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WOMEN IN ARAB POLITICAL PARTIES

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Introduction

An image that many hold when thinking about the Middle East is that Arab women do not participate or take active roles in politics. Yet, Arab women have always been active in politics, including during the colonial era, when women – as well as men – provided the impetus for independence movements – the forerunners of some of today's political parties. As Ramdani (2012, no page)) writes concerning Egypt:

> …women played a momentous role in the revolt against British rule, but found themselves sidelined by the nationalist Wafd party after Egypt was granted nominal independence in 1922… .The formation of a feminist consciousness in Egypt ran in parallel with the country's rapid development as a modern state at the start of the 19th century…The whole nation was united in criticising the way the occupying British had used their country for their own ends, demeaning the interests of the indigenous population, from the peasant masses up to the educated elites.

While playing an active role in Arab independence movements and feminist thought was part of the intellectual landscape as the era of European colonialism in the Arab world ended, women were sidelined from politics in many countries when they gained independence from European powers. Most countries – with the exception of Tunisia – also enacted traditional family laws shortly after independence which reflected norms of public and private space in which politics and the public were the domain of men and made women legal minors throughout their lives (Sidiqi 2002). Yet women contested the restrictions placed on them by traditional family laws.

This contestation also extended to the political realm. Although men have always held the majority of positions of power in the Arab world (and a woman has yet to serve as head of state in the Arab world),[1] due to the diffusion of electoral gender quotas after the 1990s, in particular, women are increasingly being elected to parliaments and local governments. In the 1950s and 1960s most elected officials, regardless of world region, were men. But due to the diffusion of electoral gender quotas, there has been a six-fold increase in women in parliament from only 3.3% of seats in unicameral or lower houses of parliament in 1997 to 18.3% by 2018 (IPU

2020). The Arab region has surpassed the Pacific region and no longer has the lowest proportion of women in office worldwide.

In this chapter, I employ a gender lens to better understand how party ideology – e.g., Islamist, socialist, and pro-regime parties – and electoral gender quotas shape outcomes for women's representation. Which political parties are most hospitable to women and most successful at electing or appointing women? What are the implications for women's representation when it comes to ordinary women's engagement with political life? I argue that women's agency and institutional factors such as quota laws and party strategies have proven more decisive in women taking on these roles and show that electing women, regardless of party ideology, can improve some dimensions of women's representation.

The chapter proceeds as follows. In the first section, I address the myth that Arab women are not engaged in formal politics and offer several examples of women's leadership in political parties and trace how this engagement followed the granting of suffrage to women, which occurred as early as the 1950s in the Magrheb and Levant, and later in most Gulf countries. Next, with Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, and Algeria as case studies, I trace the rise in women's representation in parliament, arguing that it should be considered the high watermark. Significant gender gaps in the internal decision-making structures of parties and the executive branch remain.

Finally, I assess the relationship between party ideology, institutions, and improvements in women's representation focusing on ordinary women's engagement with elected and appointed officials. Some Islamist parties, including Ennhada in Tunisia, have been active in fielding women and that Islamists' strategy to reach marginalised citizens – including women – while respecting piety and that this leads them to utilise women in their parties, leading to improvements in the representation of women's interests at the local level. Yet women have taken the leadership of political parties and also been elected to office across several party ideologies from secular to Islamist and pro-regime to opposition. Existing research suggests that electing women, regardless of party ideology can improve some dimensions of women's representation.

Women rising

It is a myth that Arab women are not engaged in formal politics. Women in the Arab world, as those in other world regions, were granted suffrage at independence in some countries. Universal suffrage emerged first in the Magrheb (i.e., North Africa) and Levant (i.e., the Fertile Crescent) and later in the Arab Gulf. Women gained the right to vote and run in elections first in Turkey (1930 in local elections in 1934 in national elections), Israel (1948), Syria (1949), Lebanon (1952), Egypt (1956), Tunisia (1957), Algeria (1962), and Morocco and Libya (1963). This right came later in Yemen, Jordan, and Bahrain in the 1970s, Iraq in the 1980s, and Qatar (local elections) and Palestine in the 1990s. More recently women gained the right to vote in Oman (2003), Kuwait (2005), United Arab Emirates (2006), and Saudi Arabia (2015 in local elections), where important restrictions remain though on women's independence to run for office without the permission of their male guardian.

There are examples of women who founded or led Arab political parties, but women are still less active than men as founders, leaders, or members. This gap is reflected in indices of women's involvement in civil society and political parties, which shows large gender gaps in involvement (Sundström et al. 2015).

