

Liberal Feminism Impact on Moroccan Educated Women: Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences, FLDM, as a Field Study

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Abstract

The present study is an attempt to investigate students' attitudes about the social status of Moroccan woman and the variables that may influence the cause of woman liberation. These variables may include feminism, female activism and international human rights on one hand. On the other hand, factors such as religion, patriarchy and marriage legislation could stand against the cause of female emancipation. The paper uses a theoretical and practical part. The review of literature is broad and inclusive that it trespasses the national intellectual framework on the issue of woman liberation to referring to western major feministic movements for woman emancipation worldwide such as liberal feminism. The field work is conducted through distributing a representative number of questionnaires, 350 questionnaires. Briefly, the findings proved that the majority of respondents, 55% hold the view that religion stands as a primary factor behind conservative gender perception, whereas, 49% of the respondents believe that education is the factor behind such perceptions. Furthermore, 40% believed that the patriarchal system is the element behind traditional treatment of gender. Concerning marriage legislation, 55% agree with the reforms in Al Mudawana in 2004. For female activism, 72% believe that women highly contributed in bringing about the changes in Al Mudawana reforms of 2004. This helped to generate an increasing female participation in politics as proved by 58% of the respondents. Finally, 65% hold the view that woman social status nowadays is semi-liberal and improving.

Keywords: Marriage legislation, Patriarchy, conservative society, women education, gender liberation

Introduction

Liberal feminism emerged as a theoretical background to foster feminism movements. The roots of liberal feminism go back to liberalism and its ideals which dominated Western thought in 18th and 19th centuries. Feminism, as a movement, developed various schools of thought and progressed into theories and approaches. Different disciplines such as philosophy, religion, economics and politics..., served as distinctive intellectual backgrounds of feminist thought. Thus, one of the essential intellectual bases of feminism is liberalism, which developed into liberal feminism. Liberal feminism and its emancipating aims caused much polemic within Muslim conservative societies such as Morocco. At first, liberal feminism seemed limited to the western scope where it first emerged. Later, it expanded and extended to even stubborn patriarchal societies such as Morocco and many other conservative communities. In this regard, liberal feminism became quasi-universal as its principles were appealing to all humanities under the slogan of universal human rights. Meanwhile, liberal feminism demands are basic and necessary for all humanities, particularly for women. In a word, Liberalism has become an intellectual tool towards freeing humans in all domains of life: in social, political, economic and religious domains.

The motive behind choosing this topic is, first of all, its amplitude and universality. On the other hand, it is up to an urgent will to reveal the unjust treatment of women in the patriarchal communities and enhancing the vindication of women's rights even in traditional societies such as Morocco. Morocco has historically witnessed unjust treatment of gender under various pretexts such religion, tradition, culture, the nature of the patriarchal system, the codes of honor and morality...etc. For long times, gender maltreatment has been considered a norm and was accepted as something natural. Woman was silenced under the authority and dominance of man because of the elements stated above. Yet when we investigate the roots of such treatment, we find that they are not based on any rational reasons. Because of such injustices done to gender, including among these gender members my mother and sisters, which we occasionally come across in social life events that I want to shed light on the impacts of such constructed structure of gender relations and reveal the factors behind them.

The present research is an attempt to encompass, theoretically and practically, the legitimacy of liberal feminism in defending women rights. Being supported by an intellectual philosophical background, liberalism, the study attempts to justify women rights across the whole universe, including traditional countries. This theoretical research is intended to be enhanced and further credited through a conducted field work, employing basic research instruments such as questionnaires. The research aims at answering questions such as the way liberal feminism has impacted Morocco and its contribution

in motivating action towards social change as well as how does such liberation instigates the opposition of the Muslim conservative society .

The research paper will start with a theoretical background on the topic of liberal feminism. This part encompasses to some extent the roots of liberal feminism and the historicity of liberalism as a philosophical branch. It will tackle thereafter its extension to Morocco, enhancing the research with a conducted field work inside the University of my Graduate Studies. This paper consists of two parts. The first part is divided into two sections. The first section addresses individualism, feminism and liberal feminism which are dealt with respectively in three subheadings. The purpose of this section is shedding light on both, the intellectual background of this movement and its extension to Moroccan intellectual centers. The second section tackles Moroccan social structure and liberal feminism. The later includes two main subdivisions: Morocco and liberal Feminism and Gender and Activism. The later is further dealt with in three sections: Female Activism, Women Education and patriarchal Challenges and Gender and Change. The second chapter deals with the methodology adopted for the field work. It comprises two major headings: Variables and Field Work. The former further involves variables statistics and graphs and variables description. The latter further includes findings, figures and tables. In a word, the first part is about the theoretical basis. The second part demonstrates the approaches employed to the research, which focuses mainly on questionnaires along with the required data analysis.

1. Liberalism, Feminism and Liberal Feminism

1.1 Liberalism

Liberalism is the dominant intellectual feature of the 18th and 19th century western thought. This movement is associated with pioneers such as Francis Bacon, René Descartes and John Locke. These pioneers, Hicks (2004) stresses, were those who first questioned the traditional dominant thought reference of mysticism, religious authority and supernaturalism and superseded it by a new reference which focused on the power of reason (Hicks, 2004). Clearly, these intellectuals, added to Montesquieu later, have broken up with the past traditional features and developed new methods of reflection. This new method is centered upon reasoning. These intellectuals and theorists shifted from mystical resources and religious authoritative thought as referential bases to institutionalizing the faculty of reasoning. They, as Hicks (2004) argues, start from nature instead of some form of the supernatural, which had been the starting point characteristic of pre-modern medieval philosophy and believe that perception and reason are the human means of knowing nature, in contrast to human reliance upon tradition, faith and mysticism (Hicks, 2004).

The adoption of this new philosophy and its extension worldwide aimed at emancipating the human from the fetters of tradition and the original sin burden prevalent in medieval ages. Modern thinkers were reconsidering the human existential status and arguing his individual liberty. Progressively, humanism as a distinct movement became the norm and the individual turned to the center of interest. For example, Webster (2003) put the following “*Individualists promote the exercise of one's goals and desires and so value independence and self-reliance*” (Webster, 2003). As humanism progressed, the characteristics of collectivism, tradition and state totalitarianism were fading. Hayek (1994) added that while opposing external interference upon one's own interests by society or institutions such as the government, individualism is often contrasted with totalitarianism or collectivism (Hayek, 1994). After centuries of struggle and conflict between traditionalism and modernism, the latter finally won and much importance was regarded to the individual at the expense of collectivity.

The struggle against traditional dominance of thought that enslaved the individual was accompanied with revolutions, particularly, in England and USA. Then, it culminated with the outbreak of French revolution as a major event in history, in 1789. The French revolution marked the triumph of individualism and liberalism and led to the collapse of the entire feudalist system (Hicks, 2004). Liberalism is based and referred to the theories of natural rights founded by renowned philosophers such as Thomas Hobbes and John Locke. Liberals espouse a wide array of views depending on their understanding of these principles, but generally they support ideas and programs such as freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of religion, free markets, civil rights, democratic societies, secular governments, and international cooperation (Wikipedia, 2015). Liberalism rejected the notions prevalent in the feudalist system, including state religion, absolute monarchy and divine rights of the king.

The development of liberalism continued throughout the 18th and 19th centuries with the burgeoning enlightenment ideals and spread across Europe, particularly with the Military and ideological campaigning of Napoleon Bonaparte (Timothy C). Liberalism expanded and was applied to politics, religion and economics. For example, Montesquieu “*The Spirit of the Laws*” (1748) defended the application of liberalism to politics. He called for the separation and distribution of political powers on separated institutions. He believed that the executive, legislative and judicial functions of the government should not be assigned to one single body authority. (Montesquieu, 2001). That is what developed to be called “Constitutional Liberty”. On the other hand, Liberalism extended to religion. Voltaire, for instance, is considered among the most enlightenment intellectuals who launched polemical attacks on religious intolerance and its long tradition of

persecutions. In this regard, Hicks (2004) stresses that Voltaire preached the freedom of religion and fought for civil liberties (Hicks, 2004). In the same regard, Mill's "*On Liberty*" (1859) defended free speech and entailed free discourse as a necessary condition for intellectual and social progress (Mill, 2001).

In the field of economics, Adam Smith advocated liberalism and supported free markets. His significant work "*The Wealth of Nations*" (1776) accounted for the benefits of free market, unrestricted trade exchange and the states support for free competition. This contributed to the development of capitalism (Smith, 2010). Through the efforts of these intellectuals and others, individualism and liberalism dominated the modern scene. As a consequence, humanities enjoyed civil rights, civil liberties, wealth and progress. That is how liberalism and its advocates served as a solid referential base and legitimacy for woman activism and yielded liberal feminism. In other words, Feminism used various approaches as weapons in order to launch and justify its militancy and activism of which was mainly "liberalism". Before moving to talk about liberal feminism, we are required, firstly, to highlight the issue of feminism as a distinct movement.

1.2 Feminism

Feminism can be defined as a socio- political movement, first launched as an activity under forms of demonstrations. This first emergence took part in France centers in 1880s. Afterwards, it progressed into a more ordered systematic form, adopting different approaches and doctrines. One of the crucial elements standing behind its appearance was the necessity of reconsidering female position in society at large. Added to this element, consequences of the French revolution sexist principles contributed in raising the issue of woman position to the front. Clearly, the demands of the French revolution which seemed to have been driven towards the interest of men only pushed a sect of educated women to moving into insurrections, condemning those objectives that excluded women's interest. From then on, feminism took the struggle to redress some of history's erroneousess along ages. Progressively, feminism brought about basic rights of women and reached the peak in the 90s of the 20th century.

Since its birth in 1880s, Feminism saw three important waves. The first wave started in 1880s and extended till 1960s. This wave demanded women's basic rights of education, work, voting and access to public space. In other words, the whole process was concerned with women's liberation from the fetters of patriarchy. The second wave started in the 1960s and ended after a period of three decades, in 1990s. Apart the radical face of this movement, some of its demands were rational and even necessary to women. Some important rights that were reiterated during this process are: birth control and

legalization of abortion, rights of equal access to political and economic positions and freedom of sexuality outside the marriage institution strictures. The most outstanding achievement; however, was what is called “the personal is political”. That is, the interference of political institutions and political authorities in personal matters whenever there is any human right violation. In other words, human rights became a universal issue agreed to and guaranteed by the power of the state. In consequence, it should be respected by all people even when the issue is that of relations between family members or between parents and their children. The third wave started in the 1990s and still in efficiency up to the present day. This wave enhanced the previous wave demands and rights that were universal and critiqued some claims that were incomprehensive. In contrast to the previous waves which were limited to certain race, class and color; the third wave was more comprehensive. It celebrated all differences of class, color, religion, ethnicity ..., and still believed in the possibility of achieving equity and equality (Kroløkke, 2005).

