



Reinforcement Project of Women's Leadership and Political Decision
Making Capacities in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia



**Media Coverage of Women's Political
Participation in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia**

(Media Exercise Synthesis Report)

June 2009

- The United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (UN-INSTRAW) promotes applied research on gender issues, facilitates knowledge management, and supports capacity-building through networking mechanisms and multi-stakeholder partnerships with UN agencies, governments, academia and civil society.
- The Centre for Arab Women Training and Research (CAWTAR) was established in 1993 in Tunisia as Regional Independent Institution working on promotion of gender equality in the Arab world, through research, training, networking and lobbying.
- CAWTAR acts in partnership with Arab regional institutions as well as international institutions for women empowerment in socioeconomic, political and cultural domains.

Media Coverage of Women's Political Participation in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia *(Media Exercise Synthesis Report)*

Compiled by : **Hamida El Bour**

Collaborateurs : **AbdelWahab Boukhenoufa, Abdelkrim Hizaoui**

Etudiants participants à l'exercice médiatique : **Hadj Nassar Kenza, Belghitia Samira, Nouari Aicha, Guedouar Tassadit, Teklal Samira, Bouthaldji Ilhem, Boughazi Fatiha, Bergheul Mohammed Ameziane (Algerie), Snoussi Wided, Attyaoui Wafa, Lahiani Souhir, Mouna Mtibàa (Tunisie).**

Editing : **Boutheina Gribaa, Giorgia Depaoli,**

Design and Layout : **Mohamed Drissi**

ISBN : **978 - 9973 - 837 - 34 - 9**

**L'Institut International de Recherche et de Formation
des Nations Unies pour la Promotion de la Femme
(UN-INSTRAW)**

César Nicolás Penson 102-A
Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic
Phone: 1-809-685-2111
Fax: 1-809-685-2117
Email: info@un-instraw.org
Webpage : <http://www.un-instraw.org>

**Centre for Arab Women Training and Research
(CAWTAR)**

P.O. BOX nr.105
1003 Cité El Khadra
Tunis, Tunisie
Tel. : +216 (0)71 773511
Fax : +216 (0)71 773611 / (0)71 780002
E-mail : cawtar@cawtar.org
Webpage : <http://www.cawtar.org>

Copyright ©2009

All rights reserved

The designations employed and the presentation of material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the United Nations Secretariat or UN-INSTRAW concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

The opinions expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the United Nations, UN-INSTRAW, or CAWTAR.

**Reinforcement Project of Women's Leadership and Political Decision
Making Capacities in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia**

**Media Coverage of Women's Political Participation in
Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia**
(Media Exercise Synthesis Report)

Compiled by :
Hamida El Bour

June 2009

Table of Content

First Part : Context, Objectives and Methodology

I- Introduction	5
II- Objectives.....	7
III- Definition of political participation	8
IV- Issue at stake	8
V- Hypotheses	9
VI- Methodology and grid analysis.....	10
VII- Sample.....	12

Second part : Media coverage of women's political participation in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia

I- Comparative analysis of the media environment in the three countries	15
II- Comparative analysis of women's political participation in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia	17
III- Algerian, Moroccan and Tunisian women's political participation through the media.....	20
1) Profiles receiving media coverage	21
A- In audiovisual media, Government female members, prevailing profile	21
B- In written and electronic press, more diversified profiles.....	23
C- Multiple profiles, but a rather general discourse.....	25
2) Media attitude towards women's political participation.....	27
A- Attitude of audiovisual media, positive in terms of content, discrim- inatory at the level of the form	27

B- Attitude of written and electronic media: women's political participation, a typically female focus of interest	29
Conclusions	33
Recommendations	37
Bibliography	39
Annexes	42

First Part

Context, objectives and methodology

I- Introduction

Women are under represented in politics. This assessment is made at varying degrees in different parts of the world, as it concerns developed countries as well as developing nations including the Arab Region.

In the Maghreb, and particularly in the three countries sharing several common factors, i.e. Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia, women's status improved in several domains thanks to juridical and institutional provisions. Two indicators are important in this regard: access to education and to active life. However, based on specific research and quantitative data, little progress has been achieved in terms of women's political participation and contribution to decision making. Governmental discourse complying with UN recommendations converge with pleas expressed by civil society, mainly led by women's governmental and non governmental organizations, or Human Rights associations stressing the need to promote women's political participation.

Over recent years, some have considered that time has come to adopt the quota system and ensure women's participation in representational structures, in addition to inserting the quota concept in the constitution or in the electoral code⁽¹⁾. This recommendation has had different echoes in the three countries. In Morocco and Tunisia, we have noted a trend towards policies in favor of implementing quotas and thereby reinforcing women's representation in elected bodies. However, in Algeria, the two parties making up the presidential majority, the National Liberation Front (FLN) and the National Democratic Rally (RND) have come down against this measure⁽²⁾.

(1) « حلقة نقاشية حول المشاركة السياسية للمرأة في ضوء التشريعات الوطنية والعربية والإسلامية والدولية » - مجلس الشعب - سوريا - برنامج الأمم المتحدة للتنمية - صندوق الأمم المتحدة الإنمائي للمرأة - نوفمبر 2006 ص 24..

“Roundtable Discussion about Women's Political Participation in the light of National, Arab, Muslim and International-Legislations” - Syrian Popular Assembly – UNDP – UNIFEM – November 2006 – Page 24..

(2) Gribâa (Boutheina) « Mapping de la participation politique de la femme en Algérie,

Based on quantitative and qualitative indicators outlining women's political activity in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia, and guided by their strong conviction that democratic processes can neither ignore nor exclude women, the United Nations' International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (UN-INSTRAW) and the Center of Arab Women for Training and Research (CAWTAR) launched a project aimed at reinforcing women's capacities in the field of leadership, political participation and decision making in all three countries. This project is funded by the Spanish government and aims at improving the status of women in terms of political participation.

Laws and juridical provisions constitute fundamental elements in the promotion of women's political participation; it would be as important to highlight actions and inputs of women capable of creating political spheres of activity, and the role of the media in this. Therefore, the project has focused on media coverage of women's political activities in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia.

Previous studies, mainly CAWTAR's report published in 2006 related to Arab women in Arab media, have noted that said media generally disseminate a negative image about women⁽³⁾. By analyzing research focusing on the image of women in the media conducted in the Arab region throughout the 1995-2005 decade, the Report noted that in the relatively few cases where media reflects a positive image of women, they mainly focused on active women holding decision making positions and women participating in public life⁽⁴⁾. This explains why in the «Mapping on the situation of women's political participation in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia», the impact of the

au Maroc et en Tunisie » - UN-INSTRAW- CAWTAR- Ensemble pour l'égalité des chances – Tunis 2008 – 2009 p. 19-20. *Mapping of Women's Political Participation in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia* » UN-INSTRAW-CAWTAR-Together for Equal Opportunity – Tunis 2008-2009, p. 19-20.

(3) تقرير تنمية المرأة العربية. «المرأة العربية والإعلام- دراسة تحليلية للبحوث الصادرة بين 1995 و 2005» - كوتور 2006 ص 85. *Arab Women Development Report « Arab Women and the Media – Analysis of Studies Published between 1995 and 2005 – CAWTAR 2006 p. 85.*

(4) المصدر نفسه ص- 88 (88) (Same Source p. 88)

media on the promotion of women's leadership and role in politics is considered to be insufficient and even limited⁽⁵⁾.

The women's capacity building project in the field of leadership, political participation and decision making in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia launched a media exercise, subject of this report, in order to investigate meaningful indicators and identify media coverage trends with regard to women's political participation in the three countries.

II- Objectives

Communication and advocacy constitute two cross sectional components that the «women's capacity building project in the field of leadership, political participation and decision making in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia» has tried to study in all various phases in order to change mentalities, attitudes, and behaviors hampering women's political participation. This choice complies with Beijing's action platform. The 4th World Women's Conference hosted by the Chinese capital in 1995 identified media as one of twelve priority fields of interest, and that communication and media play a crucial role in women's participation process in public decision making, and hence in improving equality between man and women.

In this perspective, the project led to this media exercise in order to specifically stress the relation existing between women taking part in political life and media based on two angles :

The first concerns the treatment and representation of politically active women by the media, while the second concerns access of women to media and their capacity to use communication as a tool to promote issues related to women and the gender aspect in the region.

The exercise was carried out based on the analysis of Algerian, Moroccan and Tunisian media, conducted over different periods in January, February and March 2009. This exercise was conducted individually or in groups by information and communication Master students in the three countries. Students were enrolled in the Algiers Faculty of Political Science and Informa-

(5) Gribâa (Boutheina), op.cit

tion and the Tunis Press and Information Science Institute. The Rabat Information and Communication Sciences Institute was also solicited but Moroccan students could not proceed with this media exercise, noting that during the study period, selected Moroccan media did not include enough material to carry out the analysis. At the end, the best analyses submitted by Algerian and Tunisian students were awarded.

III- Definition of political participation

For the purpose of this media exercise, UN-INSTRAW and CAWTAR refer with the expression «women's political participation» to any activity conducted by women members of the Government, parliament or municipal representatives, managers of public companies, members of political parties, as well as active women members in associations and organizations. Women's political participation also covers actions that they undertake in order to influence public political choices, the administration of public policies, or the choice of political leaders at all government levels, be them local or national. Actions may be formal as the right to vote, or informal carried out at the level of civil society, such as demonstration or protests. They may be conducted individually or in groups.

Participation concerns both representation and decision spheres as well activities performed by civil society, political parties, organizations and associations. It is commonly known that associations offer women a suitable space to learn the processes of public life, and to build «self-confidence»⁽⁶⁾.

IV- Issue at Stake

The special plenary committee's report of the 23rd extraordinary session of the United Nations general assembly stated in 2000 that women were under-represented among parliamentarians, ministers, vice-ministers and managers of social and economic companies and institutions, that the public was not sensitized enough about the importance of men/women balanced

(6) Kerrou (Mohamed) – Najjar (Sihem) « La décision sur scène. Un regard sociologique sur le pouvoir décisionnel des femmes » - CAWTAR- M.A.J.D- Tunis, 2007, p.73. *Decision on the Stage. A sociological eye on women's decision making power ; CAWTAR- M.A.J.D- Tunis, 2007, p.73.*

representation in the decision making process and that media continue to disseminate prejudices against women⁽⁷⁾.

Five years later and in order to reverse this trend, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) recommended in 2005 in its guide called «Women and the Electoral Operation»⁽⁸⁾ to use audiovisual and written media to highlight women's participation in the decision making process. The approach adopted by UN-INSTRAW and CAWTAR aims at studying the women-media relationship based on the following issue: How are women participating in public life represented in their country's media? Which women's profile receives the most media coverage? And how is this carried out?