Yet in the decades after independence, women played increasingly important roles in socialist – and after they were legalised – Islamist parties throughout North Africa, as they negotiated areas of agency (Kandiyoti 1988). This process was slow at first, especially when

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it came to leadership in parties.[2] It was not until 2006 when the Moroccan first woman, Zhor Chekkafi, became the head of a political party – the Social Democratic Party (PSD), a party created in 1996 (Gribaa 2008). But, there have also been prominent examples of female party leadership. Algerian activist and politician Louisa Hanoune was the leader of the leftist movement that opposed the socialist, single party, the National Liberation Front (FLN). Hanoune founded the Algerian Human Rights League and the Workers Party in Algeria and was the first female presidential candidate in the Arab world (Talhami 2013).[3] After the results of the first round of parliamentary elections were cancelled in 1992, she was appointed as a member of the transitional legislative institutions. Hanoune was elected to parliament in 1997, 2002, 2007, 2012, and 2019 until 2020 when she was jailed by the military-backed regime under President Tebounne.

In Tunisia as well, where the state promoted secular feminism, few women headed political parties or took on major leadership roles in the Constitutional Rally for Democracy's (RCD) decision-making structure. To put this gender gap in perspective, about 30% of the RCD's grassroots women had limited presence in the party's management structures (Gribaa 2008). Other parties that were legalised during various episodes of political liberalisation since 1981 also had few women in leadership. With Nejib Chebbi, Maya Jribi founded the Progressive Democratic Party (PDP) in 1983 and was the first woman to lead a political party as its elected secretary general in 2006.

Thus, while women continue to be less represented as leaders in political parties, there have been encouraging signs in some countries since the Arab Uprisings. Women's leadership in Tunisian political parties increased marginally after the 2011 revolution and, contrary to conventional wisdom, was most pronounced in the Islamist Ennahda party and later the Nida Tounes party. Of the 107 parties legalised in 2011, only three were led by women: Salma Ammar headed the party of Social Center; Emna Menif co-directed Afek Tunis; and Emna Mansour Karoui ran the Movement of Democratic Edification and Reform (Mfarej 2011, 14, as cited by Khalil 2014). Myriam Mnaouern headed the Tunisian Party (Parti Tunisien), while Maya Jribi was secretary-general of the Republican Party. While not headed by a woman, Nidaa Tounes had three women among its 11 members when it was founded in 2012. The party's internal rules have been amended to require half of the Political Committee to be women, resulting in the selection of 15 women among its 34 members. Two women were among Ennahda's 15-member political Bureau (Ben Amar 2016). In the 2019 elections (ElectionGuide 2020), two parties led by women ran for the elections. One of them is Abir Moussi, who leads the Free Destourian Party (PDL) (Zayat and Ghanmi 2019).

Women's membership in Arab political parties and political engagement

Women are less present in party leadership in the MENA region, but they are also less likely to belong to political parties or be active in national and local political affairs. Benstead and Lust (2015) found that 5% of Egyptian men belong to political parties, compared to 2% of women. In Tunisia, the figures are 4% for men, 2% for women. In Libya, 7% of men and 3% of women state that they are members of political parties. In Tunisia, according to the LGPI (2015), 8% of men and 3.4% of women are members of political parties. Very few identify themselves as leaders – about 0.6% of men and 0.4% of women, a non-significant difference.[4] When asked whether they have spoken to a political party about community needs or services, 12.6% of men and 3.1% of women had done so. This reveals that while women are less likely to be members and leaders of political parties then men, engagement with parties about issues of certain to citizens is especially the province of men.

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Women in government

Women's limited role in party leadership – and their lower engagement in political parties – contrasts with their rise in legislatures at the national and sub-national levels. To be sure, women are still greatly underrepresented in the executive branch and bureaucracy. But the degree to which this is the case in the legislative branch has decreased in recent years due to electoral gender quotas. This has resulted in a six-fold increase in women in parliament from only 3.3% of seats in unicameral or lower houses of parliament in 1997 to 18.3% by 2018 (IPU 2020).

Currently, seven Arab countries have one of three major types of electoral gender quotas.[5] Since 2002, Algeria, Iraq, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia have implemented reserved seat quotas, while Palestine and Tunisia have instituted legislated candidate quotas. MENA countries that do not currently have quotas include Bahrain, Israel, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Syria, the UAE, and Yemen.[6] Parties of all stripes have at times implemented voluntary quotas, and both secular as well as Islamist parties have supported and benefited from legislated and reserved seat quotas at different points in time (Darhour and Dahlerup 2013). Thus, it is important not to draw a clear line between party ideology and support for quotas or the strategic utilisation of quotas to mobilise voters.

Palestine has not had an election since 2006, therefore there is no new data.

