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Success Beyond Gender Quotas: Gender, Local Politics, and Clientelism in Morocco

Carolyn Barnett and Marwa Shalaby

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Dr Marwa Shalaby

University of Wisconsin-Madison

marwa.shalaby@wisc.edu

Dr Carolyn Barnett

Princeton University

carolyn.barnett@princeton.edu

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Abstract

What explains the success of female candidates in local elections? Despite the proliferation of subnational gender quotas over the past two decades, we continue to know little about the determinants of women's successes in local politics, especially in non-democratic settings. In this chapter, we focus on the case of Morocco and argue that the prevalence of clientelism and patronage networks at the local level hampers women's abilities to win competitive seats. While these patterns dominate both local and national politics in Morocco and much of the MENA region, they are most pronounced at the local level with direct implications for female representation. We argue that women's success in local politics is curtailed by their 'newcomer' status and weak party affiliation, combined with the majoritarian electoral system (SMD) in place in most municipalities that tends to favor more connected, male candidates who are predominantly viewed by voters as capable service providers. To test our argument, we rely on an original dataset combining the electoral outcomes of all 1538 of Morocco's municipalities in the 2015 election, including municipal and councilor-level data. Quantitative data is supplemented with interviews conducted with local party officials and elected councilors.

Keywords: municipal elections, gender quotas, Morocco, clientelism, representation

Word Count: ~8500 words

1. Introduction

Gender quotas for political representation have increased over the past few decades at both the national and subnational levels. More than 100 states have adopted constitutional or electoral gender quotas, while 75 have implemented them sub-nationally (Quota Project, 2021). Quota mechanisms are generally acknowledged to have increased female descriptive representation in decision-making institutions globally (Franceschet et al., 2012; Jones, 2009; Tripp and Kang, 2008; Childs and Krook, 2006); however, some have argued that quota implementation policies may introduce a glass ceiling, preventing women from being nominated or elected beyond the mandated quota seats (Dahlerup and Freidenvall, 2005). To date, scholars studying the subnational level have investigated the implementation and outcomes of women's quotas in democracies (Baltrunaite et al., 2014; Beaman et al., 2012; Brulé, 2020; Funk et al., 2019), but much less is known about women's successes beyond gender quotas, particularly in autocratic regimes. This disparity is problematic, as it masks important variations in female political representation across regime types and levels of governance.

This chapter explores the conditions under which women win competitive seats beyond mandated gender quotas in local elections. Morocco is an ideal case for this study for several reasons. Since 1960, Morocco's regime has held municipal elections to solidify its power (Abouzzohour, 2017) and build alliances with rural elites to counterbalance urban and partisan elites (Willis, 2002; Zaki, 2019). The regime also introduced national-level gender quotas in 2002, expanding them to subnational level in 2009. Yet, female candidates continue to face challenges accessing competitive seats. In the 2015 elections, the number of women elected beyond the quota was 132, two percent of the total number of women elected and just 0.4 percent of the total number of seats at the subnational level.

We argue that the prevalence of clientelism and patronage networks at the local level hampers women's abilities to win competitive seats. While these patterns dominate both local and national politics in Morocco and much of the MENA region, they are most pronounced at the local level with direct implications for female representation. We argue that women's success in local politics is curtailed by their 'newcomer' status and weak party affiliation, combined with the majoritarian electoral system (SMD) in place in most municipalities that tends to favor more connected, male candidates who are predominantly viewed by voters as capable service providers.

To test our argument, we draw on both quantitative and qualitative data. We rely on an original dataset containing the electoral outcomes of all 1538 Moroccan municipalities and districts (henceforth municipalities)¹ in the 2015 election, combined with municipal-level data from the 2014 Moroccan census. The quantitative analysis is supplemented with data from 28 original interviews conducted with local party officials and elected councilors in four similar municipalities where women's abilities to win competitive seats varied in 2015. We find that the dominance of clientelistic and patronage networks in Morocco's local politics constrains women's ability to win competitive (non-quota) council positions. Developmental, institutional (SMD versus PR system), and municipal political features associated with clientelistic political dynamics are also important factors to explain women's varied success in obtaining non-quota seats. However, our study demonstrates the marginal role played by parties' ideological orientations in promoting women's access to local office.

This paper proceeds as follows. Section Two outlines extant work on women's success in local politics and the role of local elections in authoritarian settings – particularly in the MENA region. Section Three introduces the context of local elections in Morocco and the theoretical framework of our study. Section Four presents the data, and Section Five provides analysis of the results, followed by a discussion of potential alternative explanations. Finally, we conclude by discussing our contributions to the study of women's local representation in Morocco.

2. Women's Representation in Local Elections: A Comparative Perspective

Extant work has shown that local-level offices tend to be more open and accessible to women and other underrepresented groups than national-level offices. For example, studies of local office-holding in the United States find women's representation is inversely related to the competitiveness and prestige of the office (Diamond, 1977; Sanbonmatsu, 2002; Rule, 1990; Welch and Karnig, 1979). However, this is not the case in the MENA region, where women continue to be underrepresented in subnational politics, even when compared to their presence in national legislative bodies.

Based on research in other regions, several factors may explain women's success in local politics. Focusing on structural factors, Sundström and Stockemer (2015) find that higher levels of female

¹ Local councils are elected in Morocco at the level of the municipality (*commune*), of which there are 1503, but additional councils are elected for districts (*arrondissements*) in major cities, raising the total number of local councils to 1538. For brevity, in the rest of the paper we refer to all these units as municipalities or municipal councils.

labor force participation and urbanization predict greater female representation at the local level in Europe. Districts' demographic factors such as income, population characteristics, and unemployment rates are also strong predictors of the strength of women's presence in subnational politics (Tolunay, 2014). Additionally, institutional factors, such as quotas and the type of electoral system, play an important role in shaping women's access to politics at both the national and local levels. Larger districts and party magnitudes—often associated with proportional representation (PR) systems—are conducive to higher levels of female political inclusion (Schmidt and Saunders, 2004), especially if combined with closed party lists (Jones, 1998).