V- Hypotheses

a- Media replicates male domination in politics in terms of numbers and contribute to women's limited representation as they provide only limited space in their information columns to their political activities.

b- Public media, concerned more than private media by the implementation of Governmental priorities and agenda takes into consideration the government's engagements with regard to UN mechanisms and structures calling for the promotion of women participating in politics, and replicate messages highlighting women's skills encouraging greater female political participation.

c- Media discourse about women's political participation can be positive, stressing women's competencies, but they can also be negative focusing on their deficiencies. Discourse varies according to the following interference factors: the media outlet's editorial line as well as the profile of women covered by media. Messages also differ depending on their source: men or women.

(7) « Rapport du comité plénier spécial de la 23ème session extraordinaire de l'assemblée générale - Nations Unies- New York 2000. *Report of the special plenary committee of the 23rd extraordinary session of the U.N General Assembly - New York 2000.*

(8) المرأة والعملية الانتخابية- صندوق الأمم المتحدة الإنمائي للمرأة- 2005 ص 5 .

Women and the Electoral Process – UNIFEM – 2005 p. 5 .

VI- Methodology and analysis grid

The choice of techniques to use in research depends on the objective sought by the researcher as stated by Madeleine Grawitz in her book «Social Sciences Methods»⁽⁹⁾. According to the media exercise objectives, the method to use is analytical and descriptive. The purpose is to study media production by analyzing content. This analysis included the written, audio-visual and electronic media in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia. The aim is to outline the image of politically active women based on several indicators. The first indicator concerns profile i.e. defining the type of women participating in political life and raising media interest the most: women present at the level of the Government and in representative bodies (Parliament, Senate, Municipal Councils); women who are active in civil society through political parties, non governmental organizations, associations, or women showing «citizenship» participation i.e. expressing an electoral power that can influence decision making in their country's affairs.

The second indicator represents the type of messages disseminated by media reporting on women's specific activities. The analysis of these messages may lead to several types of observations.

The first observation concerns the recipient of the message, be it written, radio, TV or online. The purpose is to measure the scope of the message's target audience, i.e. men and women without distinction, or simply to one specific portion, exclusively men or women.

This gives us the opportunity to study whether political women are concerned by global issues or simply exclusively women's problems. In other words, can women represent citizens regardless of gender and respond to their expectations, or can they only focus on women through women's discourse, about women and targeting women?

This level of analysis also enables us to study the extent to which women can produce personal messages or if they are in a position to reproduce a general discourse.

(9) Grawitz (Madeleine) « Méthodes des sciences sociales » - éditions Dalloz- 1996. *Methods of Social Sciences, Dalloz Editions – 1996.*

The second observation relates to the attitude of the media and the representation they make of politically active women. This attitude can be interpreted as being positive when it highlights women's skills, their success and their achievements. The attitude is considered to be negative when messages broadcast by the media put in question women's intervention in the political sphere, and stress instead their political disaffection or their incapacity to hold senior positions in decision making spheres.

The attitude of the media is considered to be neutral in the case of media evoking women's political participation without referring to roles played by key actors in this participation, either men or women.

Media attitude can be also observed through the analysis of the form of messages, both in terms of press genres diversification and the specification of products.

Press genres refer to writing formats or the presentation of the press product. We distinguish between field genres such as reporting, interviews, portraits, surveys and reports; opinion genres such as comments, editorials; informative genres including wrap-ups, etc ...

As for the specification of press products, this concerns the design of media content.⁽¹⁰⁾

Specification differs according to the type of media. In the case of written and electronic press, the analysis concerns layout techniques. In the study of radio media, we focus on the speaking time granted to politically active women, while in the analysis of TV media, we also look at the image aspect.

The interest of the media for the core subject of this media exercise can also be examined through the attitude of broadcast messages' producers.

While we know that «every journalist's knowhow is deployed and constructed within the constraints of the interdependence structure with his/her hierarchy, colleagues and sources"⁽¹¹⁾, this research aims at outlining the pro-

(10) For more information regarding this subject, see : Agnès (Yves) « Manuel de journalisme » - Collection Grands repères- La découverte- Paris 2002. *Journalism Handbook – Grands Repères Collection – La Découverte, Paris.*

(11) Neveu (Erik) « Sociologie du journalisme »- Editions La découverte, Paris 2004 p. 43.

file of journalists/anchors concerned by women's political participation according to the following parameters: gender, assiduity in processing this type of subject and attitude towards this women category (see detailed analysis grid in annex 1).

VII- Sample

The media exercise aims at analyzing the content of Algerian, Moroccan and Tunisian media, and their coverage of women's political participation.

In the choice of media, two main criteria were adopted; the first concerns the diversity of media types (audiovisual, radio, written and electronic), while the second related to the media large audience.

Though we based our study on the two criteria mentioned above, approved by the UN-INSTRAW & CAWTAR's Project Consultative Group, we decided to focus on national TV stations, as the TV landscape in the three subject countries is characterized by different experiences related to the opening of the audiovisual sector to private operators, while we are required to study comparable levels.

On the other hand, national stations are more concerned than private ones because of the enforcement of governmental recommendations and choices in all various domains, while private TV stations are commercially oriented.

A third factor determined this choice: regular news bulletins are not programmed in the various private TV stations.

As for the choice of written media, we focused on daily press due to their daily contact with readers and their capacity to keep up with the news on a daily basis.

We chose dailies with the largest circulation, while language was not a primary factor, as it was more important to sample papers with the highest readership rates. In this choice, we excluded partisan and specialized papers, such as women's magazines, which may be the subject of a subsequent study, along the line and objectives of this project.

Regarding radio stations, we selected national stations for the same reasons we had for TV stations. We did not cover local, regional and private stations.

The choice of online press sites was guided by two parameters: online journals had to be the oldest, and they couldn't be copies of print versions.

In compliance with criteria validated by the advisory group set up by UN-INSTRAW & CAWTAR's project, media selected for the present media exercise were the following:

In Algeria

- The first national TV channel (the 8 PM TV bulletin and a weekly debate program selected by the student) ;
- The national radio (the most followed bulletin and a weekly debate program selected by the student) ;
- Two private dailies: «El Khabar» (the News) and «Le Quotidien d'Oran» (Oran Daily);
- The private online journal «Echouroukonline”.

In Morocco

- The first national TV channel (the 8 PM TV bulletin and a weekly debate program selected by the student) ;
- The national radio (the most followed bulletin – Morning bulletin or at 1 PM - and a weekly debate program selected by the student) ;
- Two private dailies «Essabeh» and «El Massae» ;
- A private online bulletin «Emarrakech».

Nevertheless, as Moroccan students noted that selected media granted little interest to women's political participation during subject analysis period, we added to our corpus two private dailies with their online versions; a French daily, «Le Matin» and an Arabic daily with the largest circulation in Morocco: «El Massae» (the Evening).

As for audiovisual media, we studied the news bulletins of the satellite TV station «El Mahribia» (*the Moroccan*), which in fact broadcasts news shown on the first Moroccan TV channel.

In Tunisia

- The TV station Tunis 7 (the 8 PM TV bulletin and a weekly debate program selected by the student) ;
- The national radio (the most followed bulletin and a weekly debate program selected by the student) ;
- A private daily : «Eshourouk» and a state owned daily «La Presse»;
- A private online bulletin «Webmanager Center».

Study Period

In the beginning, UN-INSTRAW and CAWTAR chose the month of January 2009 to be the project's study period; however, as Master students were still busy with their exams, the study period was extended to the end of March, excluding of course the March 8 week, when Women Topics are usually subject to special coverage that may distort the analysis. In fact, one of the study's objectives is to examine media coverage of women's public participation during ordinary periods. This said, the corpus of the study was as follows: one week for the study of radio and TV news bulletins as well as the analysis of online media, provided subject editions cover all days of the week and include elements related to one aspect of women's political participation (see definition in the following paragraph). The analysis of TV and radio media had also to include four radio and TV programs.

Students who chose the study of written media had to extend their observation to one full month.

Second Part

Media coverage of women's political activities in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia

I- Comparative analysis of the media environment in the three countries

This paragraph roughly presents the media environment in the three countries. The purpose is to show the «media offer» that may be taken advantage of by active women in the political sphere.

The media environment in the three countries reflects similarities and differences. There are 264 written media in Tunisia, a little more in Algeria with 289 titles including daily and weekly papers and magazines, while in Morocco, and according to the Ministry of Communication, there are more than 460 titles⁽¹²⁾. In all three countries, most media outlets are privately owned, with a rate of 90% in Tunisia⁽¹³⁾ and nearly 65% in Morocco.

As for the audiovisual environment, Algeria is the only country where no private initiative has been launched yet. In 2008, this country had a national TV channel broadcasting on the land network and two satellite TV stations (Canal Algérie et Algérie 3). The same also applies for radio stations. No private radio stations. Nevertheless, Algeria is characterized by a well garnished radio network, offering 38 radios, including 6 national and 32 local stations. The Government's stated short term objective is to launch one radio station in every wilaya⁽¹⁴⁾.

(12) www.mincom.gov (mai 2009)

(13) www.tunisiemedias.com (mai 2009)

(14) « Rapport sur la mise en œuvre du programme d'action national en matière de gouvernance »- Mécanisme africain d'évaluation par les pairs (MAEP)/point focal national – Alger – Novembre 2008 p. 349. *Report on the implementation of the national action program in terms of Governance – African Mechanism for Peer Assessment (MAEP) National Focal Point – Algiers – November 2008 p.349.*

Tunisia and Morocco have authorized private operators to invest in the audiovisual sector; as a consequence, they offer a different audiovisual media environment. Therefore, in addition to the two public stations, Tunis 7 and Tunisie 21, two private TV stations have been launched in Tunisia, Hannibal TV and Nessma TV.

However, the Moroccan TV environment is the most diversified compared to the Tunisian and Algerian ones. According to the most recent figures of the Moroccan Audiovisual Communication High Authority (HACA), Morocco offers more than 10 public TV channels including the national Moroccan TV, a regional channel El Ayoune, and two satellite channels, «El Maghribia», supplied by programs offered by 2M and TVM and a sports TV station. Medi 1 is the single private TV channel in Morocco⁽¹⁵⁾.

HACA reports the existence of six public radio stations and 12 private radios. In Tunisia, there are eight public radio stations, including the national radio, a Youth radio and five regional radio stations. Three private operators have invested in this sector and launched three private stations, Radio Mosaïque FM, Jawhara FM and Ezzitouna, focusing on religious programs.