Along these waves, a distinctive feminist thought was in the way of being constructed. Feminists and womanists started questioning the fixed norms and doubted the seemingly rational social order. Feminists were deciphering the cultural established codes and were reconsidering that order. They found that across centuries, there kept the same male order. As a consequence, feminists rejected that long series of historical patriarchal ideologies and tried to rewrite a fair history. As Daphne (1938) quoting Rebecca put it “*I only know that people call me a feminist whenever I express sentiments that differentiate me from a doormat or a prostitute*” (Daphne, 1938). In this regard, Rebecca expresses her ardent will for opposing the stereotypes held on women. Moreover, it is a call for differentiation and freedom of thought. Polster in quoting Jenny in the artistic work “Stages of Engagement” (1898-1949), he put “*We want simply to be ourselves... not just our little female selves, but our whole big human selves*” (Polster). Clearly, Jenny defends woman’s right of achieving personhood and self existing. That is, there should be the right of enjoying independence and be awarded their merits as human beings. In other words, women should be treated respectfully, regarding their human dignity and not be considered as second hand citizens.

In brief, Feminists worked to demonstrate the importance of woman in education, politics, economics...etc. They managed to bring about many rights that were someday impossible. Equally, they critiqued male supremacy and patriarchal ideologies, combined with efforts to exert change. Among the efforts were the attempts to dig in history and resurrect significant female figures that were obliterated by males’ notation of history. A live example is the female English writer Aphra Behn who has been redeemed by feminists and returned to the scene. The most outstanding achievement of feminism, however, is the ability of creating a female discourse and tradition, unique of

a female style and inclusive of women interests. For this feminism to get more theoretical basis and background, it resorted to philosophical and literary support. Among the most important of these theories was liberalism, which yielded liberal feminism. Tackling this theory is the function of the next heading.

1.3 Liberal Feminism

Liberal feminism is, Rosemarie (1989) argues, an individualistic form of feminist theory, which focuses on women ability to maintain their equality through their own actions and choices. Liberal feminists argue that society holds the false belief that women are, by nature, less intellectually and physically capable than men. Rosemarie (1989) puts: "*Female subordination is rooted in a set of customary and legal constraints that blocks women entrance to and success in the so-called public world. They strive for sexual equality via down-to-earth political and legal reform*" (Tong, 1989). That is, Liberal feminism is the feministic approach tracing back its references to liberalism and individualism. The pioneers of liberal feminism are Mary Wollstonecraft, John Stuart Mill and Helen Taylor. All these writers account for women rights and liberation, referring to philosophical liberalistic arguments.

Wollstonecraft's influential book "A Vindication of the Rights of Women" (1792) is a critical work, which reveals women marginalization along ages and provides the cure. That is, education. Wollstonecraft (1792) put "*Women lack liberty because they are not permitted to make their own decisions; they lack virtue because they are discouraged from developing their powers of reason. They lack health because they don't exercise outside doors*" (Wollstonecraft, 1792). Moreover, Wollstonecraft denies that women are, by nature, more pleasure seeking and pleasure giving than men. She believes that if men were confined to the same cages women find themselves locked in, they would develop the same characters. In this regard, Wollstonecraft criticizes the stereotypes associated with women of being emotional, fun and pleasure seeking. On the contrary, woman, Wollstonecraft (1792) confesses, can construct a rational thought equal to that of man if she is provided with the same opportunities (Wollstonecraft, 1792). That is why we find her critiquing Rousseau's sexist and male biased educational book "Emile" (1755).

Clearly, Rousseau's "Emile" (1755) associates rationality as a man's solely capacity and privilege. Rousseau considered woman as an emotional complementary creature for man. He believed that men should be educated in virtues such as courage, temperance and justice; whereas, women should be educated in virtues such as docility, patience, good humor and flexibility. Thus, Rousseau's ideal male student, Emile, studies humanities, social

sciences and natural sciences; while, Rousseau's female student, Sophie, takes part in music, art, fiction and poetry. The aim behind such discrimination is producing two different characters; that is to say, a rational moral father and an emotional loving mother (Wollstonecraft, 1975). For Wollstonecraft, the discrimination made between Sophie and Emile is clearly intended to build up two different characters. Sophie won't even, Wollstonecraft argues, achieve that status of a good mother. On the contrary, she will become a slave of her passions and a creature of sensation. Thus, Wollstonecraft's cure for Sophie was to let her be provided with a real education; one that sharpens her mind and gives her a chance to develop her rational and moral capacities. Through the example of Sophie, Wollstonecraft constructs a critical outlook towards the sort of education woman is assigned and calls for a true education that should develop critical skills and the faculties of reason. She holds that *"If reason is the capacity that distinguishes human beings from brutes, then men and women, both have this capacity unless women are brutes. Thus, society owes girls the same education as boys simply because all persons deserve an equal chance to develop their rational and moral capacities"*. (Wollstonecraft, 1975).

In this regard, Wollstonecraft celebrates reason at the expense of emotion and encourages women to depend their reason for and achieving autonomy. She believes that women liberation from the oppressive roles of emotional cripple and narcissistic sex object depends on obeying the commands of reason. Also, Wollstonecraft preaches for woman's self independent being and personhood. In response to Rousseau's philosophy, Wollstonecraft stresses that woman is not a toy of man or a mere instrument to someone else's happiness or perfection. In contrast, she must be considered and treated as a rational agent with the power of self-determination. Thus, Wollstonecraft's arguments were a strong attempt to subvert the stereotypes associated with woman, on one hand. On the other hand, she defended women basic rights of education, voting and economic financial independence as principal elements to liberation. She did present a vision of a woman strong in mind and body who is not a slave to her passions, her husband or her children. Another important liberal feminist not to be neglected is John Stuart Mill. Mill's "The Subjection of Women" (1869) is an entire critical essay of defending women human and civil rights. He talks about the role of women in marriage and how it needed to be changed. There, Mill comments on three major facets of women lives that he felt are hindering them: society and gender construction, education and marriage. He argued that the oppression of women was one of the few remaining relics from ancient times, a set of prejudices that severely impeded the progress of humanity (Stuart M. , 1869). Mill says *"No one who knows anything about human history can argue that all men are stronger and smarter than all women. That the average woman can't do*

something the average man can do doesn't bar all women from attempting that thing." (Stuart M. &, 1970). Furthermore, Mill asserts that even there are some biological sex differences between males and females, it does not justify preventing females from trying what is hold in man's capability only (Stuart M. , 1869).

Mill adds that any intellectual achievement gap between men and women can be explained by man's more thorough education and by his privileged position. Mill was convinced that the moral and intellectual advancement of humankind would result in greater happiness for everybody. He asserted that the higher pleasures of the intellect yielded far greater happiness than the lower pleasures of the senses. He conceived of human beings, both male and female as morally and intellectually capable of being educated and civilized. Mill attacks the argument that women are naturally worse at some things than men. He stresses "*The anxiety of mankind to intervene on behalf of nature...is an altogether unnecessary solicitude. What women by nature cannot do, it is quite superfluous to forbid them from doing*" (Stuart M. &, 1970). On the other hand, Mill was interested in political powers and defended women rights of voting. He believed everyone should have the right to vote, with the only exceptions being barbarians and uneducated people. Mill argues that people should be able to vote to defend their own rights and to learn to stand on their two feet, morally and intellectually. This argument is applied to both men and women. Mill often used his position as a Member of Parliament to demand the vote for women.

In the same interest, Harriet Taylor Mill joined Wollstonecraft and Stuart Mill in defending women objectives and rights. Taylor's "Enfranchisement of Women" (1851) is a critical essay, encompassing women rights defense. In this work, Taylor argued the emancipation of women socially and the necessity of owning admission in the economic and political centers along with that of men. Moreover, Taylor argues that sexual inequality is the result not of nature's decrees but of society's customs and traditions. She believes that since the government applies laws, taxes and duties on both male and female, then both sexes should have, in return, equal shares and rights. Women, Taylor stresses, should be entitled to the right of suffrage, and to be considered eligible to office,...and that every party which claims to represent the humanity, the civilization and the progress of the age is bound to inscribe on its banner equality before the law, and without distinction of sex or color (Harriet, 1851). In brief, Taylor defended basic demands for women's life such as the right to education in primary and high schools, universities, medical, legal, and theological institutions. Moreover, she believed that women should equally share with men partnership in the labors and gains, risks and remunerations (Harriet, 1851).

A further liberal feminist that led to the second wave feminist movement is Betty Friedan. Friedan's essential book "The Feminist Mystique" (1963) was so influential on women social and marital status. It is an attempt to criticize women restriction to marriage. According to Friedan, the idea that women can find satisfaction exclusively in the traditional role of wife and mother has left women, at least middle class suburban white heterosexual housewives, feeling empty and miserable. Friedan's cure for suburban housewives addiction to motherhood and wifehood was getting to work outside home. She warned that unless women get college education and use it productively in the full-time public work force, they will be driven to strange manias and deep depression (Betty, 1963). Friedan discusses early American feminists and how they fought against the assumption that the proper role of a woman was to be solely a wife and mother. She notes that they secured important rights for women including education, the right to pursue a career and the right to vote which can be applied to other societies. Actually, Friedan's assumptions of women trapped status inside marriage can be applied to other societies such as Morocco where marriage roughly imprisons woman. However, Friedan was not asking women to sacrifice marriage and motherhood for a high powered career. For example, she states "*The assumption of your own identity, equality, and even political power doesn't mean you stop needing to love, and be loved by a man, or that you stop caring for your own kids*" (Betty, 1963). On the other hand, Friedan who had a degree in psychology criticizes Sigmund Freud. She notes that Freud saw women as childlike and as destined to be housewives, once pointing out that Freud wrote: "*I believe that all reforming action in law and education would break down in front of the fact that, long before the age at which a man can earn a position in society, Nature has determined woman's destiny through beauty, charm, and sweetness. Law and custom have much to give women that have been withheld from them, but the position of women will surely be what it is: in youth an adored darling and in mature years a loved wife*" (Betty, 1963). Friedan saw such outlook as a very underestimating of the human status of woman and her intellectual capacity.

Thus, liberal feminism universal arguments have accounted for women rights legitimacy, subverted the stereotypes associated with women and conceived that in no way biological characteristics should determine psychological or social gender. Because of the impartial unbiased objective arguments of liberalism, its extension reached many patriarchal societies such as Morocco. Despite the possibility that liberalism was not adopted in the Western manner as contexts differ, this theory served as a strong base for women's rights claim, legitimacy and activism all over the world. The live example is the Moroccan experience whose feministic representatives adopted

liberalism and appropriated it to the Moroccan context. Thus, we could talk about Moroccan liberal feminism, which will be treated in the next section.

2. Moroccan social Structure and Liberal Feminism

2.1 Morocco and Liberal Feminism

Generally speaking, the feminist movement in the Moroccan context can be defined as a set of efforts aiming to approach women rights and issues using associative, academic and political activism. Historically, Moroccan feminism can be traced back to the period of colonization. The first Moroccan emergence of feminist voices started with the national movement of the independence demand. At that given time, Moroccan men and women collaboratively struggled to free the country from colonization. Progressively, Moroccan feminist movement was represented in parties and associations, but still through male dominance. For example, the first woman's association emerged in 1946 and was called Akhawwat Al- Safaa (Sisters of Purity) but it wasn't independent. It was an affiliate of the Democratic Party of Independence whose main concern at the time was achieving independence (Glacier, 2012). Yet the association advanced a list of claims asking for a number of legal rights and for more visibility of women in the public sphere. The main concern of the association, however, was to provide literacy classes, encouraging women education and providing social assistance. As a continuation of this initiative, many other associations followed. These were, for instance, the "Union of the Moroccan Women" (Feminist Branch of the Communist Party), the "Moroccan Association for protecting the Family"...etc.