Political parties' ideologies also matter, both on the national and subnational levels. Studies in developed democracies have shown that political parties (Kittilson, 2006) and party ideology play substantive roles in promoting women to power (Murray et al., 2012). As Campbell and Lovenduski (2005) argued, parties are “gendered institutions” that reflect the gender ideology of their membership and top ranks. Parties with leftist ideologies are more likely to encourage women's representation (Beckwith, 1992; Reynolds, 1999). In contrast, parties with conservative ideologies tend to marginalize women by emphasizing women's traditional roles within the family (Sahin Mencutek, 2014).

But what about the determinants of women's representation in local elections under authoritarianism? Authoritarian regimes are often characterized by the concentration of power, limited opportunities for power-sharing, and weak and/or fragmented party competition. In the MENA region, elections are widely viewed as channels for rent distribution, opportunities for elites to strengthen incumbent regimes (Albrecht, 2008; Sater, 2007), and opportunities to identify the most loyal party figures (Blaydes, 2010). Lust (2006; Lust-Okar, 2009) views elections as significant political events for both political elites and voters; however, the electoral competition is not about policymaking but rather about access to state resources and clientelistic networks.

Moreover, political parties play a marginal role in national politics in most parts of the MENA region. The introduction of multi-party systems has led to the creation of parties that reproduce the regimes' autocratic and nepotistic practices rather than promote more liberal processes (AbuKhalil, 1997; Sassoon, 2016). Most parties rely on clientelistic party-building and mobilization strategies based on the distribution of selective benefits. Thus, little attention is paid to promoting credible policy programs along clear ideological lines. The more parties rely on such clientelistic strategies, the more

they become ‘insulated’ from the policy interests of their constituents and risk losing candidates and voters if their ability to provide clientelistic services diminishes (Epstein, 2009).

We expect local elections to be governed by the same dynamics and serve similar goals to their national counterparts. However, they also have some unique features relevant to female political representation. First, local elections are widely viewed as less relevant to the policymaking process (Nanes, 2015). Citizens deem local officials mainly as service providers with little or no policymaking power. Voters are, therefore, even more likely to base their choices on candidates’ abilities to provide services and secure resources from the national government. Partisanship and party ideology matter even less at the local level than they do at the national level. As voters in underdeveloped areas realize that politics will not improve their daily lives (Epstein, 2009), they are more likely to base their vote choice on candidates’ clientelistic linkages and patronage networks than on their ideologies. The pervasiveness of clientelism that reproduces male dominance (Mufti and Jalalzai, 2021) and the weak influence of ideology further disadvantage female candidates given their limited access to existing power networks and regime loyalists’ circles. Female politicians are also often perceived as less competent in service provision and distributive politics (Benstead, 2016), particularly important when local elected officials fulfill a clientelistic role. Where women are relative newcomers to the realm of local politics, they have also not had the opportunity to build reputations as efficient deliverers of patronage and services to garner voters’ support.

3. Local Politics, Gender, and Clientelism in Morocco

Morocco is a multi-party constitutional monarchy with a complex, multi-layered governance system consisting of regions, provinces, prefectures, and municipalities (Bergh, 2017). The country has held municipal elections since 1960 (*Dahir* of 1956 & 1959), and meaningful decentralization effectively dates to 1976.² Municipal councils have three sets of competencies: local, shared, and transferred (François and Goeury, 2019). Local competencies include public service provision, such as water, electricity, sanitation, road maintenance, and transportation. Shared competencies include building and maintaining hospitals and schools, and infrastructure and equipment investment. Finally, transferred competencies, which can be transferred from the central to municipal governments,

² Beginning in 1976, municipalities were officially recognized as legal entities, although they were still supervised by the Ministry of Interior (Houdret and Harnisch, 2019). See Bergh (2020) for a detailed analysis on the different phases of municipal decentralization process since 1956.

include protecting monuments, preserving natural sites, and overseeing small- and medium-size hydraulic works. Local government financing currently comprises 3.5 percent of GDP, which is high compared to many other MENA states (Bergh, 2020). However, most municipalities lack financial autonomy and continue to rely on the central government's transfers (ibid).

The past two decades witnessed a steady increase in women's political representation at the local and national³ levels in Morocco. This advance is largely due to the actions of an organized feminist movement that began pushing for women's representation quotas in the late 1990s when the gradual liberalization of Moroccan politics created a new space for claim-making (Sadiqi and Ennaji, 2006; Tripp, 2019). At the sub-national level, the 2009 electoral reform introduced a 12 percent quota for the municipal elections through the creation of additional lists for women in urban and rural municipalities (Articles 204 (1) and (2) of the electoral code), as well as the creation of a "support fund for the promotion of women representativeness" (Article 288). Consequently, women's local representation increased from 0.6 in 2003 to 12.3 percent in the 2009 municipal elections.

The new Moroccan Constitution, adopted in 2011 in response to political pressure raised by the Arab uprisings and Morocco's 20th February movement (Badran, 2020), called for the institutionalization of gender parity. Article 146 called for a new organic law to "establish steps to improve the representation of women in the [local] councils." In November 2011, the government issued organic law no. 59.11, specifying a number of local council seats to be reserved for women. The number varies from four to eight depending on the size of the local council and municipal population as detailed in the following section.