In the field of online media, the Tunisian experience is the oldest, dating back to 2002 when the private Webmanager Center Journal was created. Other online economic titles were created few years later.

In Algeria, the online press experience is recent. «Echouroukonline», created in 2007 has attracted since 2008 a large number of visitors exceeding 250,000 a day.

In Morocco, the oldest and most visited online journal is «Emmarakesh»⁽¹⁶⁾.

The Algerian, Moroccan and Tunisian media environments are therefore diversified, but this diversity does not advantage politically active women, at least according to the sample adopted in the present media exercise.

(15) www.haca.ma (juin 2009)

(16) www.ojd.ma (mai 2009).

And yet, in the three countries and at different rates, the media profession is increasingly opening up to women as the number of women journalists is growing, but they stay away from decision making spheres. Women editors in chief and managing editors are rare⁽¹⁷⁾.

II- Comparative analysis of women's political participation in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia

The constitutions of the three countries provide for women's political rights by affirming their right for vote and for election. This situation is the result of a long struggle carried out by Algerian, Moroccan and Tunisian women for the recognition of their political rights. However, the struggle path and phases are not quite similar.

Therefore, access to parliamentary representation is differently experienced by women in the three countries. One year after independence in 1957, the law granted Tunisian women the right to vote and to stand for elections. This marked for Tunisian women their first participation in the legislative power after the 1959 ballot. They represented then 1.1% of all deputies. Algerian women followed the same path six year later. In both Houses, Algerian women today hold 7.7% of the 389 seats of the National Popular Assembly and 2.9% of the Senate. As for Moroccan women, they had to wait until 1993 before they could have access to the Parliament by appointment without vote. At the House of Representatives and the House of Counselors, Moroccan women represent today only 0.66% of all elected representatives. Tunisian women enjoy the highest representation rates. According to the most recent figures, they represent 22.7% of the House of Representatives and 15.2% of the House of Counselors' senators⁽¹⁸⁾.

Nevertheless, differences shade off due to obstacles hampering women's political engagement in the three countries. This is reflected in their modest

(17) تقرير تنمية المرأة العربية. «المرأة العربية والإعلام- دراسة تحليلية للبحوث الصادرة بين 1995 و2005» - مصدر سابق.
Arab Women's Development Report "Arab Women and the Media" Analysis of studies published between 1995 and 2005 - Previous source.

(18) «التنوع الاجتماعي في تونس: أرقام ومؤشرات» - منشورات الكريديف 2007.
Gender in Tunisia - Statistics and Indicators - CREDIF editions 2007.

representation observed in the beginning of the 21st Century at the level of decision making positions.

A comparative study conducted in 2006 in Maghreb countries on women's access ways to elective positions within governments, parliaments and local councils conducted with the support of the United Nations Women Development Fund (UNIFEM) and the Information and Documentation Center of Children's and Women's Rights (CIDDEF) showed that the participation of Maghrebi women in the political management of their countries is «extremely limited»⁽¹⁹⁾.

The same study points out that women are under-represented in the decision making spheres of their countries' political institutions, even if the situation differs from one country to the other. This observation was later confirmed by subsequent studies. «We note in the three Maghrebi countries, a growing women's adherence both in terms of quality and quantity to political parties – if we consider their level of instruction and their professional affiliations. On the other hand, we note that women rarely hold managerial positions in political parties where they are much more solicited as voters rather than as candidates, and much less as leaders of their parties' list of candidates»⁽²⁰⁾.

Algeria includes 28 political parties, two of which are led by women. One of them run twice for the presidential elections, in 2004 and in 2009. This said, majority political parties do not count much on women candidates. «The FLN, or the Liberation National Front, which won more than half the seats during the 2002 communal elections in 2002, had 2.56% only of women candidates on his lists. The RND, or Democratic National Rally, a majority party, presented only 1.90% of women candidates»⁽²¹⁾.

(19) « Etude comparative sur la représentation des femmes dans les institutions politiques au Maghreb » - CIDDEF (Centre d'information et de documentation sur les droits de l'enfant et de la femme) – Alger- Avril 2006, étude citée in www.algerie-watch.org (avril 2009). 'Comparative Study on Women's Representation in Maghrebi Political Institutions' CIDDEF (Information and Documentation Center of Children's and Women's Rights) Algiers – April 2006. Study cited in www.algerie-watch.org (April 2009).

(20) Gribâa (Boutheina), ibid.

(21) op.cit

In Morocco, before 2000, there were few women at the level of parties' decision making structures, and researchers tried to diagnose the reasons for their under-representation, accusing political parties which failed to confirm and grant women their legal rights⁽²²⁾.

Thanks to specific juridical provisions, political parties had to adopt, as of 2000, quotas reserved for the representation of women and youth at the level of their managerial structures. In 2006, a woman (Zhor Chekkafi) was able for the first time to become a political party leader, the Moroccan Democratic Socialist Party (PSD). «in spite of such progress, parties are reluctant to encourage the candidature of women in legislative and communal elections.»⁽²³⁾

In Tunisia, nine legal political parties make up the Tunisian political environment, seven of which are represented at the level of the Parliament. The party in power, the Democratic Constitutional Rally, has adopted a voluntary policy to reinforce the participation of its women members at the level of national and local representation structures. This willingness has enabled Tunisian women to register considerably higher representation rates at the level of the parliament and local councils than Algerian and Moroccan women's rates. Notwithstanding women's access to most consultative instances, their proportion remains very limited both at the central and regional levels⁽²⁴⁾.

In the current composition of governments in the three countries, Morocco has considerably progressed after the legislative elections held in September 2007, by appointing seven women at the ranks of ministers and secretaries of state. The Tunisian executive branch includes six women: one Minister and five Secretaries of State, and last is Algeria where representation declined, as the number of Government women members dropped from five in 2001 to three in 2009. And yet, the Algerian constitution amended in November 2008, provides in its article 31 bis that the State works on promoting women's

(22) المصدق (رقية) «المرأة المغربية والانتخابات التشريعية» في «المرأة العربية والمشاركة السياسية» - مؤلف جماعي تحت إشراف هاني الحوراني - دار سندباد للنشر - عمان - الأردن 2000.

Msaddek (Rakia) « Moroccan Women and Legislative Elections in "Arab Women and Political Participation" - Joint Study supervised by Hani Hourani – Amman, Jordan 2000.

(23) Gribâa (Boutheina), *ibid*.

(24) *op.cit*

political rights by increasing their opportunities for access and representation in elected assemblies⁽²⁵⁾.

Associations and organizations constitute structures where women can express real capacities to undertake responsibilities towards the community⁽²⁶⁾. They also constitute a learning environment for public life participation. Women of the three countries are present in associations, mainly women's associations. They represent in their framework the struggle in favor of gender equality.⁽²⁷⁾.

Women in Algeria struggle within women's associations against discriminations they face, the retrograde fundamentalist movement, and also for all various forms of development (Gribaa 2009). Moroccan women's NGOs which nowadays constitute a considerable power, have achieved a great deal of positive actions in all domains, including the political domain. (op.cit).

III- Algerian, Moroccan and Tunisian women's political activities through the media

Maghrebi political women suffer from under-representation in their countries' media, be them public or private outlets, and regardless of the type of media: online, written, radio or TV. Media in the three countries were characterized by a quantitatively limited interest towards the issue of women's political participation. This is the main result yielded by the media exercise, subject of this report. Though the study period is not long, nearly one month,

(25) « Rapport sur la mise en œuvre du programme d'action national en matière de gouvernance »- Mécanisme africain d'évaluation par les pairs (MAEP)/point focal national algérien » ibid. p. 362 (*Report on the implementation of the national action program in terms of Governance – African Mechanism for Peer Assessment (MAEP) National Focal Point p.362.*

(26) Rapport « femmes et villes » - CREDIF 2000. *Report on « Women and Cities » CREDIF 2000.*

(27) "Mapping of Women's Political Participation in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia" cited in various paragraphs in this report highlights the importance of actions mainly conducted by women's associations to reinforce women's rights. It shows with figures show women's advocacy efforts within associations have led to major changes both at the level of laws and egalitarian mechanisms.

it was enough to produce significant indicators, and to give a clear idea about the media coverage of women's political activities.

The hypothesis that women are well present in the media is based on what can directly and rapidly be observed through what mass information means constantly show. Nevertheless, a more through observation indicates that the women's profile conveyed by such media contents does not necessarily correspond to reality, and focuses on only one aspect while overshadowing others. This has already been noted in a study conducted in 1999 analyzing the image of women of Tunisian women in written press⁽²⁸⁾. This assessment was confirmed at the Arab level by CAWTAR's report on Arab Women and the Media⁽²⁹⁾. Media discourse in this regard is mainly laudatory of measures taken in favor of women. This is a common aspect that can be observed for all media types and in the three countries.

We give below a summary of reports on the media exercise (details of media coverage of women's political participation broken down by country are published in Annex II).

1) Media Covered Profiles

A- In the audiovisual, Government women members : prevailing profile

Profiles of women participating in political life represented by the media are unequally distributed between countries and media. Nevertheless, we note that media coverage, mainly by TV prioritizes Government women members. The Algerian TV station, Canal Algérie, has shown interest through debate programs and the 8 PM news bulletins to women's various political activities, be they active at the level of the Government, representational institutions, civil society or even ordinary women citizens. But the station has favored women ministers or secretaries of state by granting them more time and importance. This can also be seen at the level of the Moroccan satellite

(28) Hizaoui (Abdelkérim) « L'image de la femme dans la presse écrite tunisienne » CREDIF-FNUAP- Tunis- février 1999. *Women's image in Tunisian written press, CREDIF – FNUAP – Tunis, February 1999.*

(29) CAWTAR, 2006, *ibid.*

channel «El Maghrebia». This station reports on women ministers or women managers of public institutions as well as on women active in associations, political parties or ordinary women citizens. However, as is the case for the Algerian TV, «El Maghrebia» grants more interest to «official» women, such as princesses, associations' chairwomen or government women members.

The Tunisian public TV station «Tunis 7», unlike the Algerian and Moroccan public TV stations, shows less diversified women's profiles. It shares with the two other Maghrebi stations the priority granted to Government women members. The Tunisian channel reports in its news bulletins on women in charge of public institutions, senior women officials at the RCD ruling party (Democratic Constitutional Rally) as well as civil society representatives active within organizations supporting the party in power such as the National Tunisian Women's Union or the Tunisian Mothers' Association.