Women, Arab parties, and parliamentary politics

The first women in the Arab world elected to parliament were Rawya Ateya and Amina Skukri in Egypt in 1957.[7] In 1959 and 1972, the first female, Radhia Haddad, was elected to parliament representing the Destourian Socialist Party (DSP), Tunisia's dominant party, which changed its name to RCD in 1988. Yet in Egypt – as across the Arab world – progress toward gender equality in formal politics was slow in the decades that followed. The 1995 United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing proved to be an inflection point that gave new force to the international norm of gender equality and profoundly shaped women's role in politics in many areas of the world. The rise and cascade of the international norm of gender equality allowed domestic coalitions – norm entrepreneurs (Kang and Tripp 2018) – to negotiate quotas in many countries, including transitional and authoritarianism countries, by leveraging states' desire to improve their international image and attract foreign aid (Bush 2011). Authoritarian governments, in particular, saw quotas as a way to make concessions to domestic coalitions without making fundamental changes to the structure of decision making (Tripp 2019).

Egypt

Egypt was the first country in the Arab region to implement a parliamentary gender quota. While it had a reserved seat quota in place from 1979–1986, Egypt has implemented and removed a quota on several occasions for its lower house, the House of Representatives (Table 20.1). Initially, the quota increased the number of women in the lower house from fewer than 10 to 34 of 392 seats (8.7%) in the 1979 elections. When the quota was reinstated in 2010, the number increased to 65 of 512 seats (12.7%).

The Arab Uprisings initially saw some gains for women, but these gains have so far not been sustained. In the first election after the fall of Mubarak, a legislated quota was in place. Yet because there was no provision for the position of women on the party lists, a disappointing 10 of 508 seats (2%) were won by women. And, after the Egyptian parliament was dissolved in

Table 20.1 Electoral quotas for single or lower house of parliament in the MENA region

Country	Single/Lower House	% Women Lower House	Political Regime
Autocracy			
Bahrain	No	15.0% of 40 (2018)	Autocracy
Kuwait	No	3.1% of 65 (2018)	Autocracy
Oman	No	1.2% of 85 (2018)	Autocracy
Qatar	No	9.8% of 41 (2018)	Autocracy
Saudi Arabia	Reserved Seats	19.9% of 151 (2018)	Autocracy
United Arab Emirates	No	22.5% of 40 (2018)	Autocracy
Syrian Arab Republic	No	13.2% of 250 (2018)	Autocracy
Closed anocracy			
Egypt	Reserved Seat Quota	14.9% of 596 (2018)	Closed Anocracy
Jordan	Reserved Seats	15.4% of 130 (2018)	Closed Anocracy
Morocco	Reserved Seats	20.5% of 395 (2018)	Closed Anocracy
Turkey	Voluntary Party Quota	17.4% of 596 (2018)	Closed Anocracy
Open anocracy			
Algeria	Reserved Seat Quota	25.8% of 462 (2018)	Open Anocracy
Yemen	No	0.0% of 275 (2018)	Open Anocracy
Democracy			
Iraq	Reserved Seats	25.2% of 329 (2018)	Democracy
Israel	Voluntary Party Quota	27.5% of 120 (2018)	Democracy
Lebanon	No	4.7% of 128 (2018)	Democracy
Tunisia	Legislated Candidate Quotas	31.3% of 217 (2018)	Democracy
Failed/Occupied/Not Included			
Libya	Legislated Candidate Quotas	16.0% of 188 (2018)	Failed/Occupied/Not Included
State of Palestine	Legislated Candidate Quotas¤	13.0% of 132 (2006)★	Failed/Occupied/Not Included

Source: Gender Quotas Database / International IDEA, www.idea.int/data-tools/data/gender-quotas. Polity IV regime authority score, www.systemicpeace.org/polityproject.html. Regimes range from most democratic to most authoritarian: Democracy, open anocracy, closed anocracy, and autocracy. Libya is under civil war and the Palestinian Territories are occupied by Israel and have not had elections since

2013, the quota was removed. The 2014 constitution allowed the President to appoint up to 5% of the seats in the unicameral parliament. Of his 28 appointees, half were women, bringing the proportion of women in parliament to 89 of 596 seats (14.9%).

Tunisia

Tunisia also was an early adopter of electoral gender quotas under the Ben Ali regime. The dominant RCD party instituted a 20% voluntary party quota for legislative elections in 1999, which it increased to 30% in 2009. This had a major impact on women's descriptive representation (i.e., the proportion of women in office) – on the eve of the Arab Uprisings in 2010, 28% of the Chamber of Deputies and local councils was made up of women – because the RCD

in authoritarian Tunisia held most of the seats in parliament (Table 20.2). By 2009, 25% of the Constitutional Council, 20% of the Economic and Social Council, 13% of the Magistracy Higher Council, and 7% of the Communication Higher Council were women.