These quotas raise questions about when and why women gain representation beyond the specified number of seats. While little is known about these questions at the local level, scholarship on women's representation at the national level suggests clientelism plays an important role in shaping women's representation patterns.⁴ National-level quotas have successfully increased women's numerical representation (Darhour and Dahlerup, 2013), but women's ability to access non-quota seats remains limited due to the patronage-based nature of politics in Morocco (Sater, 2012). Focusing on the links

³ Morocco introduced a voluntary party quota in the lower chamber of the national parliament in 2002. The number of women hovered at around 11 percent in 2007. Women currently constitute about 20 percent of the lower chamber.

⁴ We are only aware of one study that employs an ethnographic approach to examining three women's local political campaigns after the introduction of the 2009 quota (Berriane, 2015).

between female politicians and political parties, Lloren (2014) argues that quotas have failed to democratize decision-making procedures within parties and Morocco's politics more broadly. Darhour (2020) finds that women's increased representation at the national level has helped legitimize the "de-democratization" of Moroccan politics.

Moreover, extant research emphasizes the prevalence of patronage and clientelism in less developed areas of Morocco (Buehler, 2015). For decades, the regime has used political parties to build alliances with rural elites, counterbalancing the urban and partisan elites (Willis, 2002; Zaki, 2019). Political parties in Morocco can thus be grouped into two main categories: palace and traditional opposition (Pellicer and Wegner, 2014). Palace parties include the Popular Movement (MP), National Rally of Independents (RNI), Constitutional Union (UC), and the Authenticity and Modernity Party (PAM).⁵ The traditional opposition parties include Istiqlal (PI), the Socialist Union of Popular Forces (USFP), the Party of Progress and Socialism (PPS), and the Justice and Development Party (PJD).⁶ The regime has mainly used the palace parties to garner support from the rural population to counter the "unrest of the urban center" (Buehler, 2015, p. 366), providing them with ample resources, political favors, and protection in exchange for their support (Willis 2002). Thus, voting in these areas relies on personal ties and proximity to the local notables and elites (Clark, 2017).

Currently, municipal elections are administered using a combination of PR systems (for populations over 35,000) and single-member district systems (for populations below 35,000). This electoral system, by design, tends to over-represent rural areas⁷ and continues to be an important tool to solidify the regime's control over elections (Abouzzohour, 2017). Unsurprisingly, the regime's loyalist parties continued to sweep seats in the rural areas, accounting for more than 80 percent of municipalities. However, starting in 2009, the Islamist PJD party has made considerable gains in urban and formerly pro-regime districts due to demonstrable commitment to good governance values while still reproducing key elements of patron-client relationships (Clark, 2017).

⁵ PAM was formed in 2009 as an explicit anti-PJD move by the regime to counter their increasing gains in both local and national elections (Wegner and Pellicer, 2011).

⁶ These are the major parties that collectively win at least 80 percent of total votes on both national and local elections.

⁷ For instance, the minimum number of seats in government per electoral district is two, often making the least-populated electoral districts over-represented compared to densely-populated ones (Abouzzohour, 2017, p. 17).

In this context, there is a limited ability for newly elected women to disrupt existing clientelistic networks and power structures (Berriane, 2015). As a result, female politicians face high barriers to winning local office seats (or leadership positions within councils) beyond the quota in heavily clientelistic municipalities. Thus, we expect to find fewer female candidates winning competitive seats in SMD municipalities and municipalities with lower levels of development. Prior work also shows that higher election participation rates, mainly in rural areas, are often associated with support for the regime's loyalist parties – where clientelistic and patronage relationships dominate (Pellicer and Wegner, 2014). We thus also expect higher rates of political participation to be associated with less electoral success for women. Contrastingly, we expect higher levels of development and education in a municipality to be predictors of women winning competitive seats beyond the quota, as these characteristics are associated with weaker patterns of clientelism.

4. Data

We use data on 31,482 local councilors elected in 2015 initially compiled by the Moroccan NGO Tafra.⁸ The dataset includes the councilors' names, party affiliation, council position, and information on the rate of voter participation in each municipality. We manually coded the gender of every official based on first names⁹ and combined this dataset with information from the 2014 Moroccan Census on municipal-level socio-economic characteristics.¹⁰ Due to limitations on the information made available by the Moroccan government, the data do not specify whether women were elected in competitive seats or through the reserved seat system.¹¹ We, therefore, focus on analyzing variation in the number of competitive seats *exceeding* the legally mandated reserved quota seats. Municipalities with legal populations of 35,000 or lower are, by law, organized into single-member districts (SMD), with four council seats reserved for women. Municipalities with legal populations above 35,000 have councils elected via proportional representation (PR) based on party lists. Six council seats are reserved for women in municipalities with populations between 35,000 and 200,000, and eight seats are

⁸Data are available from Tafra at <http://tafra.ma/donnees/>. The original data are available at <http://www.elections.ma/elections/communales/resultats.aspx>.

⁹The authors have manually coded all the names in the dataset. When we encountered gender-neutral names, we checked the municipality's website or searched for news articles that may have their pictures and/or more info on their gender. Native Moroccans were also consulted with some names that the authors were unable to identify their gender.

¹⁰This dataset is available from the Haut Commissariat au Plan (HCP), Morocco's national statistics agency: https://www.hcp.ma/Open-Data_a2401.html; we utilize the version adapted into a more user-friendly format by Tafra.

¹¹Several variables which would be desirable to include are unavailable, such as female labor force participation rates, as well as gender-disaggregated data on participation rates in the elections. Also, candidate-level data for the 2015 municipal elections are unavailable, so we are unable to analyze variation across parties or municipalities in the number of women nominated and/or how candidacies relate to electoral outcomes.

reserved in municipalities with populations over 200,000. All additional women were elected competitively.

