceylon)* (M. Husain, Trans.). Oriental Institute. (Original work published 1917)

[21] Ibn Battuta, A. M. (1987). *Rehlat Ibn Battuta: Tuhfat al-Nu'za fi gharaibi al-Amsar wa 'Ajaibi al-Asfar*. Dar Ihyae al-'Ulum.

[22] Kahhala, O. R. (1959). *A'alam al-Nisae fi Alamay al-Arab wa al-Muslimin* (Vol. 3). Al-Risala Foundation.

[23] Mernissi, F. (1993). *The forgotten queens of Islam* (M. J. Lakeland, Trans.). Minnesota UP. (Original work published 1990)

[24] Mohmaed, A. (2021, September, 9). Qiyadiya bi "al-Adala wa Attanmia": al-Maghriba 'Aqabo al-Hizb bi al-Intikhabat. https://www.aa.com.tr/ar/-قيادية/العربية-الدول بالعدالة-والتنمية-المغاربة-عاقبوا-الحزب-بالانتخابات/2360464

[25] Rohman, A. (2013). Women and leadership in Islam: a case study in Indonesia. *The International Journal of Social Sciences*, 16 (1), 46-50. *check*

[26] Scott J., Marshall G. (2009). *Oxford Dictionary of Sociology*. Oxford UP.

[27] Shakir, H., Alhamoumia, A., Bahou, A., Alhsini, Z, M., Affan, H, A., Akki, S., & Lahnikat, H. (2014). *Fi Rihab al-Ijtima 'ayat (grade 7)*. Maktabat Assalam Aljadida.

[28] Taqqush, M. S. (2007). *Tarikh al-Maghul al-I'zam wa al-Ilkhaniyin*. Dar al-Nafais.

[29] Télé Maroc. (2020, November, 19). I'timad Azzahidi: PJD Yomaris al-Istibdad wa Rafadt 'Oroud Azzawaj Dakhila al-Hizb wa Akbalo An Akouna Zawja Thania. https://www.telemaroc.tv/info/23689

[30] Tucker, E. (2015). Feminist Political Theory. In M. T. Gibbons (Ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Political Thought*. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118474396.wbept0362

[31] Walby, S. (1989). Theorising Patriarchy. *Sociology*, 23 (2), 213-234.