Yet in reality, this progress took decades to make. Females held 4% of seats after the 1989 parliamentary elections. By 1999, the RCD increased women's representation in its national and local lists by 20%. While the RCD's party quota was supported by some civil society actors, it was implemented due to state-sanctioned feminism, tied to the ruling party's political agenda to promote economic development, repress Islamism, and legitimise itself at home and abroad (Krook 2008; Goulding 2009; Ben Amar 2016).

A second chamber of parliament was created in 2002. In 2004, when the RCD increased its quota to 25%, women's descriptive representation reached 23% at the national and local levels. Women's presence in the House of Councilors increased to 15% in 2008 (Gribaa 2008).

In 2007, to mark his 20th year in power, Ben Ali used his State of the Nation address to call on political parties to announce an increase in the RCD quota to 30% in the 2009 elections (Goulding 2009). On the eve of the Arab spring in 2011, 28% of the Chamber of Deputies and 27% of local councils, elected in 2010, were women. This was the highest in the Arab region at the time, and currently exceeds the US Congress, at 19%.

Yet, while the impetus for quotas came from the regime during the authoritarian era, civil society played a critical role in calling for the law of parity (*loi de parité*) – the principle that men and women should be represented in equal numbers in state and civil institutions. As a result of the strong role of civil society, a provision calling for parity in the electoral code passed the High Authority for the Fulfilment of the Objectives of the Revolution without objections in April 2011 (Ben Achour n.d.).

The electoral code's parity provision passed in the context of ongoing debate among civil society members, including women, political parties, and election officials, about whether to implement an electoral gender quota in the country's closed-list proportional representation (PR) elections. Detractors believed that quota laws invited new political rivals and would elect "unqualified" candidates (Khalil 2014). With the contribution of quota experts from international organisations, activists considered different quota laws for the 2011 Constituent Assembly elections, but ultimately decided on a vertical zipper system requiring lists to alternate male and female candidates. Women's organisations such as the League of Female Tunisian Voters (LET) provided training programs for female candidates. However, the limitations of the quota, which lacked a horizontal provision ensuring that women also head half of the party lists, soon became clear. In 2011, only the Democratic Modernist Pole (PDM), a political coalition including several leftist parties, featured women at the top of their lists. Women's representation remained at 27% – about the same as the pre-revolution parliament – rising to 28% in 2014, when only 4,495 of the 15,652 candidates (29%) were women (Ben Amar 2016). As a result, only 49 women were elected to the Constituent Assembly (23%). This number immediately rose to 59, and by the end of the mandate in 2014, to 61 (28%; IPU 2016). Each time a male member received a government appointment, a woman replaced him; this was intended as a further means of implementing parity.

Due to the failure of parties to nominate many women at the head of lists in the 2011 elections – and their low level of representation – civil society activists campaigned for a constitutional provision guaranteeing horizontal parity (that is, at least half of the electoral lists headed by women). Although the horizontal zipper rule did not succeed in constitutional debates, the original parity provision of the High Authority for the Fulfilment of the Objectives of the Revolution was retained in the constitution: "The state seeks to achieve equal representation for women and men in elected councils (parity)" (Article 24; "The Tunisian Constitution" 2016). Moreover, because several gender-related constitutional provisions were treated as a block, opponents of any

Table 20.2 Women's descriptive representation in the legislature of Egypt

Election Date	The House of Representatives (Lower House)
1923–1924	0 of 2015 seats (0.0%)
1925	0 of 215 seats (0.0%)
1926	0 of 215 seats (0.0%)
1929	0 of 236 seats (0.0%)
1936	0 of 232 seats (0.0%)
1942	0 of 264 seats (0.0%)
1945	0 of 264 seats (0.0%)
1950	0 of 319 seats (0.0%)
1957	2 of 350 seats (0.6%)
First election after women gained the right to vote and stand in elections in 1956	
1964	8 of 350 seats (2.3%)
Dual member constituency system was introduced reserving one of two seats for a worker or a peasant	
1969	3 of 360 seats (0.8%)
1971	7 of 360 seats (1.9%)
1976	6 of 360 seats (1.6%)
1979–1980	34 of 392 seats (8.7%)
Women quota of 30 seats for the House of Representatives was introduced in 1979	
1983 (Senate only)	–
1984	36 of 458 seats (7.9%)
1986 (Senate only)	–
1987[a]	18 of 458 seats (3.9%)
Gender quota removed before the election	
1989 (Senate only)	–
1990	10 of 454 seats (2.2%)
1992 (Senate only)	–
1995	9 of 454 seats (2.0%)
1998 (Senate only)	–
2000	11 of 454 seats (2.4%)
2001 (Senate only)	–
2004 (Senate only)	–
2005	9 of 442 seats (2.0%)
2007 (Senate only)	–
2010	65 of 512 seats (12.7%)
Women quota reinstated. It guaranteed women 64 seats in the House of Representatives.	
2011–2012	10 of 508 seats (2.0%)
Women quota removed in 2011.	
2015	89 of 596 seats (14.9%)
2014 constitution established a unicameral parliament	
The President could appoint a certain number of members (could not exceed 5% of elected seats)[b]	