The analysis below estimates a series of multivariate models on a municipal-level dataset with 1538 observations. The dependent variable in each model is a binary indicator that takes a value of one if a municipality elected any women beyond the quota and zero otherwise. We use the following predictors: *electoral system*, a binary variable which takes a value of one to indicate SMD municipalities, and zero for PR municipalities¹²; *participation*, the proportion of eligible voters in a municipality who voted in the 2015 elections; and *competitiveness*, the ratio of the margin of votes between the two parties in a municipality – the most votes to the total number of votes cast in that municipality.¹³ We also incorporate three variables from the 2014 census: *higher education*, indicating the proportion of the population in each municipality with higher education; *unemployment*, indicating the unemployment rate in the municipality; and *public sewage*, indicating the proportion of households connected to a public sewage network.¹⁴ In different models, we then include either the *party magnitude* of each of the eight major parties (the MP, PAM, PI, PJD, PPS, RNI, UC, and USFP)—the proportion of seats held by that party in that municipality—or a dummy variable for *party majority*, taking a value of one if a given party holds the most seats and zero otherwise. Municipalities in which two parties tied for the most seats won are not coded as a majority for any party. Table 6 in the Appendix provides summary statistics for these variables.

We further draw on qualitative evidence from interviews with party officials and local councilors in four municipalities across two different provinces (and regions). A local research assistant conducted twenty-eight semi-structured interviews (with 13 female and 15 male councilors or party officials,

¹² This variable is included in Models 1-2 below, and then used to divide the sample for Models 3-6

¹³ The level of urbanization is also plausibly an important factor explaining whether a municipality elected women beyond the mandated quota. Due to the quota design, across the whole dataset the proportion of a municipality designated as living in rural versus urban areas is highly correlated with the type of electoral system in place: only four municipalities with an above-median proportion of residents living in rural areas are PR systems. Including this variable in the models with the full sample introduces a multicollinearity problem as a result. In robustness checks (not presented), we do include this variable in the models run only with PR municipalities (Models 5-6); the variable accounting for the rural population is not statistically significant in these estimations and does not substantively affect the estimated coefficients of other variables.

¹⁴ Morocco has made significant progress in the past two decades connecting households to running water and electricity, but the development of public sewage networks lags behind. As a result, this indicator is currently a better proxy for variation in local development. Wegner and Pellicer (2011) also control for access to mobile phones and satellite television. By 2014 the former was ubiquitous and the latter widespread. We estimated additional models (not included) incorporating these variables, but they did not affect the results.

whom we anonymize) in person between March and May 2021.¹⁵ Each interview lasted about an hour. The interview questionnaire included questions about candidate selection, list placement, training, and campaigning; party strategies and priorities; and councilor experiences in office. These specific municipalities were selected for similarity in underlying characteristics but differ in the outcome of whether any women were elected beyond the quota: Arbaoua and Mnasra in the province of Kénitra in the broader region of Rabat-Salé-Kénitra, and Sidi Bibi and Biougra in the province of Chtouka-Ait Baha in the Souss-Masa region. Among these, the two municipalities in Kénitra are both SMD municipalities, but Arbaoua elected five women at the local level in 2015, while Mnasra only elected the quota-mandated four. The two municipalities in Chtouka-Ait Baha are PR municipalities, but Biougra elected seven women in 2015, while Sidi Bibi only elected the quota-mandated six. All four municipalities have legal populations between 30-40,000 (near the threshold determining whether municipalities will be SMD or PR municipalities). Table 7 in the Appendix summarizes additional features of the four municipalities.

5. Analysis and Results

5.1. Descriptive Analysis of Women's Representation in the 2015 Elections

On September 4, 2015, Moroccans elected about 31,482 local council seats and 678 regional council seats from 140,000 candidates spanning more than 30 parties. Voter turnout for the elections was 54 percent, up from approximately 45 percent in the 2011 legislative elections. The PAM led in less developed and rural areas, but the Islamist PJD dominated in most major cities and urban areas with the highest percentage of the popular vote (1.5 million votes), tripling its seat share compared to the 2009 local elections. The PJD also won the plurality of the regional council seats (174 of 678), followed by the pro-regime PAM with 132 seats (Szmolka, 2018). Table 1 shows the overall number and share of valid votes won and seats won by all parties that achieved at least one percent of either votes or seats. We focus on analyzing results for women among the six parties that won the most votes and seats nationwide: the PJD, PAM, PI, RNI, MP, and USFP.

¹⁵ The research assistant was approved by the University of Wisconsin-Madison's IRB office and followed strict health protocols.

Table 1: Municipal Election Outcomes 2015

Party	Votes	Vote Share (%)	Seats	Seat Share (%)
PJD	1558715	21	5018	16
PAM	1334273	18	6662	21
PI	1068560	14	5083	16
RNI	886927	12	4415	14
MP	645750	9	3006	10
USFP	562992	8	2654	8
PPS	422315	6	1770	6
UC	400473	5	1480	5
AGD	100367	1	332	1
FFD	74096	1	193	1
MDS	72540	1	297	1
AHD	33100	0	143	1

Note: The table shows the number of valid votes won per party; the vote share this represents (out of a total of 7,366,589 nationwide); the number of seats won, and the seat share this represents (out of a total of 31,482 nationwide). An additional 19 political parties omitted from this table won at least some valid votes but failed to win at least one percent of either the valid votes or seats nationwide.