The efforts and practices of the feminist movement in this phase (40s-60s) were limited by the context of the historical period. First, it has emerged under the pressure of colonialism which prioritized the national struggle towards independence. Second, it appeared as an affiliate under the authority of the political parties which blurred its work with political agendas and other imposing ideologies. Third, the focus was on providing social services and charity works which led to an absence of a clear autonomous vision to women rights. As Bazir argues, Feminists had to frame their activism as a secondary demand in the broader masculine political agendas. They also had to comply with parties' priorities and ideologies. Finally, political affiliation created a dependence that limited and even condemned women groups to disappearance (Bazir, 2013). In brief, the political parties at that time didn't initiate a true project and an active policy to integrate women in the job market. It was during the 1960s and 1970s that Moroccan feminism took a liberal form. Sadiqi (2003) argues that Moroccan feminism is a result of the encounter of the Moroccan indigenous culture with Western civilization. Clearly, liberal

feminism first appeared on the public scene of Morocco in the late 1950s and preceded religious feminism. For example, right after independence in 1957, king Mohamed the fifth allowed his eldest daughter to give a public speech wearing western clothes for the first time as a symbol of liberating women, and called for the necessity to emancipate women for the development of the society. Equally, political parties started to include women issues in their electoral campaigns. In addition, the state and the king in the 1960s started paying more attention to women interests by allowing the foundation of “The National Feminist Union” in 1969.

Thus, drawing on the above mentioned grassroots for the development of Moroccan liberal feminism, Liberal feminists have sought to improve the situation of women by adapting the universal values of equality and human rights to the Moroccan socio-cultural context. When it first appeared, Sadiqi (2003) argues, liberal feminism was a class phenomenon, producing the first women pharmacists, jurists, medical doctors, university professors, etc. On a wider scale, Moroccan post-colonial discourses and readings of participation in the national liberation movements have a clear gendered dimension and produced gendered ideologies where women were relegated to the second position after men. However, evaluated against the preceding state of affairs, Moroccan women’s access to education, and through it, to the written [world](#), made their voices heard for the first time in the history of Morocco (Sadiqi, 2003). Actually, men also played an important role beside that of women in the creation of the liberal movement. For example, Allal Al –Fasssi, a nationalist figure, wrote *al-Naqd al –Dati*: a book in which he criticized the family status code (Mudawana) and called for the abolition of polygamy, judicial regulation of divorce, inheritance distribution reconsidering...etc. In this regard, such educated men believed firmly that Morocco could not progress without educating and training women. For both men and women, some form of feminism was a means to revitalize and empower women and, thus, the country (Al Fasssi, 2002). In correspondence to Western liberal feminism, Liberal feminism in Morocco, Sadiqi stresses, was accompanied by changes in dress and other social practices. The modern European style became fashionable in urban areas. Moreover, liberal feminism was manifested in journalistic and academic feminist writings. The latter included newspaper reports and magazine articles. For instance, Zakia Daoud was expressing fervent feminist thoughts through journalistic means in which she criticized the social constructed position of woman and defended her legitimacy for claiming social liberty (Sadiqi, 2003). Later, these writings circulated widely among the educated population.

As for academic feminist writings such as Fatima Mernissi’s and Leila Abouzeid’s works, they have also aimed to demonstrate and reflect how gender differences were created and constructed within specific socio-cultural

contexts. By questioning the sexual division and the ideology on which it was based, the discourse of academic liberal feminists has questioned patriarchy and has emphasized the fact that gender roles, sexuality and even the division of labor are neither divinely prescribed nor ordained by nature, but they are historically and socially constructed. The discourse of liberal academic feminists has tackled issues that, up to a decade, were taboos, such as female sexuality and the various forms of violence against women. This discourse has sought to politicize women collective consciousness of their oppression and has denounced the indifference of political parties which often use women issues to enforce their political agendas and demarcate themselves from the fundamentalist rhetoric on women.

On the other hand, Moroccan liberal feminism has also always been closely associated with Mudawana (the code of personal status, which was instituted in 1957). Al Mudawana, a set of laws which regulate family matters such as marriage, divorce, inheritance and child custody has defined women as minors by limiting their rights and by institutionalizing polygamy. For example, women could not contract their own marriage without a male tutor, divorce and repudiation was in the hands of man, the husband, and a minimum age marriage was not fixed, etc. The reason for the association of liberal feminism with the Family Code is that the latter constitutes the locus of the legal and civil discrimination against women. In bringing together all proponents of liberal feminism, the Family Code is not only a legal document, but a strong political tool. Since independence, and especially in the last two decades, al Mudawana has become the major barometer of women status in Morocco and a symbol for their position in society (Sadiqi, 2003). The fact that this Family Status Code was masterminded by men only and was based on religious law was meant to make it sacred and not open to public debate. For this reason, liberal feminists have always been disappointed with this Family Issues Law. The disappointment of pioneer liberal feminists was mainly due to the fact that Allal Al Fassi's liberal ideas were not incorporated in al Mudawana although the man was called upon for the writing of this document. Mernissi argues that Al Mudawana was seen by the liberalists as a betrayal and a way of distancing women from the public sphere. She underlined the inconsistency between the conservative nature of al Mudawana and the promotion of a liberal economic system. While the Moroccan constitution granted women equal political rights with those of men, the Family Code inscribed them as essentially domestic beings with limited rights. According to Mernissi, postcolonial Morocco designated male supremacy and female subordination as symbols of cultural specificity and political legitimacy.

In addition to liberal feminism, civil society feminism was also concerned with such family laws legislation. Feminist associations were very

articulate and direct in asking for changes in al Mudawana. For example, UAF (Union for Women Action) launched a huge complain on women' international day in March 8th, 1992 to establish equality between women and men. This association sent a letter to the parliament calling for changes in al Mudawana and secured a million signatures petition to support its demand. The demand was strongly opposed by the Islamists. Members of the religious right responded with a counter-petition as well as a fatwa. However, Hassan II created a commission of religious scholars to review the proposed changes and suggested merely few recommendations (Database, 1992-2004). Again, none of the member of the commission was a woman. Finally, the king declared some slight changes in articles 5, 12, 30, 32, 48, and 148 of the Personal Code in 1993. For example, the reform of article 12 declared that women over 21 years were no longer in need of a tutor to marry if their father is dead. Another amendment was the necessity that before taking a second wife, the husband has to inform his first wife. A fourth important change was that man's application to repudiate his wife must be addressed to two notaries and the wife should be summoned to court. The final adjustment is embodied in the fact that a mother is given the right to legally represent her children if their father dies and in cases of divorce, child custody is given first to the mother and secondly to the father.

Although many Moroccan feminists expressed their open rejection in regard to the amendments, the changes implied positive dimensions. For it has opened the debate on the public level and lifted the religious sacredness of the personal code. With the coming of the new king Mohamed the sixth, the debate on al Mudawana has emerged again. In October 2002, king Mohamed the sixth appointed another commission of modernists and conservatives to reflect on al Mudawana and consider ways of improving it. However, the desire to adhere to Islam and experience modernization reveals itself in what Fatima Mernissi calls "the mosque and the satellite". She put "*They [Moroccan women] . . . want the 'mosque and the satellite,' without sacrificing the one for the other. The mosque provides them with cultural anchorage and rootedness, while the satellite seems to offer alternatives to some repressive mechanisms of tradition*" (Mernissi, 1996). In other words, it is difficult for most of Moroccans to sacrifice religion and what they perceive as their historical roots in order to embrace universal values of freedom and gender liberty.

2.2 Gender and Activism

i. Female Activism

Activism is an action, an activity that can be embodied in the form of demonstrations, civil disobedience, petitions, critical writing, through Media and many other forms... etc. Pre- and post-colonial Morocco has historically

witnessed different forms of activism, where woman has always been present. After independence, the cause of activism adopted many demands, mainly protesting and struggling for basic rights of freedom of expression and social justice. Woman participated in the struggle for independence and proved her capacity of access to the public sphere. However, after independence, she was forced back to house work and imprisoned inside. Unfortunately, after the independence, Mudawana 1957 had legalised men's dominance and encouraged the patriarchal society to exert its privileged status over woman by law. The personal code has stood up as a curbing wheel against women's progress. Supporters of women's rights and liberalists as stated above have always focused on this legal text to bring about positive reforms.

Because of the negative construction of woman status by Al Mudawana, feminists started to call for urgent actions towards changing the former family law. They basically viewed this law as perpetuating and reinforcing the inferiority of women and legitimizing the dominance of men. In her article "Ijtihad as a tool for Islamic Legal Reform", Amna Arshad (2007) describes Moroccan's women conditions under the limits of the Personal Code by stating: *"Imagine that you are a Muslim woman in Morocco fifty years ago. A legal patriarchal family code defines your role in life. For the first part of your life you are a daughter. In the next part you are, you may only be a wife and a mother. Your father or a designated guardian, contracts your marriage for you. Once married, you are expected to take care of the home and be obedient to the husband, despite knowing that he may divorce you at will. He may also marry up to three more wives without either your consent or knowledge"* (Arshad, 2007). On the level of civil society activism, Morocco is perhaps the only country in the Big Maghreb where feminine NGO activists have been able to achieve important civil rights, particularly the reform of the personal status law. It was the efforts endeavored by the feminists which founded a fertile ground in Morocco to defend women's rights. Those efforts embodied in constant activism of various forms culminated in the codification of the personal code reforms in 2004. In brief, after the issuance of 1957 first family code and the adaptation of a law giving women the right to vote in 1963, many events took place as a reaction to the personal code.

The first major event was Feminist activism under the frame of the "Union for Women Action" organization when it launched a national campaign petition and secured one million signatures to bring about changes in the personal code in 1992. After UAF, the struggle continued with Association Démocratique des Femmes du Maroc (ADFM, Moroccan Women's Democratic Association) that led to the formation of Dalil pour l'égalité dans la famille au Maghreb (Guide to equality in the family in the Maghreb). The later served as a strong intellectual base and document as it

explained clearly the religious arguments that were needed to confront the stronghold of the conservative groups on the interpretation of Islamic law. Followed to that, minor revisions were approved by King Hassan the second on the code of personal status in the same year. Moreover, the same organization drew a national plan for the integration of women in development by members of the “Moroccan Women’s Democratic Association” and its adaptation by the “Alternation Government” in 1999 (Database, 1992-2004).

Clearly, the plan that went hand in hand with women rights to achieve economic development and independence was supported by the leftists who had been given positions in the government of 1999. The plan contains 52 pages and includes 215 propositions divided into four main categories: education in rural areas, reproductive health, economic development for women, and improvement of women’s judicial status. In relevance to the last category, several of the propositions recommend changes in al Mudawana such as raising the marriage age from 15 to 18, ending of a mandatory marriage tutor for adult women, abolishing polygamy, making divorce judicial, ending unilateral repudiation...etc. The ministry of social protection, family and childhood under the prime minister Opposition leader “Abdurrahman- El Youssoufi” responded positively.