a On 5 April 1990, the High Constitutional Court declared the 1987 elections null and void.

b In the case of the 2015 parliamentary elections, the President appointed 28 members, half of which were women.

Source: By author

Table 20.3 Women's descriptive representation in the legislature

Election year	Women elected
1957–2002 Unicameral Chamber of Deputies, directly elected	
1959: Nominally multi-party, with the communist party fielding candidates in two districts but winning no seats	1 of 90 (1.1%)
1964	0 of 101 seats (0.0%)
1969	0 of 101 seats (0.0%)
1974: Single party	3of 112 seats (2.8%)[1]
1979: One party Destour Socialist Party (PSD)	2 of 121 (1.7%)
1981: Multi-party competition resumes, but no opposition party wins seats	7of 136 (5.2%)
1986: One-party rule Socialist Destourian Party (PSD)	7 of 125 (5.6%)
1989: Opposition parties win seats	5 of 141 (3.5%)
1994	11 of 163 (6.7%)
1999	21 of 182 (11.5%)
2002–2011 (Bicameral)	
Lower House: Chamber of Deputies (directly elected), 2004	43 of 189 (22.8%)
2009	59 of 214 (27.6%)
Upper House: Chamber of Counselors (RCD members elected by the Chamber of Deputies and municipal councils), 2005	15 of 112 (8 women elected, 7 appointed, 13.4%)
2008	17 of 112 (renewal elections for half of the chamber, 4 women elected, 5 appointed, 15.2%). A woman was vice president of the Chamber of Counselors.
2011-present (Unicameral)	
2011: Constituent Assembly	49 of 217 (22.6%), increasing to 61 of 217 (28.1%) by September 2014, due to replacements by women
2014: Assembly of the Representatives of the People	68 of 217 (31.3%)

1 According to Gribaa (2008), one woman was elected in 1972.

Source: By author

one provision had to vote against the whole article. Block voting helped usher in gender-based rights protecting women from violence, as well as guaranteeing parity in elected bodies (Ben Amar 2016). Moreover, during the Constituent Assembly mandate, 44 women created a group to advocate for greater progress toward gender parity. As a result, the percentage of women at the top of electoral lists rose from 6% in 2011 to 12.5% in 2014. In the 2014 elections, the two highest vote-getting parties – Nidaa Tounes and Ennahdha – each acquired 60 seats, with 33 and 27 women, respectively. The second vice-president of the Assembly of the Representatives of the People, Faouzia Ben Fodha, from the Free Patriotic Union, was a woman (Ben Amar 2016).

The Islamist Ennahda party, which was legalised only after the revolution, has been at the forefront of women's leadership. Women made up 41% of the deputies elected from Ennahda to the Constituent Assembly (Table 20.3). In the 2014 parliamentary elections, 39% of Ennahda

deputies elected were women. Ennahda also utilised large numbers of women in party offices to mobilise voters. The party had 240 Women's Committees to campaign in all of Tunisia's 24 *wilayat*, with 320 women acting as heads of these committees (Khalil 2014). Following Nida' Tounes' 2014 electoral victories, Caid Beji Essebi appointed six women ministers and two women secretaries of state. It also gave Ennahda four ministerial positions, among which two, including Dr Boutheina Ben Yaghlane, the State Secretary for Finance, were women.

Thus, the case of Tunisia shows that the secular regime championed the promotion of (secular) women in government and state-run enterprises yet after the revolution, the Islamist Ennhadha party was most successful in electing women through the electoral quota.

Morocco

Another leader in the Arab world in the area of electoral gender quotas was Morocco. In 2002, Morocco implemented a "gentlemen's agreement" (typically considered a legislated quota) among political parties to field all female party lists for 30 reserved seats. Following the Arab Uprisings in 2011, this was increased to 60 seats, as part of a suite of post-2011 reforms designed to respond to demands from political parties and civil society (Table 20.4). As in Tunisia, parties from across the ideological spectrum have benefited from quotas; this includes more secularly-oriented leftist parties as well as the Islamist Party of Justice and Development (PJD).