Radio coverage of women's political participation is quite similar to TV coverage. We were not able to study the case of Moroccan radio. This paragraph is therefore limited to the analysis of media products in the Algerian and Tunisian national radio stations. In both cases and throughout the one month study period, there were very few cases of news bulletins covering women's political activities. In the case of Algeria, analyzed broadcasts were news bulletins and a weekly program, «Arwiket Assyassa» (behind the political scenes) broadcast by the Algerian National Radio. Bulletins of the Algerian radio focused on active women in political parties, women members of the Government and elected women. Unlike the national Algerian TV station, relative prevalence was given to women active in civil society. As for the Tunisian radio channel, similar to the national TV 7, priority is given to women members of the Government with the largest number of citations. The second most covered profile is active women in the political party in power, or the RCD. In fact, some women members of the Government are cited in their capacity of party members or as ministers or managers of public companies. Women chairing associations and women responsible for public institutions are cited third. Voting women and female analysts are the least cited.

Synthesis Notes

- The three channels occasionally report on women's political participation. The presidential election in Algeria and the local elections in Morocco were opportunities to give women the opportunity to speak as candidates or as voters. The aggression against Gaza also enabled civil society women activists and ordinary women to express their solidarity with the Palestinians;
- Of the three channels, the Moroccan channel «El Maghrebia» and «Canal Algerie» show more openness towards the different components of civil society ;
- Due to their role as public channels, preference given to women members of the Government can be justified;
- Radios also being public, their choice to cover this topic is similar to TVs, even if the diversity of profiles is more obvious at the level of the Algerian radio.

B- In written and online press: more diversified profiles

We note that the written and online media in the three countries are not interested in the same profiles of politically active women.

In the written press, most studied papers were private, proclaiming themselves to be «independent». The two Algerian dailies that were analyzed, «El Khabar» and «Le Quotidien d'Oran» highlight profiles of women active in civil society, with a clear prevalence of this type of profile in the Arabic daily «El Khabar". The two papers showed little interest in women members of the Government, ministers and secretaries of state, the least cited profiles throughout the study period.

Media coverage mainly concerns active women in political parties. This is understandable with regards to the political situation characterized by the ongoing debate about the presidential election. Women also expressed their concerns about aggression against Gaza in Palestine.

Unlike this trend, the Moroccan daily «Le Matin", considered to be close to the Government, focuses more on appointed women holding senior posi-

tions in public agencies, and women actively participating in Moroccan associations primarily represented by the princess Lella Amina. This attitude is similar to the one adopted by the Tunisian governmental paper «La Presse». In compliance with its editorial line, «La Presse» prioritised the governmental activity carried out by women. The most evoked profile in the Tunisian paper concerns appointed women, government members, followed by women members of high political structures, which means women holding senior positions at the party in power, the RCD. Nevertheless, we note that «La Presse» highlighted more diversified profiles, by featuring as well business entrepreneurs, women active in associations and women parliamentarians.

The second Moroccan daily that was studied, «El Massae» has made totally different choices. Evoked profiles, in order of the importance granted to them: ordinary women, female ministers and women active in local associations.

Of the various dailies that were studied, the Tunisian daily «Esch-chourouk» was the only one to stress the diversity of women's political action. The daily covered activities of women participating in civil society, with the exception of political parties, through cultural, political, professional and women associations and organizations.

The second type of profiles covered by this daily concerns women holding managerial positions in political parties, including the ruling party as well as opposition parties.

Women members of the government and elected women are the least represented in this daily. From this perspective, its choices can be assimilated to choices made by the two Algerian dailies subject of the study.

Profiles covered by the Algerian and Tunisian online press are also characterized by diversification. The Algerian online daily «Esc-chourouk Online» took profit of two events, a domestic issue which is the presidential elections, and an external event i.e. the Israeli aggression against Gaza strip to favor the expression of elected, appointed, and intellectual women, or women active in civil society. This said, the coverage rate of voting women and government women members is more important than any other profile.

On the other hand, the Tunisian online journal, Webmanagercenter, highlights government women members, ordinary female citizens, voting women, elected women and then women active in civil society.

Synthesis Notes

- Pro-government written media do not reflect the diversity of women's political participation, regardless of whether they are Algerian, Moroccan or Tunisian. Even when they report on civil society women activists, they usually highlight women who are close to political powerbases.
- The written and online media are characterized by their clear interest to ordinary women as well as by women concerned by elections, and particularly voting women;
- Government or pro-government papers cover women's political participation in the same way public television channels do;
- The written and online media constitute an area favoring the free expression of women active in civil society including all various components: political parties, associations, governmental organizations and NGOs.

C- Multiple profiles but a rather general dialogue

To a large extent discourse used by politically active women targets men and women altogether, regardless of gender. This could be observed in all three countries as the interventions of this type of women concerned general topics of interest to the whole society.

However in some cases, mainly when the topic exclusively relates to women, as the candidature of a woman to the Algerian presidential election or inciting women to run for local elections in Morocco, discourse was exclusively designed for women. This becomes a discourse made by women and targeting women. This is also true for media mainly broadcasting activities of government women members of women leading women's associations. The content analysis of the news bulletins offered by the Tunisian TV channel and the Tunisian governmental daily «La Presse» perfectly illustrates this situation.

Some media gave the floor to men in order to discuss women's related issues, as was the case for the Moroccan daily «Le Matin» and the Moroccan TV channel «El Maghrebia». The topic discussed was the special fund created to promote representation.

Independently of the different contexts prevailing in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia, through media coverage in the radio, on television or by dailies or online media, women could not present in most cases personal discourse conveying personal thoughts and ideas. In spite of their diversified profiles, their discourse was general. This discourse mainly concerns women's assets.

Women generating personal discourse are primarily active in civil society, such as the Algerian Louisa Hannoune, who ran twice for her country's presidential elections, or women solicited for their expertise, either government members such as the Moroccan Minister of Youth and Sports, called upon the Parliament to account for the failure of the Moroccan soccer national team, or also managers of public institutions.

In fact, by restricting themselves within general discourse, women may lose the opportunity to highlight their skills and capacities.

Some media in the three countries just broadcast messages by women focusing on women's assets. This becomes repetitive, and it is well known that when a «journalist keeps trotting out the same topic, information becomes boring, and when the public learns nothing new, communication may break”⁽³⁰⁾.

Synthesis Notes

- The discourse of women participating in public life is conditioned by the context of their production. If women are answering questions raised by journalists, it is obvious that the questions' content shapes the content of answers. In this case, media indirectly influence discourse, either general or personal.

(30) Kovach (Bill) – Rosenstiel (Tom) « Principes du journalisme, ce que les journalistes doivent savoir, ce que le public doit exiger » - Nouveaux Horizons – Paris, 2004 p.167. *Principles of Journalism : what journalists need to know, what the public must require.*

- The target of discourse produced by politically active women is globally mixed. This enables women to break off with their conventional role as women's only spokespersons, and gives an image focusing on women's real capacities to look after their communities' problems and concerns and to be part of the decision making process to solve them out;
- Some media mainly choose to cover government members and leaders of pro-governmental associations, which grants some legitimacy to the broadcast discourse, regardless of the personality making it. This is the case of the daily paper «La Presse» relating propaganda-like messages, and also relayed by public TV channels and radio stations.

2) Attitude of the media towards women participating in public life

As indicated in the media exercise methodology, the analysis of the media attitude towards politically active women focuses on the form and content of broadcast media products. The attitude is considered to be positive if content highlights women's skills, while it is considered unfavorable if content is critical highlighting the failure of this women category. However, the neutral attitude reflects the simple fact of reporting on information, without stressing positive aspects or underlining negative ones.

The attitude can also be assessed through the media support and the position of the journalist covering or reporting on women's political activities.

A- Attitude of audiovisual media : positive in terms of content, discriminatory in terms of form

The audiovisual media in the three countries adopts a globally positive attitude towards women's political participation. Messages disseminated by national TV and radio stations generally adulate actions taken in favor of women, and reflect a positive image, even if content is detailed and quantitatively insignificant compared to the interest reserved by the same media to politically active men.

Example: the Moroccan channel «El Maghrebia» reported in the two analyzed news bulletins on 32 politically active figures. Only nine were women. Nevertheless, in terms of form, three of them were offered the opportunity to

speak without being shown, in a «voice-over» format, while another woman was shown at a meeting stage though listening only. When covering a debate on women's participation in communal elections, the same channel interviewed more women than men although there were more women than men in the audience according to images shown in the news bulletin.

The same attitude is also observed at the level of the Algerian TV, which strives to reflect positive images on women and to value their role in society. However, air time reserved for women is very limited. Tunisian public TV also occasionally covers political women's activities. During the study period, television did show images of women, either at the House of Representatives or at the Senate, but with no action or information specifically related to their activities. Paradoxically, TV anchors in the three countries' public channels are generally women.

This same analysis also applies for the radio coverage of women's political participation in two countries: Algeria and Tunisia. We also noted the quasi absence of interest towards political actions conducted by women, although women presenting and moderating radio programs, news bulletins or debates, are much greater in number than men.

Very few media outlets seemed to be aware of the issue of women's underrepresentation in politics, at least during the study period. Beyond the simple observation, they try to investigate the reasons by holding roundtable discussions about this issue. The Algerian radio made an exception by raising this issue during a debate called «Behind the Political Scenes». That was also a rare opportunity for women to speak more and longer than men.

This said, we note through TV and radio coverage, that the most used press genres are reports on women's related activities. Recourse to this press genre restricts the processing of information to summaries or the simple synthesis of events. The interview, which is a press genre highlighting personal skills and competencies, has been rarely used.

In this same context, and compared to the processing of information reporting on political men's activities by the media sample, we note that the diversification effort of press genres was limited.

Synthesis Notes

- The generally positive attitude conveyed by audiovisual media about women's political participation complies with the prevailing political discourse, and mainly governmental discourse stressing the necessity to promote women's representation in parliaments, local councils and other local and national structures;
- Women are in most cases producers of media contents broadcast by radio and TV stations. When they act as anchors of debate programs or interview politically active women, their attitudes are clearly positive. When their role is limited to reading the TV or radio news bulletin, their attitude is more subtle and neutral.
- Debate programs, with the exception of one radio program broadcast by the Algerian radio station, favor male participation. Regardless of the topic, aggression against Gaza or the financial crisis, women with renowned expertise and knowledge about these issues are not invited.

B- Attitude of written and online press: politically active women, typical women focus

The attitude of written and online press is not very different from our assessment of audiovisual media. In general, media in the three countries reflect favorable positions with regard to women's political participation, by publishing generally positive contents stressing women's input in politics.

In Tunisian, Algerian and Moroccan dailies, women journalists are more interested by this topic than their male colleagues, with the exception of the Moroccan daily «El Massae», in which political articles are drafted by men. In terms of form, the paper features women's expressions, showing them in dynamic situations, demonstrating against the demolition of a housing district, showing outrage against sexual harassment, or defending, as Cabinet members, governmental actions. This opportunity for expression is offered through direct interviews, reports or interactions posted on the paper's website.