In total, 6570 women were elected as local councilors in 2015 – 20.8 percent of the total number of councilors. Table 2 shows the number of women elected from each of the six top parties (85% of the total seats) and the proportion of that party’s total number of women-held council seats; 21-22 percent of councilors from each of these parties were women. Across all municipalities, the average is 18-19 percent.

Table 2: Women’s Representation by Party

Party	Total	Women	Overall Percentage	Average Percentage
PAM	6662	1369	20	19
PI	5083	1097	22	19
PJD	5018	1058	21	19
RNI	4415	958	22	18
MP	3006	624	21	18
USFP	2654	574	22	18
PPS	1770	380	22	18
UC	1480	274	18	15

Note: “Overall Proportion” divides the total number of seats held by women for each party into the total number of seats held by that party. “Average Proportion” calculates this proportion for each municipality, then averages across all municipalities.

A total of 132 women were elected beyond the quota requirements, spread across 99 municipalities. In 80 of these municipalities, a single woman beyond the quota requirement was elected; two women were elected competitively in 15 municipalities; four women in two municipalities; and seven women in two municipalities.

Table 3 displays the distribution of competitive women elected across the municipalities where any competitive women were elected, along with the range of total seats per council in each group of municipalities and the percentage range of total seats per council in each group. Where competitive women were elected, they comprise between 1.5 percent (in a 65-seat council where only one competitive woman was elected) and 19.4 percent of council seats (in a 36-seat council where seven competitive women were elected). The 132 women elected beyond the quota represent two percent of the total number of women elected and just 0.4 percent of the total number of seats at the subnational level. Additionally, the number of women elected failed to reach the target quota in seven municipalities: in four municipalities (three PR and one SMD), there was one fewer woman elected than required, and in three municipalities (two PR and one SMD), there were two fewer women elected than required, for a total of 10 “missing” female councilors.

Table 3: Women’s Competitive Victories and Council Sizes

# of Municipalities	Competitive Women	Total Seats	% of Seats
80	1	13-65	1.5 - 7.7
15	2	19-44	4.6 - 10.5
2	4	28-38	10.5 - 14.3
2	7	36-65	10.8 - 19.4

Note: The table presents information on the 99 municipalities where at least one woman was elected beyond the quota requirements. The “total seats” column shows the range of council size in each set of municipalities. The “% of seats” column shows what percentage of this total number of seats the number of competitive women elected represents.

Both the overall proportion of women among councilors and the number of women elected competitively varied across the electoral system types. Table 4 shows the total number of elected seats and number of female councilors. Because of the quota design, a slightly greater proportion of seats (21 percent versus 19 percent) is held by women in SMD than PR municipalities. Thus, women are more represented in less populated municipalities (with very few exceptions).

Table 4: Women’s Representation by Electoral System

Electoral System	Total	Women	Overall Percentage	Average Percentage
SMD system	25987	5584	22	23
PR system	5495	1039	19	19

Note: “Overall Proportion” divides the total number of seats held by women for each party into the total number of seats held by that party. “Average Proportion” calculates this proportion for each municipality, then averages across all municipalities.

While there are fewer PR municipalities than SMD municipalities, nearly an equal number of municipalities with each type of system had at least one woman elected beyond the quota requirements—that is, PR municipalities were disproportionately more likely to elect women beyond quota requirements. Among SMD municipalities, 1331 elected exactly the number required by the quota, while 44 elected one additional woman, five municipalities elected two additional women each, and one municipality elected four additional women. Among PR municipalities, 101 elected exactly the number required by the quota, while 36 elected one additional woman, 10 elected two additional women, one municipality elected four additional women, and two municipalities elected seven additional women.

5.2. Analysis

We estimate six logistic regression models, the results of which are in Table 5.¹⁶ Models 1 and 2 use the entire sample and include the indicator for a municipality having an SMD electoral system as a predictor variable. Models 3 and 4 are estimated on only SMD municipalities, and Models 5 and 6 are estimated on only PR municipalities. Across these sets, the odd-numbered models use the *party magnitude* variables described above, while the even-numbered models use the *party majority* variables. The indicators for all eight political parties listed above that won more than five percent of council seats nationwide are included in the regression models. We display coefficients only for the top six parties; results for the two omitted parties (the PPS and UC) are similar.

Consistent with our expectations, results from the first two models show that SMD municipalities are significantly less likely than PR municipalities to have women elected beyond the quota-mandated

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. The results are substantively similar across all specifications. We focus on presenting the logistic regression results as the most straightforward to interpret while accounting best for the nature of the data.

seats. The results also show that the proportion of the population with higher education is a strong and significant predictor of having women elected beyond the quota, although this finding loses statistical significance in the models run on the small sample of PR municipalities. Higher unemployment is negatively associated with women winning competitive seats, while the proportion of households connected to public sewage is positively associated with this outcome.

We also find a negative association between the level of participation in the 2015 elections and the incidence of women being elected beyond the quota, which is statistically significant in the full sample while controlling for party magnitudes or majorities, and among the sample of PR municipalities while controlling for party magnitudes. As explained above, voter participation is systematically higher in places with denser clientelistic ties to local politicians dominated by regime loyalist parties.