The last event that encouraged the promotion of a positive female activism was the decision of the king Mohamed the sixth to form a committee to review the Mudawana in 2001. Because of this degradation of the awarded status of women in the personal code, it was condemned thereafter in the speech of king Mohamed the sixth exclaiming that “*How can society achieve progress, while women who represent half the nation, see their rights violated and suffer as a result of injustice, violence and marginalization, notwithstanding the dignity and justice granted them by our glorious religion!*” On October 13, 2003, Mohammed VI proposed substantial reforms to the *Mudawana*, which the Moroccan parliament ratified in January 2004. After much arguing and examinations of the committee, the issue culminated in implementing radical changes in the Mudawana in 2004 for the interest of women and family at large (Beth, 2007). These events reflect a continuous transformation in the Moroccan society, basically because they were subject to massive cultural debates along history. Nouzha Gessous explains that by referring to five facts. She emphasizes that, Firstly, the 2004 Mudawana reforms was the result of more than twenty years of struggle and thirty months of work in the reviewing committee. Second, it was the result of a deep discussion among all segments in society. Third, it was the result of surveys and studies covering all social actors that represent different trends and ideologies. Fourth, it was the result of a long scholarly debate among the members of the royal committee with their different age, experience, approaches, and sex (three women were included in the committee). And

finally, because it came as a result of the royal arbitration about disputed points as he owns the title of the “Commander of the faithful” (Guessous, 2004).

In addition to that, king Mohamed the sixth in his opening speech at the fall parliamentary session in 2003 presented further characteristics of this reform by declaring that the new reform is meant to free women from the injustices they endure, in addition to protecting children’s rights and safeguarding men’s dignity. Moreover, and as an attempt to reconcile the views of both the traditionalists and the modernists, he declared: “*As the king of all Moroccans, I don’t make legislation for a given segment of the population or a specific party. Rather, I seek to reflect the general will of the nation, which I consider to be my extended family*” (Map, 2010). Recognizing the significance of this reform, the royal speech as well as the new family law continued to receive massive welcomes and praises by many people and institutions. In her article “*Family Code and the Global System of Human Rights*” (2004), Khadija Reggali outlines the great significance of this reform for society explaining that the new family code has brought a new philosophy framed by the culture of equality between the sexes and the cooperative relation between the spouses in the family. Also, it could lift the holiness of the old one replacing it with reforms that keep pace with requirements of social change in Morocco (Reggali, 2004). In a word, it is up to the unified efforts of feminists, women’s rights supporters and allies that today we notice tangible transformations in gender relations through alterations and reforms of laws, perceptions and beliefs throughout the modern history of Morocco. Yet many challenges stand as a retarding wheel against full achievement of gender progress. This will be tackled in the next sub-heading.

ii. Women Education and Patriarchal Challenges

Actually, it is hard to speak about and advocate women education and empowerment in the middle of a patriarchal society. Clearly, women education may pose a threat to the status quo of the traditional patriarchal Muslim communities. As Maher notes “*This is especially true in the case of women for the value system which reserves the public sphere for men and excludes women from it also requires the training of women to be entirely domestic so that they are unemployable and economically dependent*” (Maher, 1974). Obedience is required from women towards men because of their financial dependency. Within the constraints of patriarchy, parents do not see any benefit coming from the education of their daughters. In their point of view, it is useless. As Elliot (2015) put it: “*What can a girl learn out of books about being a housekeeper and mother, only to be hungry for unseemly clothes and expensive foreign goods?*” (Zvan Elliot, 2015).

In other words, educating woman will lead to her liberation socially, economically and politically. This may trigger a patriarchal fear of women’s

increasing power. In this way, one can notice an implicit fight between genders for social power, and this means that the changing balances of power between genders utterly shake the old ideological systems rooted in the minds of many citizens, mainly the Islamists. This fear is confirmed by Ouzgane (2006) as he contends *“Such ideological systems of male dominance are inherently responses to the fear and dread of women’s potential power; power that would be released, set free to chain men, were it not for the limitations ideological, spatial, physical, placed upon women”* (Ouzgane, 2006). Such perceptions are referred to the rooted cultural conceptions and the constructed people’s mindsets, conditioned by cultural, historical and religious factors. Yet they don’t have any basic rational foundation, as it is reported by James Turner in the Fez conference (2008): *“If there is resistance against change in the law, this is likely due to the fact that the roots of male dominance are not of institutional or legal nature, but built on historic and cultural perceptions. The gender approach is therefore in favour of abolishing this structure and aims to reconstruct the system on the basis of equal rights for women and young people”* (James, 2008).

Moreover, woman education, her participation in vital sectors of the country and her social liberation creates fear and resistance in the hearts of the Muslims at large. The ideal woman in the large Muslim society, as Sabbah (1948) argues, is the silent obedient immobile woman. These qualities are the attributes not only of an ideal woman, but also of the true believer vis a vis his God (Sabbah, 1948). Sabbah (1948) explains that the woman’s obedience to the husband is not just a marginal device in Islam but a central key law for the viability of the system. She states that the believer is fashioned in the image of woman, deprived of speech and will and committed to obedience to another God. On the other hand, it is crystal clear how the plan of Women Integration in Economics was opposed by the conservative sect of the Moroccan society. The plan is global and touches on all aspects that involve women and development; however, it is the fact that the plan bans polygamy, raises the legal age for marriage from 15 to 18, and reforms divorce that triggered heated debates between modernists and conservatives and took gender issues to the forefront of the political scene. That led to the fifth major event. That is, on 8th March 2000, a large number of modernists and pro-women rights (male and female intellectuals, politicians, etc) marched in mixed groups in Rabat despite the fact that the march was opposed by Islamists march in Casablanca. The modernists supported the plan and considered it revolutionary as it banned violence against women, poverty and subordination in public spheres, and the conservatives opposed it and considered it West-inspired and alien to Islamic Law. Yet the plan took the debate on Moroccan women’s issues to the national public arena for the first time in the history of Morocco. Proponents of each

trend from all walks of life voiced their views in meetings, on radios, TV, daily newspapers, as well in mosques, street conversations and at home.

For these conservative perceptions to be subverted and their irrationality to be absorbed, women should receive a proper education. Obviously, women education importance has been emphasized by a number of international conventions, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Program of Action of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development. For example, the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995, recognized that women's literacy is key to empowering women's participation in decision making in society and to improving families' well-being. In addition, the United Nations has articulated the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which include goals for improved education, gender equality, and women's empowerment (Syntax, 2002). The MDGs emphasize education's essential role in building democratic societies and creating a foundation for sustained economic growth (Nations, 2005).

Nationally speaking, in 2005, the Moroccan government launched the National Initiative for Human Development to provide more funding for non-governmental associations in vulnerable regions and work on lack of access to education for children, with a particular focus on girls' illiteracy in rural areas. The initiative provided funding to help families send their children, including girls, to school, as well as bicycles for students who needed to travel long distances. Moreover, from 2009-2012, the government's Education Emergency Action Plan provided stipends to help poor children attend school, built more preschools in rural areas, improved existing schools, and created dormitories in major cities so that children from rural areas, especially girls, could have a safe space to live during their studies. Under Morocco's new constitution, passed in response to the Arab Spring protests in 2011, the principle of gender equality is front and center. With education making up nearly a quarter of the government's budget, Morocco has also come close to meeting the Millennium Development Goal for universal primary education, which more than doubled from 1990 to 2008.

In a word, there lies much opposition against laws that legislate for women's rights and women's liberation at large. Much criticism was directed against the plan of the integration of women in development and; thereafter, against the profound reforms of the personal code in 2004. The justifications that multiple educated sects of the society put forward against the plan in 1999 or against the Mudawana reforms in 2004 is an obvious indication of the inflexible nature of the Moroccan society towards women's liberation. It remains hard for a society, even educated, that inherited for centuries a patriarchal structure of male's dominance; to easily forgo his privileges and

accept equality vis a vis women. Yet change takes place, albeit slowly. This will be tackled in the next sub-heading.

iii. Gender and Change

The major event that encouraged social change in terms of gender relations and gender relative development was the decision of making profound reforms in the *Mudawana* in 2004. Naji (2012) argues that the 2004 *Mudawana* brought substantive changes on the level of marriage, polygamy, divorce, child custody, and inheritance. For example, the reformed *Mudawana* re-defines marriage as “A legal contract by which a man and a woman consent to unite in order to have a common and lasting marital life. The goal of marriage, among other things, is to create “the foundation of a stable family.” Previously, the code allowed the husband alone to direct the marriage and required the wife’s obedience. In addition, the previous code specifically cited the need to procreate. Moreover, Article 19 establishes the age of marital consent as eighteen for men and women. Previously, the age of consent was eighteen for men, but fifteen for women. In a word, under the previous code, men and women had separate rights and duties. The reformed code eliminates this language and establishes men and women’s reciprocal rights and duties. These changes redefine marriage closer to an equitable partnership, rather than a male dominated subjugation. Women are no longer sexual objects with an explicit duty to procreate and “common and lasting life” replaces obedience to the husband (Naji, 2012).

Another important reform was regarded to polygamy. Critics that argue Islamic law is incompatible with women rights often cite male polygamy (the ability of men to marry multiple wives) as evidence of this incompatibility. However, the reformed *Mudawana* restricted the ability of man to marry several wives. First, a polygamous marriage now requires judicial approval, not the husband’s discretion. Second, the husband must demonstrate the “necessity” of the second marriage. Finally, polygamy is impermissible if the wife previously required the husband not marry a second wife. Furthermore, the husband’s ability to divorce his wife by repeating the statement “*I divorce you*” three times in succession, is considered very undermining and underestimating of the human status of women. The reformed *Mudawana* provides women greater legal protection by prohibiting this husband’s ability to complete this practice. Now, this type of divorce requires a judge’s permission and review. The reformed code also exhibits the government’s commitment to combating spousal abuse (Reggali, 2004). These are only some sides of the reforms on the level of husband-wife relationship and there are many others such as custody, inheritance..., which the reform included (Naji, 2012).

Since the initiation of these reforms, Gender perception and gender relations started changing. More respect of women social liberation was guarded and intensification against their liberty under any pretext was reduced. Such transformation and change is confirmed by several sociologists like Germain Ayache, Abdallah Laroui, Abed Al-Jabri and Fatima El Mernissi. They all stress the idea that Morocco has undergone major changes at many levels and it is becoming a very complicated and complex entity due to its interaction with new patterns of modern life. It is clear that the relationship between men and women is one significant indicator of the change taking place in Morocco. Thus, the socio- cultural power attributed to both men and women is one parameter to measure the change in gender positions in society. It is obvious that within the Moroccan structure, critics of gender relations nature invoke the public and private spheres to examine the socio-cultural power awarded to gender. Moreover, upon the changes that took place after independence, women started acquiring not only power, but also different kinds of it, inside and outside home. Nowadays, there is an increasing number of educated women, exercising many types of work, participating in politics, gaining more legal rights... etc. Such practices utterly prove a real improvement in women positions and social power. El Mernissi, for example, confirms this by adding *“Women are now designing their futures instead of growing old”* (Davis, 1995). That is a clear indication of the displacement and alteration of men’s alleged power. Change and transformations sweep over many domains in public space as well as in politics.