The second Moroccan daily that was studied or «Le Matin» made other choices. While also adopting a favorable attitude, it reported on women's

political participation in four articles, but only two directly highlighted active women in politics or in civil society. The two other evoked women's participation in politics through men's statements, cabinet members or leaders of political parties.

Written media in the three countries tried to highlight articles related to women's political participation by publishing them on pages that first catch readers' eyes: the odd-numbered pages. However the position of articles is not enough to conclude that the paper expressed interest to the subject. In fact, the use of illustrations represents another indicator that should be taken into account. The two Algerian papers, «El Khabar» and «Le Quotidien d'Oran» published most articles on odd-numbered pages, though located at the bottom of the page. Very few articles were published on top of the page. In both situations, photos are rarely used.

The Tunisian daily «La Presse» made the same choice, despite different editorial lines. Articles generally enjoy good positions on odd-numbered pages, with inciting and attractive headings, but texts do not include photos.

The second Tunisia daily that was studied, «Ech-chourouk» made use of illustrations, as was the case for the Moroccan dailies «Le Matin» and «El Massae». Photos enable readers to recognize various political figures, and consequently be able to recognize women as well.

Coverage in the three countries' written press is incidental, consequently the most prevailing press genre is reporting. Papers' front pages include dispatches provided by press agencies, though limited to wrap ups, and sparing the assignment and travel of journalists to cover news. The use of agencies' dispatches gives the impression that the same article is shared by various papers, as long as content is similar. Other forms of media coverage, mainly interviews, portraits and news reports are rarely used.

Some papers, namely the Algerian daily «El Khabar» tried to diversify content offered to readers by publishing in addition to reports, vox-pops. These mini-surveys aim at enabling common citizens to express their opinions and comment on specific issues.

Online media is characterized by interaction possibilities enabling readers to react instantaneously. The Algerian online paper «Ech-chourouk Online» could sense public categories of opinion according to reactions expressed by visitors to the site, both men and women. Some perceptions are negative. According to the analysis, negative perceptions were expressed by men visitors who could not tolerate women holding managerial positions. This confirms results yielded by a 2008 survey which showed that «Algerians of both genders are less prepared today to elect women for political decision making positions»⁽³¹⁾.

Even if the paper adopts a globally positive attitude with regard to women's political participation, by praising for instance women's skills as political parties' cultivated leaders, most articles related to this subject are usually placed in internal pages. They mainly include reports, news Wrap ups or statements collected on the spot.

In the case of the Tunisian online paper «Web Manager Center», we did not see any visitor reaction to women's political activities. In fact, while adopting positive attitudes that can be clearly seen through content, the paper shows no particular interest to this issue in terms of form.

In some articles, women are not cited. However, in at least one case, the photo attached to the text shows a woman on the podium or in a position that tells that she was speaking. She was then considered an anonymous actor as she was not identified, neither in the article nor in the photo legend.

In fact, in the six articles dealing with women's political participation and published by the Tunisian online paper, three are agencies' dispatches placed in the «Reading» column. Speaking opportunities are monopolized by men in five articles out of six. Women speak in only two cases, and even in this situation, men share with them speaking times.

It is difficult to study the attitude of journalists as most articles are not signed.

(31) (www.algerie-watch.org, mai 2009)

This online media is economically oriented, and articles are published along its specialization line.

Synthesis Notes

- Prevailing press genres are wrap ups and reports. We note the limited recourse to interviews, portraits, news stories, which are all living genres that could have shown the action of women participating in politics and their impacts on their wider environment.
- The options of written and online media can also be observed through the choice of sources of articles in some columns. We note that papers in all three countries cover activities carried out by unions, political parties and parliaments with no reference of women, if any.
- Online media enable the public to instantaneously interact with articles. This also helps to gauge public representations regarding women's political participation. This option is still not explored enough.
- Written and online media generally reflect a positive representation of women's political participation, based on the content of articles. Nevertheless, the design and formatting of articles do not always reflect this attitude;
- Opinion editorials and analyses are non-existent. Journalists are opinion leaders. However, in the three countries, this dimension is almost absent in the media coverage of women's political activities.

Conclusions

The media exercise related to the media coverage of women's political participation in the three Maghrebi countries i.e. Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia has drawn the attention of researchers in the three countries to a poorly studied aspect at the national and regional levels, the media exposure of women's political participation.

At the end of this media exercise, it is evident that the media coverage of women's political participation in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia is far from reflecting women's political contribution, either within political parties, civil society institutions or representational bodies. The analysis has certainly covered a limited number of media, but it did bring out a global vision about the image of active women in the political sphere through public and private media with considerable audiences in their countries.

It is true that in terms of numbers, Algerian, Tunisian and Moroccan women are not well represented in the political, syndical and association domains, and media exposure reflects to a certain extent this quantitatively limited presence. This said, the diversity of women's profiles already actively present in the political sphere is still poorly reflected in the media.

In the three countries, the media coverage of this subject is globally punctual and selective. This is because it still depends on special events, electoral campaigns and other types of meetings held by public institutions and professional organizations. However, the role of the media is also to draw the public's attention to topics and subjects considered to be a priority for society.

Media coverage is selective as it favors profiles of some politically active women and neglects others. Profiles that can actually reflect the diversity of women's political actions are ignored by the media, of which mainly elected women, such as MPs, members of municipal councils, or senators. It is true that the study period did not coincide with budget debates, a political time

when MPs and counselors (senators) are exposed to the media more than any other time of the year, but the parliamentary action is not limited to the traditional study and discussion of the State's draft budget, as the legislative mandate covers the entire year with the discussion of draft bills, among other activities.

Women who are active in non women associations and voting women aren't either well covered enough, even if for Algeria and Morocco, elections that were respectively held in April and June 2009 represented opportunities to raise interest on these profiles.

In spite of this, audiovisual, written and online media in the three countries, regardless of their editorial lines adopt favorable attitudes towards politically women. This attitude can be observed in contents broadcast by subject media.

It is globally visible in the attitude of journalists. The purpose of the media exercise is not to provide quantitative indicators with regard to this subject but it is very clear that women, who are heavily represented as media content producers i.e. journalists are more interested that their male colleagues in women's political activities, albeit with some exceptions.

This said, the image reflected by the media about politically active women, either produced by men or by women, is globally positive.

In fact, we may deduce from the media exercise's outputs that the poor representation of politically active women in the media is due to two major factors.

First, women are not used to reaching out to the media. Men feel more at ease in this kind of activity. This could be clearly observed in the media coverage of events involving both men and women.

The most media covered profiles, mainly on television, are government women members. Nevertheless, within this category, some women are more exposed than others. Women ministers are cited more than women Secretaries of State or women managers in charge of public companies. In the case of Tunisia, the government female member receiving the most media coverage

is the Minister of the Family, Childhood and the Elderly. This may be accounted for by the variety of sectors covered by her ministry and the efficiency of her press and communication department which main task is to ensure the proper coverage of the minister's activities.

The second factor accounting for the limited representation of women's political activity is the attitude of the media not trying to diversify their content and production, by giving opportunities to men and women to discuss general issues affecting the entire society. Women were very rarely invited in debate programs analyzed in the framework of this media exercise. Another more recent example is a debate produced and broadcast by a Tunisian TV channel related to the enforcement of a new bill against smoking. The entire stage was made up of men: the anchor, a specialized doctor, a psychotherapist, a coffee-shop owner and a smoker. However, women are as concerned by this issue at various levels.

Media, unintentionally or not, do not try to give value to women's political action because they are concerned by gender equality. This explains their rather poor contribution so far in the promotion of women's political participation.

Recommendations

- Research is important in the UN-INSTRAW & CAWTAR project entitled «Reinforcement of Women's Leadership and Political Decision Making Capacities in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia". It needs to be further developed in order to identify fields of action and reach set objectives, mainly to improve women's representation in the political and decision making spheres. The media exercise being limited to a few-weeks observation, it would be interesting to encourage Master students to further study the media coverage of women's political participation. The purpose is to yield quantitative and qualitative indicators that would stimulate a more thorough analysis of the situation.

- The passion raised by the media exercise among students and future researchers is enlightening. It reflects interest in this topic by the communication and information sciences. This passion needs to be encouraged by partnership initiatives with press and communication departments in all three countries in order to involve students in communication actions valorizing women's contributions in the political domain;

- It would be interesting to analyze the media coverage of women's political participation through political parties' papers and in publications of professional organizations and associations in the three different countries. It is important that changes be launched at this level, as these structures in fact constitute the framework for this kind of activities;

- Media that were studied reflect a positive representation of women's political participation. This attitude must be reinforced through debates with journalists and media decision makers in order to train them and raise their awareness about the importance to favor gender equity when covering political activities;

- The media exercise has shown that some journalists are interested in women's political participation issues. It would be useful to train this category of journalists about gender equity in media products. Said journalists will later play the role of relays with their colleagues.

- It would be interesting to try to identify hurdles or constraints hindering the relation between women's political participation and the media through debates and discussions. In some situations, mainly in political entities, contacts with the media adhere to the party's regulations that must be strictly observed by all members, men and women;

- It would be judicious to consider short training cycles in favor of politically active women in the three countries. Training aims at reinforcing capacities of this women category in terms of communication with the media;

- This kind of training already exists for some professional categories. Their topics can be diversified, such as being interviewed by journalists, speaking on television, etc...

- Political parties in the three countries play an obvious role in the political coaching of women. They must fully play this role by better highlighting the action of their women members. Creating women's organizations or units is no longer enough.

- Media coverage relies on a communication service or the presence of a communication advisor. Associations and organizations of all three countries can offer internship opportunities to new graduates and share their knowledge. Once integrated in the professional circuit, interns will constitute a good resource to help associations to better reach out to the media.

- Today, electoral campaigns and political messages have gone beyond conventional expression means. Initiating politically active women to explore the web's various possibilities, through the use of blogs or web sites should be considered. This requires the holding of targeted training sessions in communication and information technologies.