Table 5: Regression Model Results

	All		SMD Only		PR Only	
	(1) Magnitude	(2) Majority	(3) Magnitude	(4) Majority	(5) Magnitude	(6) Majority
SMD System	-0.945* (0.446)	-0.811+ (0.447)				
Higher Education	10.864** (3.357)	10.028** (3.289)	13.606** (5.016)	13.589** (5.175)	7.230 (4.631)	5.778 (4.431)
Unemployment Rate	-3.759+ (1.984)	-3.180+ (1.926)	-3.812+ (2.196)	-3.566 (2.183)	-3.829 (5.464)	-0.796 (5.355)
Public Sewage	1.157* (0.503)	1.109* (0.499)	1.197* (0.600)	1.226* (0.594)	0.464 (1.098)	0.187 (1.071)
Participation	-2.868+ (1.475)	-2.554+ (1.465)	-1.922 (1.896)	-1.812 (1.891)	-5.020+ (2.896)	-3.176 (2.833)
Competitiveness	-0.255 (0.702)	-0.234 (0.719)	-0.412 (0.838)	-0.016 (0.817)	-0.817 (1.963)	-1.098 (1.657)
PAM	-0.005 (0.010)	0.002 (0.494)	-0.004 (0.010)	0.207 (0.671)	-0.016 (0.025)	-0.205 (0.790)
PJD	-0.018+ (0.011)	-0.037 (0.504)	-0.029+ (0.015)	-1.153 (1.170)	-0.008 (0.024)	0.266 (0.736)
PI	-0.011 (0.011)	-0.003 (0.542)	-0.010 (0.011)	0.254 (0.708)	-0.020 (0.026)	-0.574 (1.024)
MP	-0.002 (0.011)	0.497 (0.539)	0.000 (0.012)	0.747 (0.716)	-0.011 (0.026)	0.347 (0.888)
RNI	-0.003 (0.010)	0.004 (0.550)	-0.003 (0.011)	0.427 (0.689)	-0.011 (0.026)	-16.345 (1303.932)
USFP	-0.016 (0.013)	-0.850 (0.838)	-0.020 (0.014)	-0.567 (0.933)	-0.008 (0.036)	-16.386 (2772.445)
Num.Obs.	1534	1534	1379	1379	155	155
AIC	603.4	609.4	421.7	422.2	198.6	198.3
BIC	683.4	689.4	494.9	495.4	241.2	240.9
Log.Lik.	-286.702	-289.688	-196.870	-197.076	-85.285	-85.156

+ p < 0.1, * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001

Note: Models (1) and (2) are run on the full sample of all municipalities. Models (3) and (4) are run only on the sub-sample of municipalities with single-member district (SMD) electoral systems. Models (5) and (6) are run only on the sub-sample of municipalities with proportional representation (PR) electoral systems. In the odd-numbered models, the coefficients reported for each party are for the *party magnitude*. In the even-numbered models, the coefficients reported for each party are for the *party majority* variable.

While we lack a direct measure for clientelism in our dataset, these results taken together suggest that the lower ability of women to win competitive seats in less developed areas, especially those characterized by higher levels of unemployment and voter participation, is due to the dominance of clientelistic voting patterns, which tend to favor male candidates. To validate our findings, we turn to our interview data. Our interviewees reiterated the prevalence of clientelism and patronage politics, especially among the regime loyalist parties, and expressed the adverse effects on the supply of female candidates. For example, a party official from Agadir stated that,

Well... the administrative parties give people [*Makhezzen*] money to vote for them. We don't have this kind of issue, but we hope this practice would stop as it strikes the heart of the electoral process. Especially when it comes to providing equal opportunities. Some candidates pay as much as 300 dirhams per vote, and unfortunately, people vote for them because they see that they have so much money. And they get elected! (*Interview #8, Party Official-Socialist Democratic Vanguard Party*).

Another interviewee from Kénitra stressed that,

[Local] Elections are still based on rent distribution where citizens are still unable to evaluate and decide among different party programs. All they [voters] care about is the candidate's family ties and background. We are against bribery as well as providing material benefits in exchange for votes. (*Interview #7, Party Official- Socialist Democratic Vanguard Party*).

In this context, parties struggle to recruit and integrate women who can fulfill these expectations into their party structures. As a female party official in Agadir explained,

The biggest problem is finding women who are willing to run as candidates. I mean, if you go to rural areas, villages, or other remote regions, it is very difficult to find women willing to run for office. It is not just adding names on the lists. On the contrary, she [female candidate] has to build her place/position, speak her mind, and many other things. (*Interview #9, Party Official-USFP*).

To compensate for female candidates' lack of clientelistic linkages, parties opt to select women with strong community and social ties to fill the quota seats—but not necessarily lead an electoral list and/or run for a competitive seat. Elected female councilors also underscored these strategies, recruiting female candidates from prominent families or with strong ties to the local community regardless of their prior political affiliation or experience. One interviewee described elections as “family selection” (*Interview # 15, Councilor-Popular Movement*). Another from Mnasra highlighted strong social ties as another important criterion for selection, stating:

I am a teacher, and most, if not all, the families know me personally and interact with me on a daily basis. They see that I am giving, helpful, with a degree, and willing to talk and participate in important conversations, which would definitely allow me to represent them within the council and solve their problems. They trust me. (*Interview #17, Councilor-RNI*).

Proximity to the regime is critical for women to be selected to head an electoral list or run for a competitive seat. Referring to women's competitive success in Arbaoua municipality, a leading party official from the Popular Movement stated that,

...the president of the Arbaoua [council], Fatima Alkeihel who was a former minister, was able to achieve so many accomplishments and attracted so many women who worked hard and left their own imprints. She is now running so many projects benefiting the entire municipality. (*Interview #2, Party Official-Popular Movement*).

Being a former part of the ruling elites facilitates access to resources and networks – indispensable for success as service providers in their districts.

5.3 Alternative Explanations

Extant work has emphasized the role of political parties' ideology in shaping outcomes relating to female representation. However, we argue in this paper that party ideology plays a less meaningful role in Morocco's local politics, even when compared to the national level. The main role of local politicians is to secure investment and services for their constituents from central decision-makers. Regarding parties' gender-related ideologies, former studies of Morocco have underscored the diffusion of the gender equality rhetoric across the political spectrum: "All parties speak of increasing women's political participation nowadays" (Lloren, 2014; see also Tripp, 2019). Others have found very little divergence of opinions between PJD and USFP supporters regarding gender roles (Wegner and Pellicer, 2011).