On the political level, a number of measures were taken to improve the status of women in Morocco and to ensure their political participation. For example, the government ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 2008 without any reservation with Mohammed the sixth stating *“Our country has become an international actor of which the progress and daring initiatives in this matter are readily recognized”* (Elboubkri, 2013). Moreover, the amendment of the constitution in 2011, following the protests of the Arab Spring put gender equality and equity at the centre. The constitutional reform increased the number of seats reserved for women from 30 out of 325 in 2007 to 60 out of the 395 seats (15%) in 2011 (News W. , 2016). As to the elections of 2016, a constitutional monarchy Morocco's parliament is made up of two directly elected chambers: the 395-member House of Representatives (the lower house) elected for a 5 year term, and the 270-member House of Advisers (the upper house) elected for a 9 year term. Out of 395 members, 305 are elected in multi-seat constituencies from electoral lists put together by the parties, while 60 seats of the remaining 90 are reserved for a national list of women. The rest 30 seats are reserved for candidates under the age of 35. While Morocco has a gender quota for Chamber of Representatives, there is no

quota for the Chamber of Advisors. In the Chamber of Representatives, 305 members are directly elected in multi-seat constituencies by proportional representation vote and 90 members are directly elected in a single nationwide constituency by proportional representation vote. Thus, the political participation of woman reached a number of 81 women in the Chamber of Representatives (20.5%) and 14 in the Chamber of Advisors (11.67%) (News, 2016). In fact, the new constitution guarantees women's rights and political participation which are needed to guarantee their empowerment and contribution to society's democratization.

Though still well below the 30% quota claimed by women's movements, it is an improvement from the initial quotas implemented in 2007. Electoral laws have also undergone significant changes to increase the political participation of women, starting with a reform of the ballot system and electoral code in 2002, through the introduction of a proportional list system, followed by the institution of positive discrimination in the form of a gender quota. September 2007 legislature marked the election of 34 women to Parliament: 10.77% in contrast to 0.6% in the 2002 elections (Tahri, 2016). In local councils, the participation of women exploded, as the rate of participation multiplied by 22, increasing from 0.56% in 2002 to 12% in 2009, taking the number of elected women to local councils from less than a hundred to more than 3465 (Ennaji, 2015). In 2016 there were 81 women in Parliament representing 21%—nearing the world average. They are present in decision-making positions although in insufficient numbers (five in the government). On the other hand, Article 19 of the new constitution enhances equality of men and women before the law and underlines the crucial importance of women's sharing of political power and policy-making. Like the family code, the new constitution has been cited as an example of Morocco's progress toward becoming a more democratic society. To promote women's political participation, the state implements Article 19 of the new constitution, as it is fervently demanded by the feminist movement in Morocco in order to foster women's political participation and access to power. The following table summarizes the political increase of female participation from 2002 up to 2016.

Elections Dates	Female representation by statistics
2002 Local Councils Elections	Less than a hundred female (0,56%)
2009 Local Councils Elections	More than 3465 (12%)
2007 Parliamentary Elections	30 Parliamentary Seats out of 325
2011 Parliamentary Elections	60 Parliamentary Seats out of 395 (15%)
2016 Constituencies Elections	60 Seats are reserved for women out of 395
2016 Parliamentary Elections	81 Seats out of 395 (21%)

Thus, the feminist movement and female activism through decades in Morocco has played a major role in the reforms that took place whether socially or politically. All the reforms would not have been possible without the feminist movement's long struggle and strong advocacy based on real expertise and linked to the grassroots reality and experiences of women. These women charged with a liberal education that respects human dignity and women in particular took the battle forward for achieving full dignity and humanity. Political positive responses, maintained in the legalization for new laws as well as the profound reforms in the personal code is a clear tendency towards the advancement of democracy in the society, sharing power with women that constitute half of the Moroccan population. Certainly, political legislation and the attempts for the achievement of political democracy highly contribute in the embodiment of social change and social democracy. However, such reforms in the interest of women and in the cause of gender equality instigate the reactions of a large sect of the society, mainly the Muslim conservative society. The latter seems against such women education that frees her from the constraints of cultural persecution and social legends. While a large segment of the society is in favour of change and reforms under the emblem of universal human rights, democracy and equality; another category stands in strict opposition to such changes. The following part deals with the research questions and the respondents attitudes towards the above tackled hypotheses.

3. Methodology

The purpose of this chapter is to give an account of the methodology followed in this study. It attempts to describe the objective of the study and the research questions asked. It attempts to justify the use of questionnaire as a fundamental research technique employed in the present study. It also describes the participants targeted, the sample size and the sampling procedures. The present study is an attempt to investigate students' attitudes about the cause of woman liberation in Morocco. The study measures the variables related to research respondents of gender, religion, age, social status and marital status. Also, it discusses the factors may stand against the cause of woman liberation such as religion, patriarchy and culture. Moreover, the study attempts at testing the human rights conventions, marriage legislation and women education on the other hand. In order to achieve this objective, two major questions were focused on:

1. How do you identify conservative gender treatment?
2. To what extent, obstacles such as religion, patriarchy and traditions may hinder the cause of woman emancipation.

So as to answer the research questions mentioned above, the study targeted 370 FLDM (Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences; Dher El Mehrez, Fez)

students: 350 questionnaire versions. The participants were selected randomly. The sampling is random. That is, every member of the student's population of the faculty of letters and human sciences had the chance to participate. This study uses the questionnaires for eliciting the quantitative data. The aim is to ensure minimum unbiased hypothesis testing results. The questionnaire used in this study is meant to elicit quantitative data that will be quantified and described in numerical terms.

While distributing the questionnaire, the respondents were told that the information provided will be used only for the present study. Most of items used were closed questions and their answers are classified and grouped together. The questionnaire was designed in English language. For the respondents who didn't understand English and were from other departments such as Arabic and French departments, the questionnaire items were explained to them and let them fill up them at their own convenience. 350 questionnaires were distributed among FLDM students. 320 had been received back and clearly filled up and the items responded out of 350. 180 of the questionnaires were filled up purely by females and 160 by males; whereas, 20 were disqualified as it was clear that the respondents weren't precise and ticked several choices at once. The ten left questionnaires were lost and not handed back.

The respondents' age is between 18 and 30. Furthermore, 100% of respondents are Muslims since they live in an Islamic country and referred to themselves as Muslims. Concerning the social status of respondents, 67% of them belong to the middle class; whereas, 33% of respondents are from a low-poor social class (it is shown in the graph below). 90% of the respondents are singles; whereas, 8 % are married and only 2% are divorced as the graphs show below. The reason behind the choice of this research sample from this faculty is that the respondents are educated, young, and may understand women's situation in a better way, meaning that they can provide the best information about the topic.

The research paper used a general literature (theoretical background) for expanding the extent of readership of the work. Moreover, the paper may contribute in understanding in depth the socio- cultural factors that may hinder the cause of woman liberation, not only in the Morocco but in all parts that share common features and factors such as those tackled in the review of literature. Thus, my rationale behind this work flows in this regard and for this purpose.

The following table summarizes the main components of the methodology adopted:

Methodology	Description
Fundamental Research Instruments	Questionnaire
Questionnaire Items Type	Closed questions
Population Targeted	FLDM (Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences; Dher El Mehrez University, Fez,)Morocco
Sample Size	370 Respondents
Respondents Variables	Gender, religion, age, social status and marital status
Major Research Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you identify conservative gender treatment? • To what extent obstacles such as religion, patriarchy and traditions may hinder the cause of woman emancipation?

The graphs below summarize the data collection techniques used in this study as well as the respondents’ description:

3.1 Variables Description

3.2 Graphs:

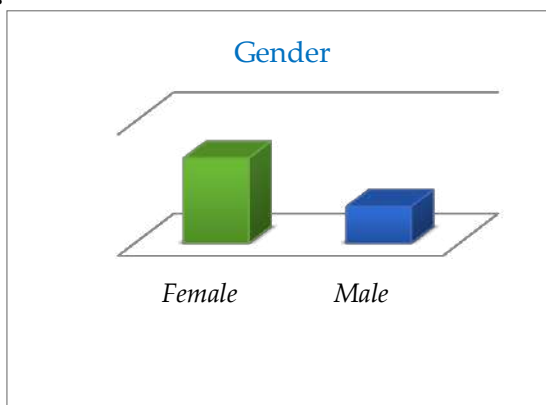


Figure 1. Gender

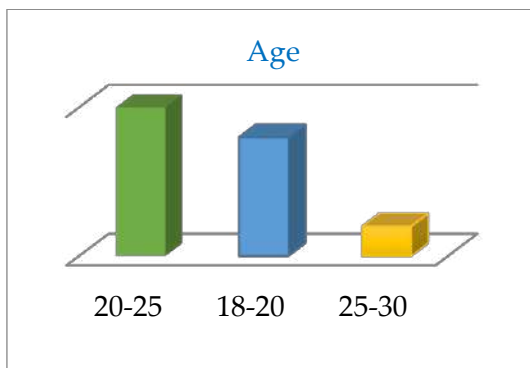


Figure 2. Age

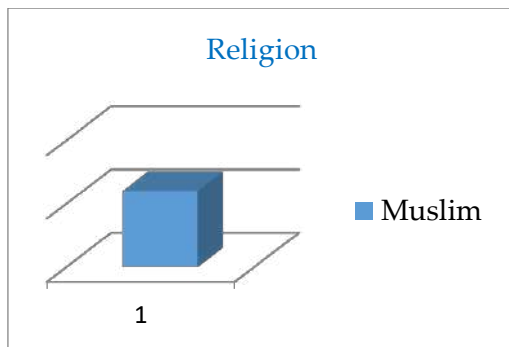


Figure 1. Religion

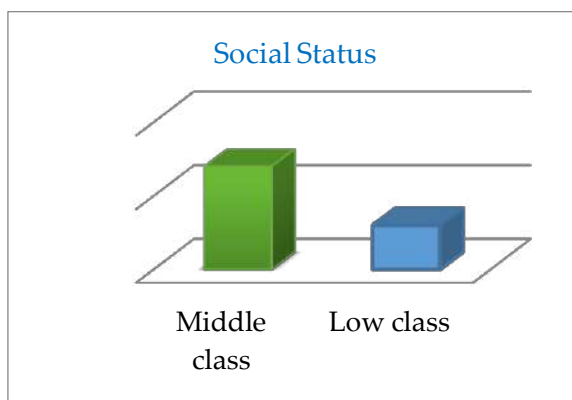


Figure 2. Social Status

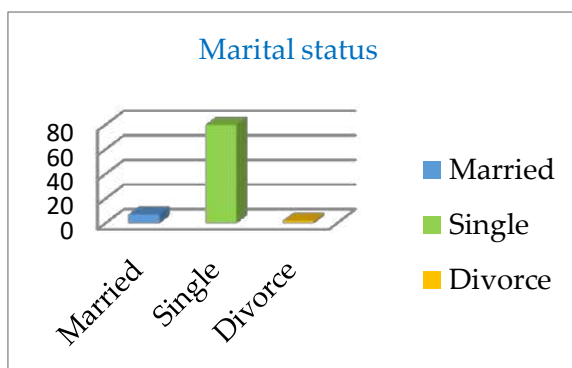


Figure 3. Family Type

3.1.1 Variables description

The above mentioned variables are of considerable importance in this research. They could shape the attitudes of respondents and could represent the rationale behind their answers variations. For the first figure of gender, 58% were females and 42% were males. Obviously, women are more concerned in this regard. That is why; the findings may be shaped due to the outnumbering of females on males. Thus, results could have been proved