Bibliography

I- In French

Books

- Agnès (Yves) « Manuel de journalisme » (Journalism Handbook) - Collection Grands repères- La découverte- Paris 2002
- Grawitz (Madeleine) « Méthodes des sciences sociales » (Methods of Social Sciences) - éditions Dalloz- 1996
- Gribâa (Boutheina) « Mapping de la participation politique de la femme en Algérie, au Maroc et en Tunisie » - UN-INSTRAW- CAWTAR- Ensemble pour l'égalité des chances – Tunis 2009 (Mapping of Women's Political Participation in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia – Together for equal opportunities).
- Hizaoui (Abdelkérime) « L'image de la femme dans la presse écrite tunisienne » CREDIF- FNUAP- Tunis- février 1999 (Women's image in Tunisian written press).
- Kerrou (Mohamed)- Najjar (Sihem) « La décision sur scène, un regard sociologique sur le pouvoir décisionnel des femmes tunisiennes » (Decision on the Stage – a sociological eye on Tunisian women's decision making power)- CAWTAR-M .A.J.D- 2007
- Kovach (Bill) – Rosenstiel (Tom) « Principes du journalisme, ce que les journalistes doivent savoir, ce que le public doit exiger » (Principles of Journalism : what journalists need to know, what the public must require)- Nouveaux Horizons – Paris, 2004
- Neveu (Erik) « Sociologie du journalisme » (Sociology of Journalism)- Editions La découverte, Paris 2004

Studies and Reports

- « Etude comparative sur la représentation des femmes dans les institutions politiques au Maghreb » - CIDDEF (Centre d'information et de documentation sur les droits de l'enfant et de la femme) – Alger- Avril 2006, étude citée in www.algerie-watch.org (Information and Documentation Center of Children's and Women's Rights) Algiers – April 2006. Study cited in www.algerie-watch.org (April 2009)

- « La femme et l'opération électorale »- UNIFEM (Fonds des nations unies pour la promotion de la femme)- 2005 (Women and the Electoral Process – United Nations Development Fund for Women).

- « L'image de la femme dans les médias » - Rapport du ministère du Développement Social, de la Famille et de la Solidarité – www.maghreb.com (Women's image in the media – Report published by the Ministry of Social Development, Women and Solidarity).

- Rapport du comité plénier spécial de la 23ème session extraordinaire de l'Assemblée Générale des Nations Unies. New York 2000. (Report of the special plenary committee of the United Nations 23rd extraordinary General Assembly).

- Rapport « femmes et villes » - CREDIF - Tunis 2000 (Women and Cities Report).

- « Rapport sur la mise en œuvre du programme d'action national en matière de gouvernance »- Mécanisme africain d'évaluation par les pairs (MAEP)/point focal national – Alger – Novembre 2008. (Report on the implementation of the national action program in terms of Governance – African Mechanism for Peer Assessment (MAEP) National Focal Point – Algiers – November 2008 p.349).

II- In Arabic

- الجندى (عائشة) « المرأة العربية والأحزاب السياسية » في « المرأة العربية والمشاركة السياسية » - مؤلف جماعي تحت إشراف هاني الحوراني- دار سندباد للنشر- عمان- الأردن 2000.

- Al Jundi (Aicha) – “Arab Women and Political Parties” in Arab Women and Political Participation – Joint Work under the supervision of Hani Hurani – Sindabad Editions – Amman, Jordan 2000.

- المصدق (رقية) «المرأة المغربية والانتخابات التشريعية» في «المرأة العربية والمشاركة السياسية» - مؤلف جماعي تحت إشراف هاني الحوراني- دارسندباد للنشر- عمان- الاردن 2000.

- Musaddak (Rakia) “Moroccan Women and Legislative Elections” in Arab Women and Political Participation – Joint Work under the supervision of Hani Hurani – Sindabad Editions – Amman, Jordan 2000.

- «النوع الاجتماعي في تونس: أرقام ومؤشرات» – منشورات الكريديف 2007/17 «النوع الاجتماعي في تونس» 2007.

- Gender in Tunisia – Statistics and Indicators – CREDIF Editons 2007, 17.

- تقرير تنمية المرأة العربية. «المرأة العربية والإعلام- دراسة تحليلية للبحوث الصادرة بين 1995 و2005» - كوثر 2006.

- Arab Women's Development Report “Arab Women and the Media” Analysis of studies published between 1995 and 2005 – Previous source.

- «حلقة نقاشية حول المشاركة السياسية للمرأة في ضوء التشريعات الوطنية والعربية والإسلامية والدولية» - مجلس الشعب- سوريا- برنامج الأمم المتحدة للتنمية- صندوق الأمم المتحدة الإنمائي للمرأة- نوفمبر 2006،

- “Roundtable Discussion about Women's Political Participation in the light of National, Arab, Muslim and International Legislations” - Syrian Popular Assembly – UNDP – UNIFEM – November 2006 – Page 24.

III- Web sites

www.algerie-watch.org

www.haca.ma

www.mincom.gov

www.tunisiemedias.com

www.resaq.org

www.ojd.ma

Annexes

Annex I :	
Media Exercise Analysis Grid	43
Annex II :	
WOMen's political participation in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia	47
Annex III :	
Detailed summary of the media exercise national reports.....	51

Annex I

Media Exercise Analysis Grid

a- Common aspects (This refers to aspects that will be studied for all types of media, audiovisual, written or online)

**** First analysis category : Target public***

The purpose is to breakdown in terms of quantity the media content designed for analysis in two sub-categories:

- Media products exclusively targeting women;
- Media products targeting men and women with no gender distinction

The calculation unit (analysis unit) used for this category is frequency, that is the number of times when content exclusively targets women and number of events when content is designed for both men and women.

**** Second analysis category: Profile of women participating in political life (analysis unit : frequency)***

Breakdown by number women mentioned in the media according to the type of profiles:

- Voting women
- Women appointed at the Government
- Elected women : local to national
- Women in civil society (associations, organizations and political parties)
- Intellectual or academic women writing or making statements about politics
- Women analysts interested by politics (with the exception of women journalists specializing in politics and writing in the framework of their daily job...)
- Citizen women participating in events and making statements about politics (even in vox-pops)

*** *Third analysis category: Representation of politically active women (analysis unit: the idea)***

The purpose is to identify messages conveyed by analyzed media about women's participation in politics. Messages can be distributed as follows:

Rather positive representation :

- Highlight their skills and success : professional career, diplomas, struggle, analysis capacities,
- Highlight assets in their favor

Rather negative representation :

- Highlight their disaffection of politics
- Highlight their inability to succeed in holding senior positions

Rather neutral representation :

- Highlight the topic with no reference to the role of actors, be they men or women;

*** *Fourth analysis category: behavior of politically active women with regard to the media (analysis unit).***

The purpose is to analyze the attitude of women participating in politics making statements in the media based on the following indicators:

- They produce their own discourse
- They reproduce a general discourse
- When comparison is possible, example of articles or programs where men and women have the opportunity to speak, quantitatively and qualitatively analyze common points and differences in men's and women's behaviors with regard to the media. (Combine the frequency and idea analysis units to study speaking times, speech accuracy, territory gained, ...)

*** *Fifth analysis category: Source***

The purpose is to define the profile of journalists/anchors interested by women's political participation according to the following indicators: gender, assiduity in dealing with this subject and attitude with regard to women

** Sixth analysis category: Public perception (analysis unit: the idea)*

If in some sample elements (press articles or programs), the public comments on women's political participation, proceed with the analysis of public perception according to the following attitudes: favorable, unfavorable, and neutral.

b- Specific aspects

Apart from common aspects mentioned above, media have specific aspects that should be analyzed as follows:

**** Analysis of the media coverage of women's political participation in the written press***

Analysis of aspects related to form:

- Area of articles dealing with the Woman issue ;
- Location of articles (pair pages, front page links, ear, central part ...)
- Columns (national, regional, economy, society, culture, sports ...)
- Titles (informative, incentive)
- Visuals, photo legends
- Press genres

Analysis of the trends of articles' contents.

**** Analysis of the media coverage on women's political participation by the radio (national and local radios)***

- Analysis of aspects related to form:
- Programs broadcast live
- Recorded programs
- Topical programs
- Type of programs (news bulletins, debates)
- Program elements (interviews, news stories, radio investigations)
- Participants
- Broadcasting hour and time
- Actors (their qualities including the journalist or the anchor)
- Intervention type: studio, telephone

- Time allocated for every actor

Analysis of the trends of programs' contents

*** *Analysis of the media coverage on women's political participation by television***

Analysis of form related aspects:

- Debates broadcast live on TV,
- News bulletins
- Specialized programs (TV magazine on women for instance)
- Recorded programs
- Topics discussed,
- Image levels (zoom, travelling, wide screen, Italian ...)
- Camera movements
- Broadcasting hour and time
- Actors (studio, telephone, email)
- Time reserved for every participant

Analysis of trends of programs' contents.

*** *Analysis of the media coverage on women's political participation by online media***

Analysis of form related aspects:

- Positioning (home page and internal pages)
- Genres (opinion, information, explanation)
- Interactivity
- Visuals and photos
- Source
- Columns

Analysis of the trends of articles' contents.

Annex II

Women's political participation in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia

In 2009, the three countries experienced major electoral events, the presidential elections in Algeria and Tunisia, legislative elections in Tunisia and local elections in Morocco.

1- Situation in Algeria

In Algeria, women have been present in post-independence politics for many years. Two key dates can be marked. In 1980, for the first time, the Algerian Government suggested the Healthcare Portfolio to a woman, but the latter refused. The second date was in 2001 when a first woman minister was appointed: Ms. Zohr Ounissi.

From 2001 to 2009, we noted a regression as the Government now includes three women ministers, Ms. Khalida Toumi, Minister of Culture, Ms. Sadia Nawara Jafar, Minister Delegate to the Prime Minister in charge of the Family and Women Affairs, and Ms. Souad Ben Djaballah, Minister Delegate in charge of Scientific Research. Only one woman holds the Wali position (Governor) out of the country's 48 wilayas (Governorates). Two women are secretary generals of two various opposition parties.

Regarding political institutions, the National Liberation Front (FLN) includes two women at the level of its national board while they represent 16.81% of its voting instances; the National Democratic Rally (RND) comes first with 21.66% at the level of its voting instances but there are three women only among 17 members of the National Board. In the best cases, they represent 38% of the voting instances and 31% of the national board, which the case of the Labor Party⁽³²⁾.

(32) Gribâa (Boutheina), op.cit

2- Situation in Morocco

Women in Morocco were excluded from parliament representation until the early 1990s, while they joined the Government in 1997 only with the appointment of four women Secretaries of State.

This assessment was made by Dr. Msadak with regard to women's weight on the electoral body, where they represent nearly half the population, to show that this numerical power is solely used to mobilize votes with no impact on the choice of candidates, and that the non enforcement of political rights also reflects the absence the willingness to enforce those rights within political parties, both produced by the national movement or created by the Administration. «In one word, parties play a negative role in the appointment of women candidatures.»⁽³³⁾

Moroccan women are represented in parties' central committees, but they are rarely present at the level of political bureaus. (El Joundi, 2000).