Algeria

The National Liberation Front (FLN) in Algeria implemented a voluntary party quota beginning in 2002, by which it committed to fielding at least two women in the top five list positions on its candidate lists. That same year, the Islamist Movement for Society and Peace (MSP)

Table 20.4 Female parliamentarians in the 217-seat Constituent Assembly (2011–2014), Tunisia

Party/Parliamentary group	Percentage of seats	Percentage of female parliamentarians in party
Ennahda	41.0%	41.1%
Congress for the Republic (CPR)	13.4%	38.9%
Popular Petition for Freedom, Justice, and Development (PP, Al Aridha)	12.0%	14.3%
Democratic Forum for Labour and Liberties (FDTL, Ettakatol)	13.4%	28.6%
Progressive Democratic Party	7.4%	25.0%
Independents	7.4%	0.0%
Initiative (Al-Moubedra)	2.3%	10.0%
Democratic Modernist Pole (PDM)	2.3%	17.0%
Afek Tounes	1.8%	0.0%
Workers' Communist Party of Tunisia (PCOT, Al Badil Athawri)	1.4%	0.0%
Socialist Democrat Movement (MDS)	0.9%	0.0%
People's Movement (Haraket Achaab)	0.9%	0.0%

Source: By author

did the same for its local and regional list. In 2012, Algeria implemented a legislated quota which called for the proportion of women on parties' electoral lists to include 20 to 50% women, depending on the district, and providing financial incentives to parties for compliance. Implemented after the Arab Uprisings, this quota provided incumbents with a "safe" way to respond to social demands without jeopardising their grip on power, while ensuring that 30% of Algeria's National Popular Assembly (APN) is made up of women (Table 20.5).

It is critical to see the dramatic rise of women in many Arab parliaments as the high water-mark for women's representation. As discussed, women have had much less access to the internal decision-making structures of parties (as well as the executive branch at large and other areas of the military and bureaucracy) (Khalil 2014) and party membership is low among women. This is true of Tunisia, which has always had few women in its executive branch. Bourghiba appointed the first two women ministers in 1983 and, as of 2001, two of 29 ministers and three of 25 Secretaries of State were women. Between 2001 and 2014, women held between 7%

Table 20.5 Women's descriptive representation in the legislature of Morocco

Election Date	Women Elected
Late 1950's (National Consultative Assembly) Members Appointed by Royal Decree	
Legislature 1 (Bicameral) 1963–1965 Independence in 1956; Constitution established March 10, 1962	0 of 144 seats (0.0%)
Legislature 2 (Unicameral) 1970–1971 1970 Constitution; Coup attempts in July 1971 and 1972	0 of 240 seats (0.0%) ⅓ Directly Elected
Legislature 3 (Unicameral) 1977–1983 1972 Constitution; May 30, 1980 Constitution	0 of 267 seats (0.0%) ⅔ Directly Elected
Legislature 4 (Unicameral) 1984–1992	0 of 306 seats (0.0%) ⅔ Directly Elected
Legislature 5 (Unicameral) 1993–1997 23 September 1996 Constitution	2 of 333 seats (0.06%) ⅔ Directly Elected
Legislature 6 (Bicameral) 1997–2002 July 1999 Mohammed VI takes the throne	2 of 325 seats (0.06%)
Legislature 7 (Bicameral) 2002–2007	35 of 325 seats (10.8%)
Legislature 8 (Bicameral) 2007–2012	34 of 325 seats (9.6%)
Legislature 9 (Bicameral) 2012–2017	66 of 395 seats (16.7%)
Legislature 10 (Bicameral) 2017-present	81 of 395 seats (20.51%)

Sources: IPU (2020); Gribaa (2008)

Table 20.6 Women's descriptive representation in the legislature of Algeria

Election Date	Women Elected
Single-Party Legislatures	
1962–1963	FLN Party
Independence (1962)	10 of 196 seats (5.1%)
Rules of procedure	
1963–1964	
Constitution of 1963	
Oct 3, 1963 legislature was suspended for one year	
President Ben Bella assumed the power of the legislature and elections were not held until 1977	
1965–1976	
1964 elections were held on the basis of a yes/no vote for the FLN	
Parliament dissolved in 1965	
Coup in 1975	
Constitution in 1976	
1977–1982	FLN Party
	9 of 261 seats (3.4%)
1982–1987	FLN Party
	4 of 282 seats (1.4%)
1987–1992	FLN Party
	5 of 295 seats (1.6%)
Legislative Institutions of Transition	
1992–1994	FLN Party
Civil War begins after the second round of legislative elections are annulled (1991 coup)	430 seats
1994–1997	12 of 183 seats (6.5%)
Constitution of 1996	
Multi-Party Legislatures	
1997–2002	12 of 380 (3.1%)
2002–2007	24 of 389 seats (6.2%)
Voluntary party quota (FLN)	
2007–2012	31 of 389 seats (8%)
2008 law calling for women to make up 30% of local and regional councils	
2012–2017	146 of 462 seats (31.6%)
Quota law passed in 2012	
2017-Expected for 2022	119 of 462 (25.8%)