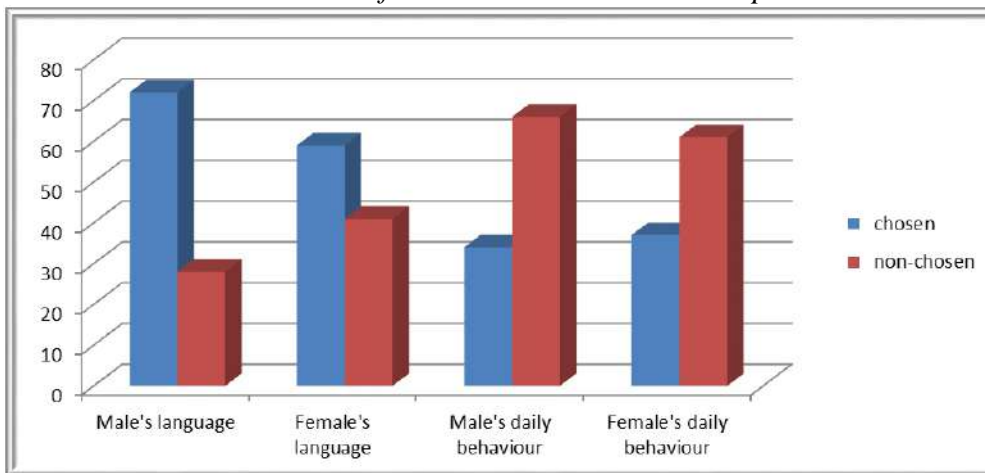
otherwise if more questionnaires were filled up by more males. The variable of age for the second figure isn't less important in this regard. Age of the respondents is one of the most important characteristics in understanding their views about the particular problem of woman liberation. By and large, age indicates a certain level of maturity of individuals. In this paper as the third figure demonstrates, 33% of respondents were between the ages of 18-20 years old; 50% of respondents were between the ages of 20-25 and 15% were between the ages of 25-30 years old. Concerning the variable of religion in the fourth figure, 100% referred to themselves as Muslims. Religion may largely underlie Respondents attitudes, particularly if the religion bears a certain solid vision and has resource texts on the status of woman. Also, the social status of the respondents, as indicated in the fifth figure, may imply their attitudes nature. In this research, 67% of respondents are from the middle class; whereas, 33% are from the low class. Obviously, the social position implicates the manner of life undergone inside and outside home. A good social position allows good welfare for the family and good education. Thus, attitudes reflected through the respondents could form variations according to each social status. The last measured variable, in this sense, is the marital status as the last figure shows. Worthy of indication is that the marital status of the respondents has consciously or unconsciously a connected relation with the topic of gender emancipation. As the graph above shows, 90% referred to themselves as singles, 8% were married and only 2% were divorced. Apparently, the attitudes provided by divorced respondents who have undergone the marital experience may vary from the respondents who were still singles. Likewise, the same points of view may differ to those who married and later divorced.

4. Field Work, Findings and Analysis

4.1 Field Work Findings and Analysis

4.2 Figures and Tables

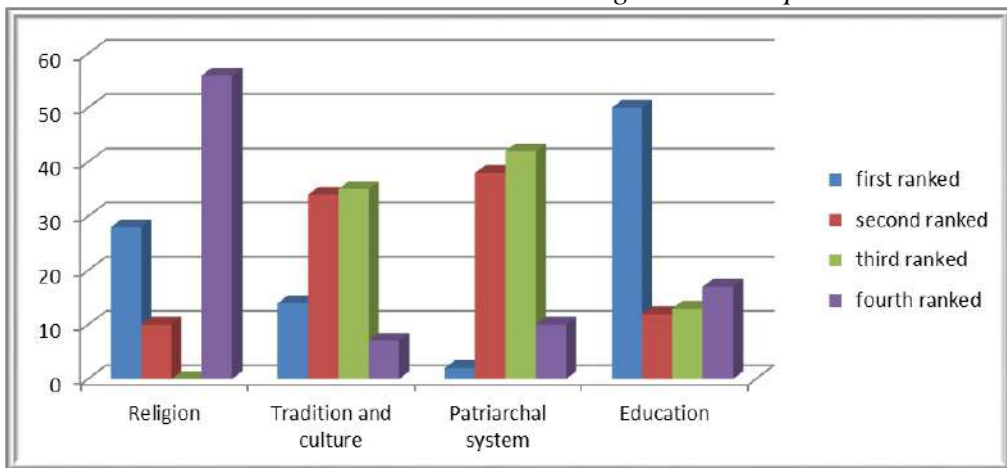
i. Forms of Conservative Gender Perception



A close analysis of the above-figure demonstrates that the majority of the respondents, 70%, identify conservative treatment of gender with male's language at the university. That is to say, gender conservative perception can be embodied in oral forms of daily life. In other words, male's daily verbal relationship towards woman may imply and reinforce a certain gender perception. As far as concerned, we can't deny this supposition in daily life. Actually, we attach feminine lexicon and vocabulary such as "sweetie, cutie, honey, darling..." to purely females. This is perceived not only within Moroccan context but also worldwide. We also perceive that such femininity is reinforced and manifested in movies, music and literary works. Moreover, 62% believes that forms of gender conception are manifested in male's daily behaviour. Clearly, man's behaviour may symbolize a certain reinforcement of male superiority and bears seeds of female's subordinating. This is clear, mainly on the level of sexuality. In this interest, man guards a certain privilege by the fact of being born sexually a masculine. That is evident as long as culture and society are concerned within a context such as Morocco. Not far from the previous percentage, 59% of the respondents hold the view that conservative gender perception is shown in female's daily behaviour. Indeed, females themselves show a firm femininity and sometimes, they reinforce their subordination. This is may be manifested mainly on the level of sexual seduction and attraction of males where body gestures and movements play an important role. Similarly, a close majority to the previous, 55% identify traditional gender treatment with females' daily language. This finding and

result manifestations can be encountered in daily life situations. That is, females may use a feminine sexy vocabulary in order to be attracted. In a word, the findings proved that the common prevalent vision towards gender is a shared responsibility between man and woman. However, man bears the highest responsibility as the graphic shows. From this analysis, we move to tackle the factors may stand behind such gender conception.

ii. Factors behind conservative gender conception



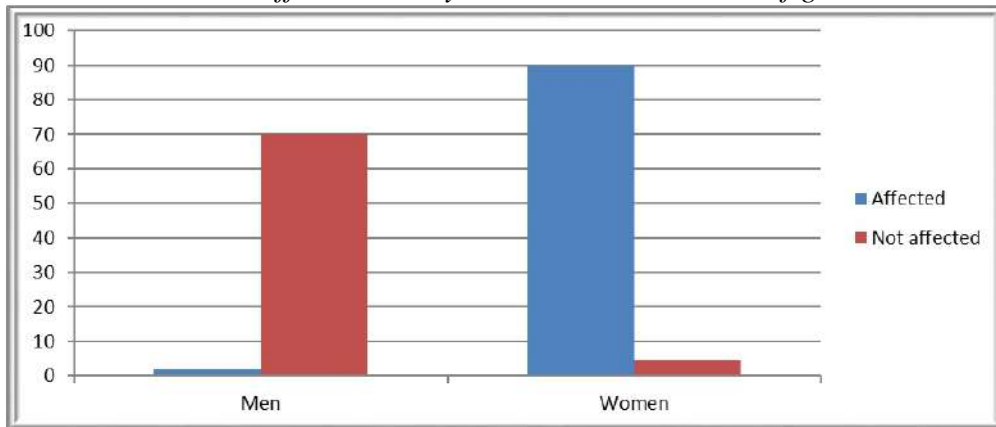
A quick glimpse at the figure above demonstrates that the majority of the respondents, 55% hold the view that religion stands as a primary factor behind conservative gender perception. We could deduce from such views the role of religion in organising the social life of the society, especially where Islam represents a majority of the population. Moreover, the religious conservative big sect of the Moroccan population holds a constant fight against women liberation or what they call heresy and abnormality to the Muslim community. Thus, they oppose any initiative or law legislating for women empowerment and fight against it. Attending religious services, performing prayers in mosques, and other different rituals of religious holy celebrations...etc, are a reflective indicator of the religiosity of the person. Such religion as that of Islam, apart its creed or devotional dimension comprises a legislation dimension which is considered very essential to one's complete belief and religiosity. The practical and legislative dimension of Islam has a clear vision towards the status of women, first through the clear Koran verses and their exegesis towards woman status, and secondly through the prophet anecdotes and historical evidences on his treatment for women, polygamy, marrying a six years old girl, his sexual intercourse with multiple concubines...etc. Not far from the mentioned percentage, 49% of the respondents believe that education is the fact behind such perceptions of

gender. In this regard, we can't neglect the efficiency of education and how it does affect the mindset of generations.

Education could stand behind several forms of gender treatment and practices in reality. Therefore; reforming education could establish a well balanced generation of mutual respect of gender peers. Thanks to the increasing rate of education access that we perceive a parallel increasing awareness of gender. In other words, the more education both man and woman receive, the more open-mindedness, gender toleration and cooperation. Further important are 40% of the reflected views which put the nature of the patriarchal system as the element behind traditional treatment of gender. In this regard, hindering women liberation is referred to a society where male dominance is prevalent. As highlighted in the theoretical background, there was much opposition against gender liberation such as the Casablanca protests against the law of integrating women in development (the law issued in late 1999 and the opposing movement by conservatives and religious sects in March 8th 2000). However, such criticizing and opposing of woman empowerment has no logical base apart merely religious texts that represented a given time and context in history. Such resistance As James Turner emphasized it in Fez conference (2008), are built on merely historic and cultural perceptions. Such perceptions are themselves referred to the rooted cultural conceptions and the constructed people's mindsets, conditioned by cultural, historical and religious factors.

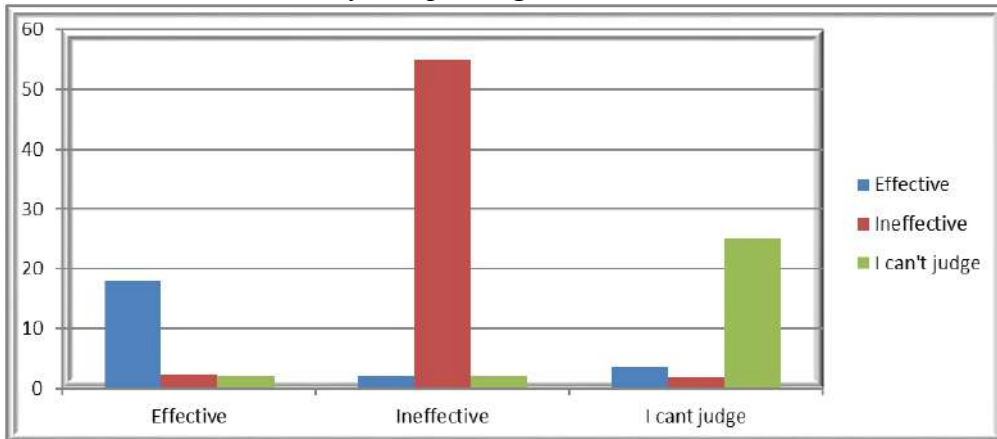
On the other hand, 32% of the respondents hold the view that tradition and culture are the main reasons behind such treatment of gender. That is obvious as far as the weight and power of culture on the society is concerned. In patriarchal societies, there kept traditions to be looked at and respected. Such culture and tradition have a weight on gender perception. For instance, man is supposed to be in the public; whereas, woman occupies home. Other cultural perceptions expect woman to cook and do the house chore while the husband stretches on a couch and watches TV. In any case, woman may remain the most affected from such treatment as the views of our respondents stressed in the next graph. This will be analyzed in the next section.