Therefore, the exclusion of women from public affairs is a phenomenon that had prevailed from independence until the late 1990s. no women was appointed Minister before 1988, when a woman was finally designated for the first time in the country's history Minister of Women's Conditions, Childhood, Social Protection and the Handicapped.

Participation of Moroccan women in politics within the Government is now considerably better, as seven women are currently members of the Cabinet; they are Ms. Amina Ben Khedher, Minister of Energy, Mines and Water Resources ; Ms. Yasmina Baddou, Minister of Healthcare ; Ms. Nawal El Moutawakel, Minister of Youth and Sports ; Ms. Nouzha Skalli, Minsiter of Social Development, Family and Solidarity ; Ms. Touriya Jabrane, Minister of Culture; Ms. Latifa Labida, Secretary of State with the Minister of National Education, Higher Education, Training, and Scientific Research in charge of

(33) الجندي (عائشة) « المرأة العربية والأحزاب السياسية» في «المرأة العربية والمشاركة السياسية»- مؤلف جماعي تحت إشراف هاني الحوراني- دارسندباد للنشر- عمان- الأردن 2000.

- Al Jundi (Aicha) – "Arab Women and Political Parties" in Arab Women and Political Participation – Joint Work under the supervision of Hani Hurani – Sindabad Editions – Amman, Jordan 2000

School Education; and Ms. Latifa Akherbach, Secretary of State with the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation.

A sociological study was conducted by the Women Leadership Training Center and the Women Democrat Association in Morocco in 2002 among 100 women and 100 men aged 25 to 50 years, showed that 75.5 % of the interviewed support women's participation in the political decision making process, considering this to be a source for pride and social recognition, and that 53% of them would vote with no gender bias.

In 2007, a woman was appointed by the King as Governor. Morocco is in fact witnessing a dynamic change through civil society actions including consultations and studies. Let's cite here a study launched in the beginning of February 2009 by RESAQ Casablanca (associations network covering the Great Casablanca area) to examine women's place within districts associations⁽³⁴⁾.

This action is part of efforts to reinforce women's presence in the decision structures of their associations and to identify women's participation aspects in their districts associations.

3- Situation in Tunisia

Compared to other Maghrebi countries, Tunisian women enjoy a relatively higher representation in elected structures and at the level of political spheres in general, but still not reaching rates held by men at all levels.

The 2008 statistics showed that the rate of active women in political parties represent 25.7% of members of the Democratic Constitutional Rally RCD, the ruling party, while they represent 10.8% only in the opposition parties. One woman is a secretary general of an opposition party, Ms. Maya Jeribi on top of the Progressive Democratic Party (PDP).

Evolution exists at various levels, but figures are well below effective representation. Women represent 15.2% of the House of Counselors, 14.9% of the Government and 22.7% of the Parliament: 43 women including 39 representing the RCD, two representing the Popular Unity Party (PUP) and two others are members of the Unionist Democratic Union (UDU) and the Social-

(34) www.resaq.org

ist Democratic Movement (MDS). Women represent 20% of the Economic and Social Council, 25% of the Constitutional Council, 27.4% of municipal councils, 14.28% are members of the Communication Higher Council, 29% of Tunisian magistrates are women while 31% of the Bar Association are women lawyers.⁽³⁵⁾

In representative institutions, women have held for years the position of vice-speakers, but no woman has been or has run to compete with their men colleagues to be the Speaker of the House. In fact, candidatures for these top ranked positions are determined by the parliamentary majority party and the ruling party before the beginning of the parliamentary session.

Women members of the Government run a variety of sectors: one woman is Minister of Women, Family, Childhood and the Elderly, while five secretaries of state hold technical portfolios, including Information Technology, the Internet and Free Software, Hospital Institutions, Childhood, the Elderly, and American and Asian Relations.

As for union activities, though women represent 50% of the Labor Union's members, no woman has ever been elected to the executive board, nor even to regional executive boards, with the exception of two elected women, one in Tunis and the other in Ariana. Union decisions are exclusively made by men, in spite of successful historical women union leaders and important women figures.

A sociological study on Tunisian women's decisional power shows that political willingness and the juridical framework constitute favorable grounds for women's participation in the decision-making process, mainly by women members of the Government, members of municipal councils or women running public institutions. The same study claims that «obstacles preventing women's participation are due to social resistances, mainly prejudices and stereotypes, family responsibilities, education and the enforcement of legal rules and political decisions.»⁽³⁶⁾

(35) « النوع الاجتماعي في تونس : أرقام ومؤشرات » - منشورات الكريديف 200717 « النوع الاجتماعي في تونس 2007
Gender in Tunisia – Statistics and Indicators – CREDIF Editions 2007, 17.

(36) Kerrou (Mohamed) – Najjar (Sihem), op.cit

Annex III

Analysis of the media coverage of Maghrebi women's political activity

I- Media coverage of Algerian women's political activities

A- Algerian media environment

There were in Algeria in 2008 a total of 291 written press titles, including 68 dailies, a national TV channel broadcasting using the land network, and two satellite channels (Canal Algerie and A3), 38 radios, including six national and 32 local stations. The Government's expressed objective was to create one radio station in every wilaya⁽³⁷⁾. The experience of online media is recent, the daily «Echourouk Online» dates back to 2007, and it has been able to attract since January 2008 a considerable number of visitors, i.e. more than 250,000 every day. Selected media are considered to be the most important due to their large audience.

The period set for the study was close to an important election, as the country was preparing for the April 9 presidential elections, and that a woman was running for the second consecutive time as candidate; can we then say that the analysis could be distorted?

In any case, the report produced by Algerian students has shown that Algerian women have increased their presence in politics compared to other times, however, they have not been able to defend their presence as they should particularly in terms of communication, as they are almost absent in the media.

B- Coverage of Algerian women's political participation in the written press

(37) « Rapport sur la mise en œuvre du programme d'action national en matière de gouvernance »- op.cit. Report on the implementation of the national action program in terms of governance.

According to the two sample papers the Arabic daily «Al Khabar» and the French paper «Le Quotidien d'Oran», we note that 12 issues of the first paper published information related to women's political participation, while only six were published by the second.

Articles in the two papers targeted men and women alike, while only one article was designed for women only, and was published in the «Quotidien d'Oran».

The two dailies dealt with this subject in the same way. Most articles are reports. Nevertheless, we note an attempt to diversify press genres in the Arabic daily «Al Khabar», which published five vox-pops and one comment. There were neither portraits nor interviews in both papers.

Even if most articles are published in the odd pages of the two papers, very few were placed on top of the page. In both cases, photos were very rarely used.

The two papers mainly stressed profiles of women active in the civil society, with a clear prevalence of this profile in the Arabic daily «El Khabar», with 15 citations out of 18. In the second position, the paper talks twice about a woman analyst and one woman appointed in the Government comes last. We note nearly the same choices made by «Le Quotidien» where civil society women activists were more covered by the media than women ministers or secretaries of state.

Media coverage mainly focuses on women active in political parties. This can be accounted for by the political context, characterized by debates on the presidential election. Women also shared their thoughts about aggression against Gaza in Palestine.

In spite of difference between both media, discourse of the written press was neutral. Women, at least within study sample, generally reproduce the general discourse; only few women had their own personal discourse.

C- Radio coverage of Algerian women's political participation

The studied sample was made up of a news bulletin and a daily program, «Arwikat Essyassa» (Politics behind the scenes) broadcast by the national

Algerian radio. Throughout the month of January, only three news bulletins raised the women political participation issue. Concerning the subject of the radio program, out of the three editions broadcast during the month of January, only one exclusively focused on women, while the two others targeted men and women alike.

The three news bulletins respectively reserved the rates of 2.28%, 5.19% and 6.77% of their time to politically active women. Profiles of women covered are mainly women active in civil society, and mainly members of political entities, government members and elected women.

In the radio programs, two women and two men are invited to the studio. Participating women include the candidate to the highest office and one representative of the Harakat Moujtamaâ Salim movement (HMS) (Movement for a Peaceful Society) and had the largest share, i.e. 51.07% of time allocated for all participants. This was exceptional.

In the news bulletins, the prevailing press genre was reporting. Women representation is rather neutral in the news bulletins and more positive in radio programs.

In radio programs, women producing a general discourse represented two opposition parties: the Labor Part and the HMS Harakat Moujtamaâ Salim movement (Movement for a Peaceful Society).

The personal discourse was developed by the FLN representative. Topics raised in the program «Fi Arwiket Essyassa» were the April presidential elections, the impacts of the Israeli aggression on Gaza and factors hindering women's political participation in Algeria.

D- TV coverage of Algerian women's political participation

The analysis of the 8 PM news bulletin broadcast by the first national TV channel and of two political debate programs, «Fi Essamim» (In the Bull's Eye) and «'El Montada» (the Forum) shows that the women's political participation issue was dealt with several times. Out of 28 recordings of news bulletins, fourteen tackle women's political participation. Out of fourteen, seven specifically dealt with subject issue as the main analysis corpus. Every debate

program dealt only once with the women's political participation issue. Those two editions were analyzed.

In the news bulletins, time allocated to this subject was 21.38% of the entire time. This can be explained by time granted to the Arab Women's Forum and politics prevailing in Algiers extensively covered by Algerian TV. The participation of Algerian women in demonstrations supporting Palestinians also justifies time allocated by TV to women's political activities. However, women's participation in elections held on April 9, 2009 was the least covered, at 9.70%, though still better than time allocated to cover other women's activities.

Even if reports prevail over other genres in TV coverage, we also noted the use of some other genres, such as interviews, stories and reporting.

Half of the broadcasts related to women's political participation presented in TV bulletins were exclusively designed for women.

In terms of debates, the first, «Fi Essamim» targets both men and women, while the second, «Montada» is rather designed for women, though it may be of interest to both genders.

The interest of TV bulletins was reflected in the coverage of political events attended by Algerian women, either in their capacity as Government members, or representatives, or as active members in the Algerian civil society. Women academics and ordinary women citizens were also cited. Nevertheless, the action of Government women members was better highlighted. This said, women's political participation aroused more interest when presidential elections at the approach of the presidential elections.

In the TV program, through the focus of the presidential candidate Louisa Hanoune, leader of an opposition party, attention was drawn to profiles of Algerian women citizens and those active in civil society.

Globally, TV discourse related to women's political participation is positive. Algerian TV tries to give value to the role of women in society.

The coverage of women on TV follows a general discourse; in the case of international events such as aggression against Gaza, their positions and statements are similar to Algerians massively supporting Palestinians.

Nevertheless, in the case of national challenges, such as the presidential elections, women make their statements based on their own convictions and produce their own discourse.

However, the impact of this discourse on the audience cannot be measured as TV bulletins and programs do not provide the opportunity for the public to make comments.