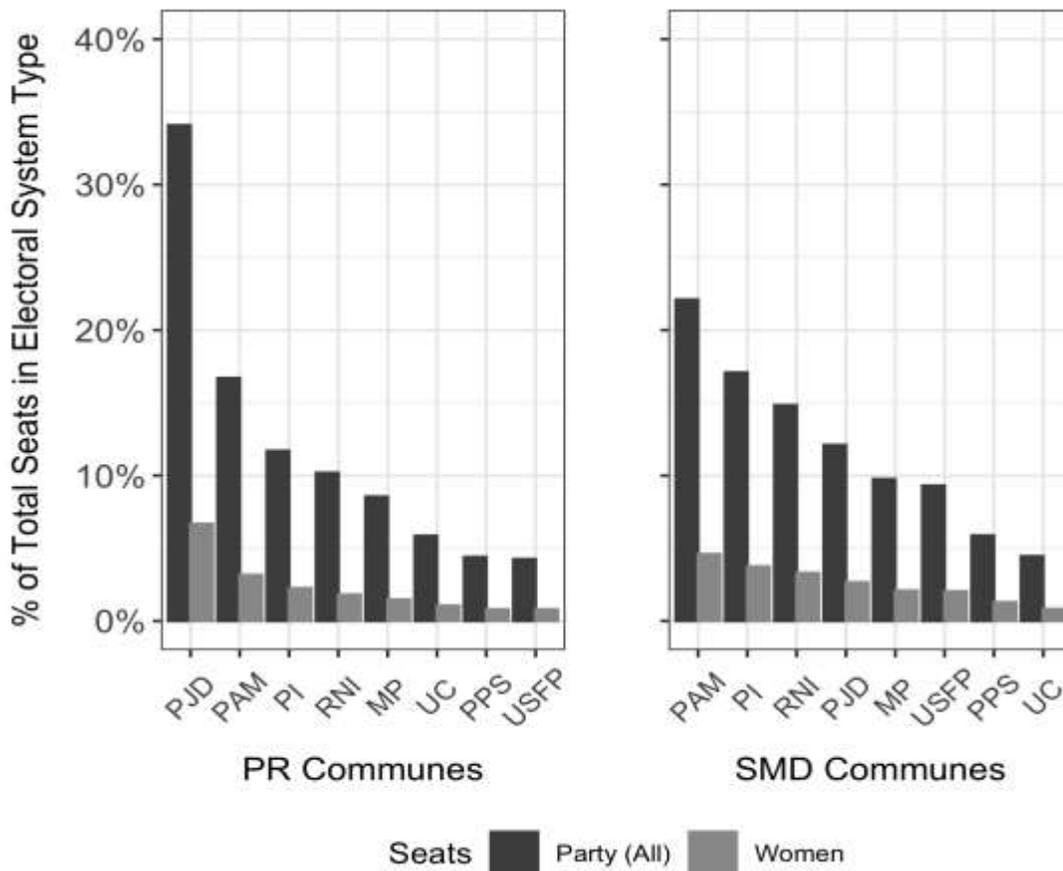
Our interview data confirm the weak influence of party ideology in less developed, rural areas on female representation. Interviewees emphasized the weakness of party politics at the local level and the predominance of service provision, both from voters' and parties' perspectives. As a prominent party official in Kénitra stated,

Our priority now is to avoid politics! We want to avoid useless discussions, ideological party debates, and disagreeing about issues and positions! This is counterproductive! What the

inhabitants of Kénitra need today is better service provision on the local level. (*Interview #1, Party Official-Popular Movement*).

Explanations of women’s electoral outcomes based on party ideology also find little support in our quantitative data and statistical models. The lack of variation in women’s representation across political parties apparent in the aggregate (see Table 2) holds true when we examine the number of women elected by each party under each type of electoral system.

Figure 1: Women’s Representation by Party and Electoral System



Note: Figure 1 displays the percentage of seats held by a party and the percent of seats held by women of that party, both out of the total number of seats available within each type of electoral system: 25,987 across all SMD municipalities, and 5495 across all PR municipalities.

Figure 1 shows the total number of councilors and the total number of women elected from each of the major parties in SMD and PR municipalities, respectively. The proportion of women elected is consistent across parties under both types of electoral system: each party had an overall proportion of 21-22 percent female councilors in SMD municipalities and 17-20 percent women in PR municipalities.

We use the party magnitudes as explanatory variables in our multivariate models, and we find no indication of strong systematic differences across parties in the likelihood of electing women beyond the quota. Increased party magnitudes for the PJD are associated with a lower likelihood of competitive female councilors in the overall sample and among SMD municipalities. However, the magnitude of these associations is small, and no estimates for any of the party variables are large or statistically significant in any other model. These results may also be driven by the PJD's relative weakness in SMD municipalities (see Figure 1). We separately estimated the same regression models (results omitted) while aggregating party-level results into broader measures of the magnitudes and majority status of the “palace” versus “opposition” parties; the coefficients on these indicators in all models were substantively small and statistically insignificant.¹⁷ We also find no association between competitiveness (the relative closeness of the election between the top two parties in each municipality) and women winning non-quota seats.