iii. *The affected sect by conservative treatment of gender*



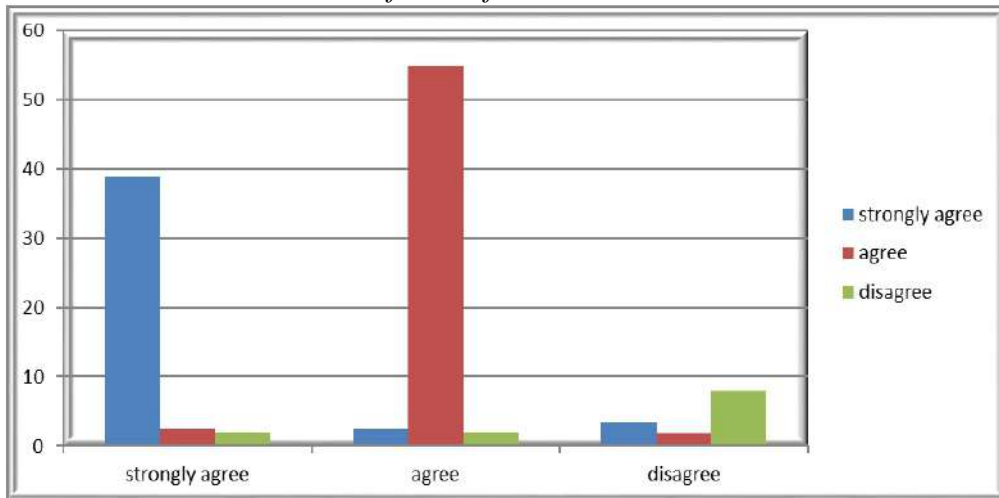
A close analysis of the above figure demonstrates that the majority of the respondents, 99% see that women are more affected by conservative gender perceptions. Within such lived culture's constrictions and weight, life becomes hard and challenging for women's existence. Inside some families, especially those very bound of traditions; we may perceive that women do many tasks and never remunerated or even given the admission. For instance, in some countryside centres, we find wives do the farming besides their husbands added to the house chore, child rearing and cooking. On the other hand, only a minority of respondents, 5%, believes that men are more affected by such treatment of gender. In fact, it is crystal clear that the patriarchal structure of the society remains in the interest of man. Being a man inside a patriarchal society is a plus for man social existence and a minus for women existence. That is why we devoted a part of the questionnaire to ask respondents about the role of the laws initiated in order to facilitate and reduce such hardships on women. Their attitudes and replies will be analyzed in the next section.

iv. *The laws initiated for improving women's social and economic status*



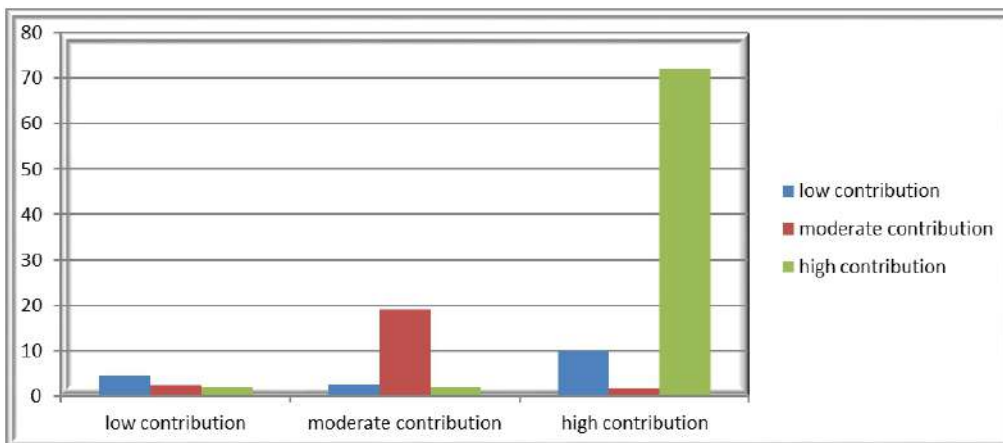
A quick glimpse at this figure reveals that 55% the respondents believes that the laws launched for women's status amelioration are ineffective. This fact is not shocking as the complaints of the reticence of government and decision makers towards the violation of women's rights goes on. Actually, it is not clear to what extent respondents are familiar with the issuing laws for the interest of women. But if such laws don't touch upon their daily social life, they can't admit the efficiency of such conventions. For we constantly hear about events of women rights abuse and rape in public places and public transportations like the Casablanca sexual assault in 2017 (News M. W., 2017).

On the other hand, A percentage of 25% of the respondents stated that they couldn't judge whether these laws are effective or not. This means once again that the efficacy of these laws if it exists is not visible to the view of the audience. On the other hand, an important percentage of the respondents, 18% hold that the laws initiated for the progress of women situation are effective. The findings in this regard show that there is a relative change encountered in daily life situations. We can't deny that there were several laws and conventions issued or ratified for the interest of women such as the reforms of Mudawana 2004, the ratification of CEDAW lifting all previous reservation in 2008, the increase of women political participation through the quota system and the 2011 constitution centering upon gender equity and equality. Such daring initiatives pushed to fundamental changes on the social and political levels of daily women lives. For this reason, we opted to direct the attention of the respondents to the most fundamental family relations issuing resource which is the Mudawan or the personal code and the effected reforms in 2004. In relation to those reforms, we asked our respondents about their views. This will be analyzed in the coming section.

v. *The reforms of Al Mudawana in 2004*

A close analysis of the above figure demonstrates that 55% of the students who were handled out the questionnaires agree with the reforms in Al Mudawana in 2004. This is because the reforms were logical and legitimate as some comments of the respondents went on. As Naji (2012) argues, the 2004 Mudawana brought substantive changes on the level of marriage, polygamy, divorce, child custody, and inheritance. Moreover, the subordinating language of women in the Mudawana since 1957 was largely reduced in the reformed code. For example, the goal of marriage was centered upon the foundation of a stable family rather than wife's obedience to the husband. Furthermore, the reform tackled a number of articles in the personal code and proceeded for daring steps to reviewing them. Besides, the reform lifted the sacredness on the code one step ahead and opened it for future reviewing possibilities. This percentage is reinforced by 39% who strongly agree with those reforms. Once again, the findings are a proof on the positivity of those amendments that ensured women a daring step towards social liberation. Finally, only 8% of the respondents manifest their disagreement with the same reforms. Indeed, since those reforms took place, we could observe that more respect of women social liberation was guarded and intensification against their liberty under any pretext was reduced. Thanks to the contribution of females and their constant struggle that those changes were possible. The extent of their contribution to bringing about those reforms is going to be the object of the next section.

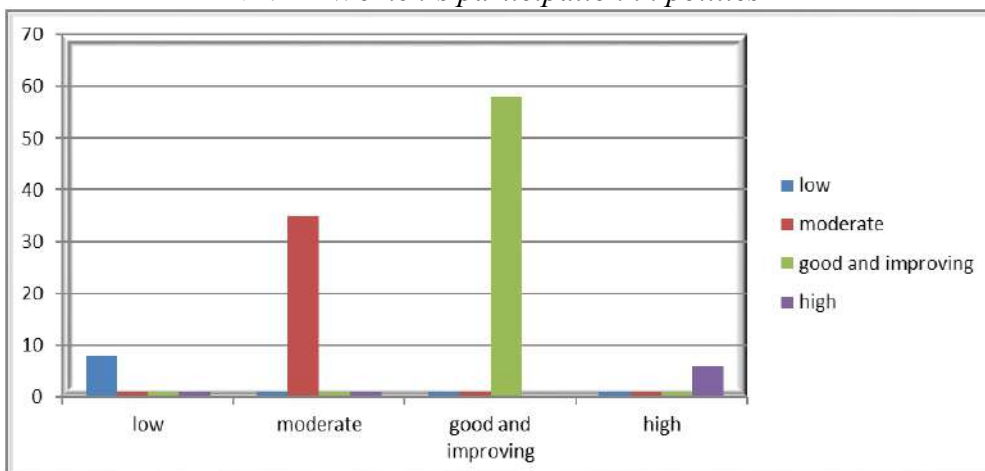
vi. *The contribution of females in bringing about the reforms in Al Mudawana in 2004*



A close analysis of the above figure demonstrates that 72% of the students who were handled out the questionnaires believe that women highly contributed in bringing about the changes in Al Mudawana in 2004. That is an obvious recognition of the role and constant activism of the Moroccan female figure historically. That is not merely supposition but proved by historical data and evidence. For instance, “Union Action of Women” launched a national campaign in 1992 and secured one million signatures to bring about changes in the personal code. Clearly, many activists and academic intellectuals viewed the personal code as legalizing men dominance and perpetuating women inferiority. These activists reacted through many tools against it. Furthermore, “Democratic Association of Moroccan Women” drew the national plan for the integration of women in development and introduced it to the government in 1999 (Alternation Government was headed by Abderahman El Youssfi). On the other hand, there were many academic activists apart the civil society and political activists such as Amna Arshad, (Fatima El Mernissi, Leila Abu Zeid and Abed El Jabri...etc. These intellectuals expressed their open thoughts and criticized the subordination of women through publishing works.

On the other hand, 19% of the respondents think that woman contribution and efficiency in Al Mudawana changes is average. Lastly, only 10% holds the view that woman’s presence was low. If there is activism and change in the laws, there must ensue fruits and improvements. That is to say, an improvement in the social and economic status of women is supposed to be achieved. In order to have an idea about the respondent’s attitudes of woman presence in the political scene, we have devoted it a single item in the questionnaire. Their replies will be analyzed in the next section.

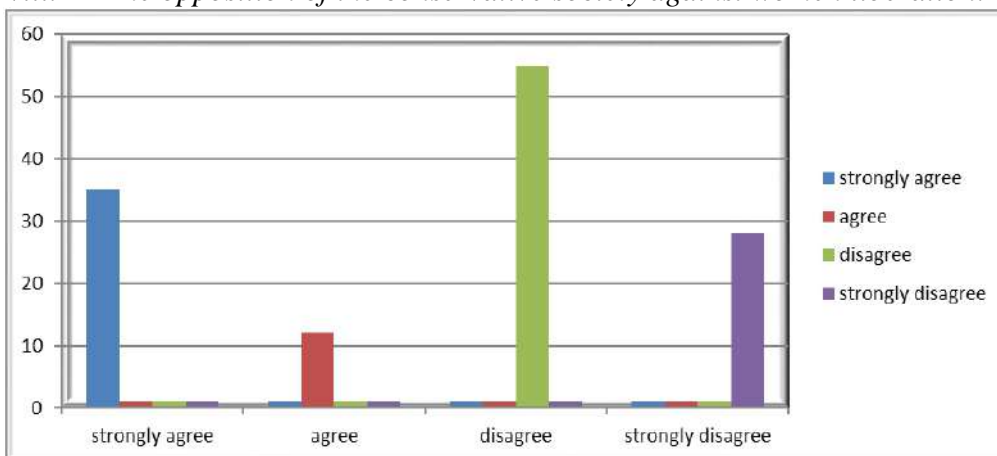
vii. *Women’s participation in politics*



A quick glimpse at the figure above shows that 58% of the respondents stress that woman’s participation in politics is good and improving. This admission is confirmed by witnessed facts of woman participation in the political field. One of the major steps stressing the necessity of gender presence in politics was the amendments of 2011 constitution. The constitutional reform increased the number of seats reserved for women from 30 out of 325 in 2007 to 60 out of the 395 seats (15%). In 2012, for the first time in the history of Morocco, a veiled political figure, Bassima Hakkaoui took over as Minister of “Solidarity, Women, Family, and Social Development”. On the level of leadership, Nabila Mounib, was the first woman to be elected as a party leader of the “Unified Socialist Party”. Also, and as demonstrated in the review of literature, the parliamentary elections of 2016 proved of a significant increase of woman political participation. Clearly, in 2016, 305 were elected in multi-seat constituencies from electoral lists out of 395 put together by the parties, while 60 seats of the remaining 90 were reserved for a national list of women. And the rest 30 seats were reserved for candidates under the age of 35. Thus, the political participation of woman reached a number of 81 women in the Chamber of Representatives (20.5%) and 14 in the Chamber of Advisors (11.67%) in 2016.