Source: By author

and 10% of ministerial posts – about the same as the final cabinet which lost power in 2011.[8] Following the 2014 elections, Prime Minister Essid's government-appointed more women to ministerial offices after the second election term (19.5%). Three female ministers and five secretaries of state were appointed (Ben Amar 2016). Even though a woman has yet to be president of Tunisia, Kalthoum Kannou was the first woman to run in 2014; four others dropped out before the campaign began. Kannou finished 11th of 27 candidates (Ben Amar, 2016) and was later appointed to the Supreme Court.

Women and party ideology

Women have taken the leadership of political parties and also been elected to office across several party ideologies from secular to Islamist and pro-regime to opposition. Women's agency and institutional factors such as quota laws and party strategies have proven more decisive than ideology in women taking on these roles. Yet how has this rise of women from different parties in government impacted women's representation?

Representation in authoritarian and transitional contexts

Women face critical obstacles engaging in politics and gaining access to services and resources for themselves and their communities in authoritarian and transitional contexts in which personal networks and clientelism are important modes of political life (Beck 2003; Goetz 2002, 2007; Tripp 2001; Benstead 2016; 2019; Bjarnegård 2013). Surveys of Moroccan and Algerian parliamentarians and Libyan citizens find that females have significantly less access to clientelistic services (Benstead 2016). For instance, a survey of 200 Moroccan and Algerian parliamentarians found that 20–29% of requests in both countries are from women: 20–29% of requests received by male deputies, 40–49% by female members (Benstead 2016). Similar gaps exist in Tunisia. Using data from the Local Governance Performance Index (LGPI), Benstead (2019) found that male citizens are thirteen percentage points more likely to know a local councilor and six percentage points more likely to have contacted a councilor for help.

These gender gaps mean that women are less well represented than men when they have personal difficulties accessing services and solving problems with the bureaucracy, but they also mean that their community and policy concerns. As shown in Table 20.6, 17% of men and 11% of women know a member who was in the Constituent Assembly, a 6% gap, while 14% of men and 8% of women know a member of the 2014 parliament, a 6% gap. Some 29% of men and 16% of women know a local councilor, a gap of 13%, and 30% of men and 17% of women could name the head of their local council, a 13% gap.

The role of electing women

The gender gap in women's political engagement in Tunisia and other Arab countries is substantial, yet several studies show that electing women, regardless of party ideology, helps to reduce these gaps. For instance, Benstead (2019; 2016) found that female MPs and local councilors are more responsive to female constituents than their male colleagues. Electing women helped females access services, but did not diminish males' ability to access services. This is due to network homosociality – that is, denser personal networks with others of the same gender. Men tend to have more homosocial networks, while women tend to have more heterosocial networks (Bjarnegård 2013).

Being elected through a quota also plays a role. In the same study, Benstead (2016) found that deputies elected through quotas are more responsive to women than members of either sex elected without quotas as a result of a perceived mandate to serve women.

But while member gender matters most, party ideology is also important. Conventional wisdom assumes that Islamist successes negatively affect women, yet, the literature on Islamist parties and governance suggests the picture is more nuanced (Blaydes 2014). Because Islamist parties serve marginalised communities and institutionalise constituency service to avoid corruption and patronage, electing Islamists may diminish males' advantages accessing

Table 20.7 Knowing a local official in Tunisia, by respondent gender

	Men	*Women*	*Total*
Do you personally know any members who sat on the Constituent Assembly, elected in 2011?	289 (16.5%) $\chi^2 = 27.24$★★★	194 (10.5%)	483 (13.4%)
Do you personally know any members of the new parliament, elected in 2014?	245 (13.9%) $\chi^2 = 28.49$★★★	155 (8.4%)	400 (11.1%)
Know a local councilor	472 (28.7%) $\chi^2 = 80.28$★★★	270 (15.9%)	742 (22.2%)

Source: LGPI.

clientelistic networks and improve women's access to services. This would be particularly true if Islamist parties use women to mobilise female supporters in segregated environments such as homes, mosques, and social events (Abdel–Samad and Benstead 2016; Arat 2005; Ayata 1996).