6. Conclusion

This chapter explores the conditions under which female candidates win beyond the mandated quota seats in local politics. Drawing on multivariate analysis of the 2015 local election results and the socio-economic characteristics of Moroccan municipalities, as well as insights from interviews with party officials and elected councilors, we argue that the limits on women's ability to win seats beyond the quota reflect the ongoing strength of clientelist ties and the challenges women face as credible bearers of clientelist service provision. Women are more likely to win competitive seats in municipalities with weaker voter participation, higher rates of development and education, and PR electoral systems. In contrast, party ideology and electoral competitiveness only have a modest effect on women's ability to win non-quota seats.

This chapter contributes to our understanding of gender politics, local governance, and party politics in autocratic settings in several ways. First, this study offers one of the first systematic analyses of women's descriptive representation at the local level in Morocco. Second, subnational gender quotas have proliferated across the region over the past two decades, but research on the implementation and consequences of these new institutional mechanisms is scarce. Thus, our study paves the way for more

¹⁷ In these models, the PAM, RNI, UC, and MP are coded as “palace” parties, while the PJD, USFP, PI, and PPS are coded as “opposition” parties. The models replace the individual party-level variables with variables for, respectively, the palace and opposition magnitudes or majorities in a municipality.

comparative analyses of gender quotas and women's representation at the local level in the MENA region. Finally, our findings will be of use to practitioners seeking to further facilitate local governance reform and improve women's representation. The results underscore the utility of gender quotas in achieving some level of representation for women, helping women gain political experience, and accustoming voters to female candidates. However, they also demonstrate the limitations of quotas in the face of constituents who may view women as incapable service providers.

Morocco is holding its national and local elections in September 2021, the third since the 2011 constitutional amendments. Based on the findings of this study, it is likely that the more educated, urban centers of the country will continue to be the major drivers of increased female political representation. Yet, the past ten years of experience with female municipal councilors could mitigate the disadvantage they face in the context of more clientelist politics. It is possible that, as women have gained increasing experience in politics at the local level, voters will be more willing to vote for women and trust that they will effectively fill the service provision and political connection roles expected of local politicians. However, more work is still needed to analyze the variations in women's ability to win competitive seats across electoral systems and municipalities' level of development in future elections. Furthermore, while we find no differences across parties in the number of females elected to local councils, it is possible that there are systematic differences in the number of women nominated to run for these positions. Future work should assess this possibility by gathering and analyzing systematic candidate-level data.

Finally, our interviewees reiterated several socio-cultural challenges facing women candidates that we cannot systematically assess with our data. Female councilors and party officials alluded to the cultural stigma associated with women in high visibility positions, especially in rural areas with traditional gender norms. However, absent local-level public opinion data on social norms and attitudes towards female candidates, we cannot rule out whether such norms play a role in suppressing female representation in local politics. We believe further research on the effect of such norms is critical to better understand the supply aspect of female representation in Morocco's local politics.

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Appendix

Table 6: Summary Statistics for Regression Variables

Statistic	N	Mean	St. Dev.	Min	Max
Electoral System	1,538	0.899	0.301	0	1
Higher Education	1,534	0.027	0.033	0.000	0.428
Unemployment	1,534	0.138	0.092	0.000	0.662
Public Sewage	1,534	0.171	0.310	0.000	1.000
Participation	1,538	0.672	0.110	0.254	0.932
Competitiveness	1,538	0.214	0.179	0.0003	1.000
MP Magnitude	1,538	9.705	19.254	0	100
PAM Magnitude	1,538	21.413	25.646	0	100
PI Magnitude	1,538	16.882	22.940	0	100
PJD Magnitude	1,538	13.781	18.390	0	88
PPS Magnitude	1,538	5.678	14.087	0	100
RNI Magnitude	1,538	14.842	22.329	0	100
UC Magnitude	1,538	4.374	12.520	0	95
USFP Magnitude	1,538	9.042	18.247	0	100
MP Majority	1,538	0.101	0.301	0	1
PAM Majority	1,538	0.239	0.426	0	1
PI Majority	1,538	0.153	0.360	0	1
PJD Majority	1,538	0.120	0.325	0	1
PPS Majority	1,538	0.044	0.204	0	1
RNI Majority	1,538	0.148	0.355	0	1
UC Majority	1,538	0.040	0.195	0	1
USFP Majority	1,538	0.078	0.268	0	1

Note: Table 7 provides summary statistics for the variables included in the regression models discussed in the chapter and presented in Table 6.

Table 7: Case Municipalities for Qualitative interviews

Commune Province	Arbaoua Kénitra	Mnasra Kénitra	Biougra Chtouka-Ait Baha	Sidi Bibi Chtouka-Ait Baha
Electoral System	SMD	SMD	PR	PR
Reserved Seats	4	4	6	6
Women Elected	5	4	7	6
Population	32690	34429	37933	39042
Illiteracy Rate	0.45	0.51	0.27	0.35
Higher education	0.02	0.01	0.08	0.03
Unemployment	0.09	0.07	0.13	0.09
Rural Population	0.24	0.49	0.00	0.02
MP P.M.	62	0	0	0
PAM P.M.	24	0	38	0
PI P.M.	0	10	0	48
PJD P.M.	7	17	31	31
RNI P.M.	0	72	10	0
USFP P.M.	0	0	21	0

Note: Table 8 presents information on the institutional, socio-economic, and partisan characteristics of the four municipalities selected as sites for the qualitative interviews. The two municipalities in Kénitra province both have SMD electoral systems, while the two municipalities in Chtouka-Ait Baha both have PR electoral systems, but all four municipalities are within a few thousand inhabitants of the dividing line (of 35,000) that determines which electoral system is used. In each province, one of the chosen municipalities elected a woman beyond the reserved seats mandated by law. The municipalities are otherwise relatively similar on observable characteristics.