These statics prove the findings of respondents in believing that the political participation of woman is increasing and improving. On the other hand, 35% thinks that woman’s participation in politics is moderate. That is say, woman’s presence in politics is not very high, but it is gradually improving and woman get further access to political domains and political life over time.

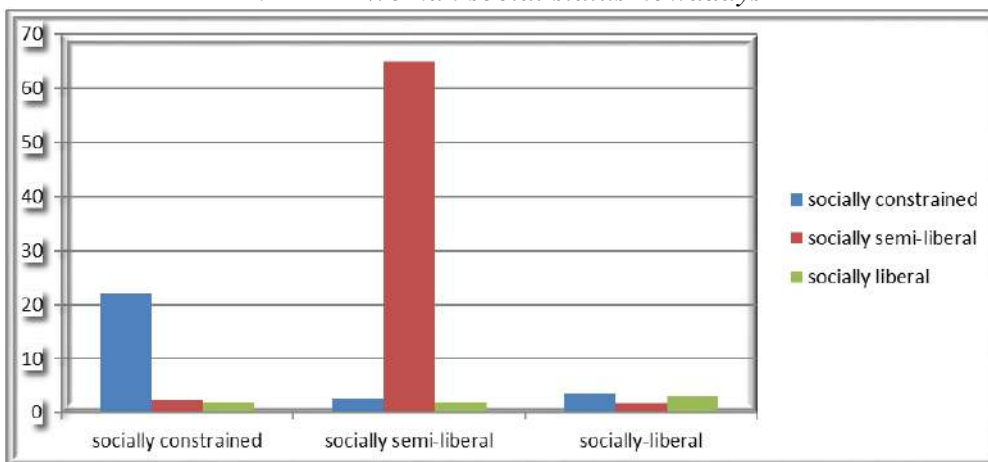
viii. *The opposition of the conservative society against women liberation!*



A close analysis of the figure above demonstrates that the majority of the respondents, 55% disagree with the opposition of the conservative sects to the development of women and their liberation. That is obvious and expected on the part of the educated people as long as woman development and liberation is a necessity demanded in the modern present time. For an entire community progress to be realized nowadays, woman empowerment, her cooperation and collaboration remains a primary condition. We undoubtedly perceive that female sex forms half of the society population and has a very important role in the education of the generation. Therefore, ignoring the status of woman could be a huge mistake leading to steps backward.

Further important is a percentage of 35% that demonstrated a full strong disagreement to that opposition. Total disagreement on the part of students implies the illegitimacy of that opposition against something positive as they clearly expressed it. In other words, such opposition of the extremist mentalities could be an open obstacle against development and progress in general. On the other hand, only 12% expressed their agreement with the opposition of the Muslim conservative society. These people who raise contrasts to women liberation under the umbrella of Islam put forward justifications such as God’s will and God’s orders. As stated in the theoretical background, there are religious texts which clearly determine the rights and the status of woman in Muslim communities such as Morocco. In this regard, people attached to the texts and their conservative traditional exegesis can’t deny overtly or covertly that the opposition of the Muslim society is legitimate. Yet change takes place and despite the constraints. That is why the last item was on the nowadays woman status according to the attitudes of our respondents.

ix. *Woman social status nowadays*



A quick glimpse at the above graph demonstrates that the majority of the respondents, 65%, hold the view that woman social status nowadays is semi-liberal. Actually, we can't deny that since the reforms of Mudawana 2004, more respect of women social status was guarded. For instance, more openness was being witnessed within marriage relationships and violence reduced. On the other hand, there is an increasing number of educated women, exercising many types of work, participating in politics, gaining more legal rights etc..., Such practices utterly prove a real improvement in women positions and social power. Such transformation and change is confirmed by several sociologists like Germain Ayache, Abdallah Laroui, Abed Al-Jabri and Fatima El Mernissi. They all stress the idea that Morocco has undergone major changes at many levels and it is becoming a very complicated and complex entity due to its interaction with new patterns of modern life. El Mernissi, for example, confirms this by adding *“Women are now designing their futures instead of growing old”* (Davis, 1995).

On the other hand, only 22% of the findings agreed with the statement that women are socially constrained. This percentage isn't a merely supposition. We still observe a lot of reservation on women social liberation as we perceive that still a big rate of woman population suffer from marginalization and subordination. This percent may, therefore, refer to this sect of the marginalized women, mainly in countryside. Finally, a minority of respondents, 5% believed that women are socially liberal. In regard to this last finding and result, we find that it may apply to reality. For instance, The Minister of Family, Solidarity, Equality, and Social Development by Bassima Hakkaoui shared alarming data on Tuesday, showing that violence against women is still prevalent. The government survey revealed that 52.5% of

married women in Morocco have experienced domestic violence (Kasraoui, 2019).

Limitations

Through the process of my adopted research paper, I have come across some difficulties and challenges. On one hand, I couldn't have easily linked the theoretical part which is based on western notions of liberalism with the practical one which is conducted within a different context. As the contexts differ, so did the reflections and reactions opposed to what had been expected. As to this research, I don't claim a total knowledge and mastery of it as well as I do recognize my modest contribution to the topic adopted "Liberal Feminism Impact on Moroccan Educated Women". Yet the research is enough critical and exciting to attract the attention of researchers in order to elaborate on it further. Moreover; it touches serious gender issues whose tackling in a profounder manner would pave a way for more open mindedness, gender toleration and women acceptance in the dynamic sectors of the country.

Conclusion

To sum up, the findings show that there is a tendency and flexibility towards gender liberation as well as there stands a set of obstacles against woman social emancipation and political empowerment. By large, the findings proved that still forms of conservative gender perception persist, mainly through male's oral and physical behavior. Religion is demonstrated to be one primary factor against women emancipation and against the acceptance of western liberating notions. In this regard, religion perpetuates traditional and conservative treatment of gender relations. Such treatment is embodied in daily gender relationships behavior and within marriage social and sexual lives. We could deduce from such views the role of religion in ordering and shaping the social life of the society, especially where Islam represents a majority of the population such as Morocco. On the other hand, a significant percentage from the conducted field results believes that education is the factor behind such perceptions of gender. In this regard, illiteracy may push to further reinforcement of women subordination. Oppositely, literacy and education may lead to a raise in awareness that may subvert such gender perceptions and question their pretended legitimacy. In any ways, the victim from such treatment and within such constraints as the results proved is woman. She bears much more harm than that of man within this social structure. In reaction to Mudawana reforms, respondents expressed their full agreement and relative satisfaction. That is because the reforms were rational and logical and diminished the burden within husband-wife relationship.

In a word, liberal feminism is a universal philosophical approach, which was used to support feminism intellectually. It is based on liberalism

and its universal principles of freedom, human rights and individualism. Liberal feminism is the first essential feministic background that demanded women's basic rights such as education, work and voting. Liberal feminism that started in the West expanded to other continents of the world. The universality of this approach made those demanded rights a necessity for all women all over the world. It came to reveal women's marginalization along the ages. Equally, it critiqued the patriarchal ideologies that subordinated women along history. Meanwhile, it presented alternatives and solutions towards salvation, prevalent in works such Wollstonecraft's and Stuart Mill's. Among the countries that underwent the influence of liberal feminism is Morocco. The latter lived centuries of patriarchal dominance that is still in influence, but largely reduced. Liberal feminism in Morocco started in the 1950s and brought many liberal ideals, embodied through Moroccan male and female feminist's activism. At first, Moroccan feminism was included and joined with male parties and associations such as the Sisters of Purity movement framed by the independence party. Later, it took an independent form. It was supported through journalists and academic writers such as Leila Abu Zeid and Fatima el Mernissi. Feminism in Morocco took many progressive forms apart academic representation. It was manifested in Media channels, associations, parties and in the public sphere especially after the 12.000 members' demonstration in Rabat in favor of the laws for the integration plan of women in development even though there was an opposing outnumbering movement in Casa Blanca against same plan. Since one of the restricting laws of women in Morocco is al Mudawana, the struggle was always headed to this personal code. The pressure on authorities to reform al Mudawana came finally successful and brought substantive changes in 2004. The latter had brought amendments in favor of women on the level of marriage, divorce, polygamy and inheritance.

Yet much opposition was manifested against these changes and against many reforms that intend to empower women and lead to her liberation. It is evident that the issue of woman liberation in the Muslim societies creates much polemic and becomes subject of attack from different angles of references, especially from Islamic conservative jurisprudence. The reaction was emitted mainly from Islamists, conservatives and traditionalists. This was proved in the conducted field work by the views and notes of the respondents. Similarly, history witnesses on many opposed movements and reactions from the right wing against women assumed liberation. All together stand against women development and resist it under various pretexts of religion, identity justifications, western conspiracy theory ...etc. Since the historical patriarchal structure inherited the privileges man joined for a long time at the expense of women; they fear women's liberation and progress, which will push these segments to re-consider her status and admit her dignity and strong position.

Yet change has been taking place since independence, albeit slowly. The seeds of women liberation nowadays are manifesting strongly. Today, the assumption of woman social freedom, through the free choice of dress, frequenting public places such as Cafe shops...,etc that were particularly man's own space is crystal clear. On the other hand, the presence of woman in the political and economic field is widely increasing as the statistics demonstrated.

After having conducted a theoretical and practical research about liberalism in its relation to Moroccan woman emancipation, I had deduced that there lies a set of hindrances against a satisfactory achievement of women's rights and women's emancipation. This is referred to the nature of the general system; patriarchy; the general cultural reference which is enhanced by a religious cover and the history that maintained a conservative structure of the society for decades if not centuries. However, nowadays, we are constantly invaded by the western culture; western economy and in general what is called globalization. It is, therefore, compelling upon us to embrace the notions of liberation and treat not only gender relations but various domains of life in what corresponds modernity and technology. Therefore, the society has to adopt a new enlightening vision and foregoes the conservative conceptions and the old privileges of man that may push to further backwardness. Unless the system and government collaborate with a democratic and liberating vision of the community, the progress and development of the society will be fully achieved. That is to say; the system has to initiate laws that will elevate this country to progress and prosperity, not possible without involving and enabling women socially, politically and economically.

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