The role of electing islamists

Indeed, there is evidence to suggest that this is true. Abdel–Samad and Benstead (2016) take advantage of increased Islamist and female representation in transitional Tunisia, where women gained 31% of seats due to a legislated quota in the 2011 Constituent Assembly elections and Ennahda won 37% of all seats and 61% of all female legislators in the parliament, to test the impact of female and Islamist deputies on women's symbolic and service representation. Controlling for relevant factors, they find that women are more likely to know a deputy's name and have asked for a service (not receive services) in districts where a higher proportion of female parliamentarians are elected. Party ideology is also important. Islamist parties in general and Islamist female deputies, in particular, also increase women's representation on both of these outcomes. They argue that Islamist and Islamist female deputies better represent women due to an Islamic mandate effect – Islamist parties' efforts to govern cleanly, provide services to the marginalised, and respect norms of piety and sex segregation by using female parliamentarians to reach women in private and public spaces, such as homes (Blaydes and Tartouty 2009). Benstead (2016) also found evidence for an Islamic mandate effect in Morocco, where the Moroccan Party of Justice and Development (PJD) obtained 13% of seats in the 2002–2007 elections and served more female constituents than other parties.

Conclusion

Many outsiders have preconceived ideas about which parties will be more hospitable to women as members and leaders. Yet while socialist parties have long fought for different forms of equality – including gender equality – and often are places where women have the best access to power (e.g., Louisa Hanoune and the Kurdish parties), Islamist parties have also been among the most active in running female candidates and utilising women to mobilise voters – albeit while respecting piety and traditional values.

The rise of women in parliamentary politics in the Arab world has been substantial in recent years. Yet the nature of the gender gap in political life and political parties goes beyond the women that take on often very visible roles in parliament. Patriarchal social and economic

structures continue to limit women's leadership and membership in parties. This has a critical impact on women's representation, from their interaction with politicians to their ability to access resources for themselves and their communities.

As women move to close this gap, party ideology and strategy play an important role. As illustrated in the cases of Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia, both socialist as well as Islamist parties have run women candidates. Women's agency, institutional factors such as quota laws, and party strategies have all proven more decisive in beginning to improve women's representation in the region.

Notes

1 Turkey, a non-Arab country, has had a female prime minister.
2 Parties are not legal in all Arab countries.
3 Under the single-party era, Hanoune played an active role in Algerian politics as a member of the banned Socialist Workers Organisation, a leftist opposition party that was seen as a threat to the single party regime. After the country opened its elections to multi-party competition in the late 1980s, Hanoune ran for parliament in 1990, but not before being jailed for her political party activities.
4 "Have you engaged in meeting with any of the following groups in order to determine the community needs and plan services? A political party" (LGPI 2015).
5 Party candidate quotas are voluntary measures by parties to increase the number of female candidates, or to improve their placement on party lists. Legislated candidate quotas are, "provisions by law, regulating the gender composition of all candidate lists, and binding for all political parties." Reserved seat quotas ensure "a specified number of seats … for women or minorities" by setting aside some seats in the legislature for which women or some other minority group is eligible to be elected (Darhour and Dahlerup 2013, 134).
6 As you can see from the three preceding tables (additional in the appendix), quotas are an effective way to quickly increase the proportion of women in office. While all three types of quotas have been implemented in the Arab world, reserved seat quotas are most common, due to political authoritarianism. With the exception of Lebanon, Palestine, Tunisia, and Libya (before state collapse), all Arab states have authoritarian governments. Authoritarian governments can readily implement a reserved seat quota by increasing the total number of seats in parliament. Thus, in contrast to a legislated quota, reserved seat quotas that add seats to the legislature do not challenge entrenched interests by taking seats away from men. On the contrary, the added seats – even while they are for women only – are additional concessions which incumbents distribute to political parties in exchange for cooperation.
7 Women were first elected in 1935 in Turkey. Lateefa Al Gaood was the first woman to be elected in the Arab Gulf, to the Council of Representatives of Bahrain in 2006.
8 There were only three female appointments at the ministerial level in the transitional governments, and these appointees were to the weakest ministries: Faouzia Charfi, Secretary of State to the Minister of Higher Education, who resigned from the second Essebsi government on 28 January 2011; and Habiba Ezzahi Ben Romdane, Minister of Public Health, who resigned on 1 July 2011 (Mfarej, 2011, 11, as cited in Khalil, 2014). Only Lilia Labidi, Minister of Women's Affairs, completed her term.

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