E- Coverage of Algerian women's political participation in online media

«Echourouk Online» communicates with its visitors through the «Montada Echourouk» service, providing a discussion forum on current issues. Seven days were spent to observe the site and showed visitors' interest in women's political participation. The Israeli aggression against Gaza was an opportunity for several women's profiles to be advertised in the site. Elected women, appointed women, women active in civil society and intellectual women were all featured. However, the most covered women are voting women and female members of the government.

Most articles related to women's political participation are written by women, they are published in the site's internal pages. They mainly include reports, news summaries or statements made on the spot.

Analyzed articles target both men and women alike and account for 68.75%. This reflects the site's target heterogeneous public.

Globally, the site's discourse conveys a positive representation of women in 66,66% of the stories by praising the skills of cultivated women leading parties.

The site adopts a neutral tone when giving the opportunity to women to comment on the presidential election or on women's representation in said elections.

In very few cases, i.e. 6.66%, women are represented in a negative way. As for the public's perception, we noticed that the male public expressed a negative opinion about women's role in politics not tolerating them holding senior positions. This confirms results of a study conducted in 2008 which came to the conclusion that «Algerians of different genders seem less ready today to elect women to political decision making positions »⁽³⁸⁾.

II- Media coverage of Moroccan women's political activities

A- Moroccan media environment

The Moroccan media environment includes seven TV stations including the National Moroccan TV, 2M, and educational channel, a sports satellite TV, a sports channel, the 6th, a regional channel «El Ayoune» and a satellite channel «El Maghrebia», supplied with programs by 2M and TVM.

In the field of written press, 460 titles were identified as of December 2005, including 260 titles in Arabic. More than 65% are private enterprises, 4.56% are run by political parties while 5.35% are published by associations⁽³⁹⁾. Dailies with the highest readership rates are El Massae and Essabah, while the most visited online journal is «Emmarakech»⁽⁴⁰⁾.

Moroccan media studied during the month of January talked very little about women participating in politics, which prevented students from making the analysis of how this subject is covered by the most read papers, by public television, by the first national radio and by the online journal «Echourouk». This confirms results yielded by a study published one year ago, in April 2008, which showed that in several domains, the image of women in the media was not reflecting progress of their situation. The same study stressed male prevalence over political, economic or sports topics. This

(38) www.algerie-watch.org, avril 2009

(39) www.mincom.gov (avril 2009)

(40) www.ojd.ma (avril 2009)

is valid both for written press as well as for television⁽⁴¹⁾. For this reason, we extended our observation to another period, the month of April, by focusing on two other media, Morocco's first TV channel and the site of the online paper «Le Matin», a pro-governmental paper and the online site of the paper «El Massae».

(41) www.maghrebia.com (avril 2009)

B- Coverage of Moroccan women's political participation in the written press

The two dailies with the most readership in Morocco i.e. «El Massae» and «Essabah» offered little space to cover women's participation in politics during the period set in advance for this media exercise.

We then decided to postpone our study period, by choosing one week in April, between the 9th and the 17th. This coincided with the implementation of a fund for the support of women's candidatures to the June 12, 2009 elections. Titles selected for our analysis were print papers offering an online version. They included the French pro-governmental paper «Le Matin» and the independent daily «El Massae», initially planned by this media exercise. Even observation focused on the two papers' online versions, articles were copies of the print version, we therefore considered them to be written media and not online journals.

The site of «Le Matin» discussed women's political participation in four articles, but only two directly talked about women's participation in politics and in civil society, and both offered links on their homepage. The two others raised women's political participation through men's discourse, as government members or leaders of political parties.

The first article talking about women was an interview made by a woman journalist. She interviewed a woman member of the commission in charge of managing the fund promoting women's representation.

The purpose of the fund is to enable women to be trained on political actions and in local management. The interviewee stressed the need to «focus on mobilization, mainly in rural areas, to incite citizens to change their vision with regard to women.»

The second article cited HRH Lalla Amina, President of the Moroccan Childhood Protection League, Chairwoman of the Special Olympic Morocco and member of the consultative council of the International Olympics Committee. The article echoed the Princess' participation in a meeting held in Doha, a Forum on children with special needs.

Both articles were subject to good placements, as they were published on the homepage illustrated by photos of women concerned by subject activities.

During our observation period, the first secretary of a political party, the Social Union for Popular Powers, talked about his party's electoral strategy for the June 12 elections however without referring to women, while one of said elections' priorities was to improve women's representation.

The April 16 issue reports on the Minister of Interior and the Minister of Communication who provided details about the campaign's funding mechanisms and special measures encouraging women to run for elections. A 450 million dirhams envelope was allocated to fund this campaign, and 10 million dirhams were reserved for women's participation.

Beyond figures, the message stressed that the most important was not «women's numerical impact but rather the quality of their mission and the image of a studious representation.”

The April 17, 2009 issue of «Le Matin» online version mentioned forthcoming elections by publishing an agency's dispatch covering the Interior Minister's speech at the House of Representative about ongoing preparations for the June 12 elections.

The Minister stressed the Government's efforts «to enable women's real integration in communal institutions.» They include «financial incentives to encourage women's representation in the general communal elections”, part of the State's contribution to finance political parties' electoral campaigns. Globally, the political activity reproduced in this paper is globally masculine, related to male ministers.

However, the site of «El Massae» gives another visibility to the country's political action through its homepage.

It is true that the paper mainly reports on political activities carried out by men, but it stresses differences between members of the Government and political parties' leaders. It also highlights ministers challenging civil society and the people's representatives i.e. MPs.

During the same period, the paper focused on three women's profiles: women citizens, appointed women and women acting in civil society and working in associations.

The April 9 subject concerned a sexual harassment case in a Rabat hospital. Three women victims made the story of the article, while two more women expressed their indignation in the comments section offered by the site.

Only one man spoke in the article; the hospital's manager who tried to deny the paper's allegations.

The April 10 issue also highlighted women citizens taking part in a demonstration but without giving them the opportunity to speak. The demonstration was against the demolition of a housing compound located in the electoral district of the Prime Minister Abassi Fessi. The protest was led by women and children, and the photo showed all veiled women facing police officers.

The second profile that was cited concerned the Minister of Youth and Sports called by the parliament to account for the rout of the Moroccan national soccer team. The photo showed the Minister surrounded by six men. She was keeping a low profile in a defensive position.

The article cited the Minister but included three interviews, the first with a man member of the commission, the second with the president of a parliamentary commission while the third was the president of the tennis federation. The title highlighted the two men's divergence concerning this subject, while the two women initiating the meeting were in a secondary position. This meant that soccer was a men's business.

The paper made up for this in its April 13 issue showing the Minister in a better position, as she succeeded in explaining the national team's rout. The photo attached to the article expressed self-confidence.

The third profile mentioned in the paper is that of a civil society woman activist, through the publication of an interview on April 16 with a woman poet also working as a journalist in a local TV station. She is also member

of the local commission of the national development and solidarity initiative called El Ayoune.

The paper focused on activities conducted by political parties and unions, but when covering such topics, there is no reference to women's participation.

Women cited in the paper, independently of their profile diversity, produce their own message and their image is globally positive.

C- TV coverage of Moroccan women's participation in politics

To gauge this we will analyze how this topic is covered based on two news bulletins selected by chance and broadcast at 11 PM by the satellite channel «Al Maghribia» during the last week of April.

The first bulletin prioritized the King's activity for more than one hour, and then focused on the Princess Lalla Hasna, President of the Mohamed VI Earth Protection Foundation, an environmental association. The Princess was accompanied by several women at the inauguration of an exhibition called «Earth seen from the Sky». In this report, the speaker was a man and the photograph of works simply displayed.

The Prime Minister's activity came third. He spoke to a mixed audience, but women who were more in number, were seated in the second and third rows.

In this report, women were clearly more numerous, at least according to the cameramen's images, but they remained silent and listening, or playing the role of assistants, handing the signing books to men politicians.

The second type of profiles included appointed women, ministers or managers of public institutions, and civil society activists such as members of associations or political parties.

In the first case, women are solicited due to their expertise, such as the Minister of Public Health, interviewed about the swine flu, or the manager of the Moroccan Courts Modernizing project talking about the progress of the project. Both made their own statements related to their knowledge about subject files.

In the second case, women members of parties or associations were concerned by the women's representation promotion fund.

Nevertheless, in the story related to this subject, there were more men than women i.e. three against two. They produced a general discourse, indicating the necessity to act in order to encourage women to become better involved in politics.

The sports section of the bulletin included a report on the women's tennis tournament of Fez called Lalla Meriem Prize for women tennis.

The second bulletin that was analyzed included elements relating to women's political participation, through interviews and reports. The TV news bulletin is presented by a woman, and several women are producers of field news reports.

The bulletin repeats more or less the same topics mentioned in the previous one, but with a new genre distribution of the role of speakers.

The bulletin included a news report on the swine flue conducted at the airport, but interviewees were mainly men: the airport manager, a medical doctor, and the WHO representative. A woman was making explanations about this issue but her voice was on voice-off.

Out of 32 political actors including all types of profiles, nine women were shown; three spoke on voice-off, while one was shown at the stage, but silent.

Activities covered by the media concerned diversified domains such as ports, political parties, human rights, urban development, magistracy reform, promoting employment in southern regions and regional meetings held by political parties. Regarding the last point, debates raised the issue of women's political participation, but the prevailing discourse was a men's discourse. In spite of a massive women presence in the audience, reporters usually ask men to speak.

Women profiles that were covered mainly included women acting in political parties, appointed women, i.e. the manager of public ports, or women beneficiaries of job promotion projects in southern regions.

III- Media coverage of Tunisian women's political activity

A- Tunisian media environment

267 papers and magazines are currently published in Tunisia, 90% of which are held by private press companies. Fewer in number, there are six Tunisian TV channels, two public stations, Tunis 7 and Canal 21, four private stations, three of which belong to the same company, Hannibal TV, and the last one is Nessma TV, with a Maghrebi vocation⁽⁴²⁾.

As for the radio environment, it is made up of eight public radio stations including the national radio, the Youth radio and five regional radio stations. Three private operators also invested in this sector and created their own radio stations, Radio Mosaïque FM, Jawhara FM and Ezzitouna, specializing in religious matters.

Online media offers a number of sites, the Web manager center being the oldest.

B- Coverage of Tunisian women's political participation in the written press

In the sample Tunisian written press, women are still under represented, in spite of differences in the type of coverage and the profile of political women covered.

The example of the two dailies with the most readerships i.e. the French paper «La Presse», a governmental paper being published by a public company, and the Arabic daily «Eshourouk» with the highest circulation among Arabic titles, showed that throughout the month of February 2009, women participating in politics were cited 19 times in 13 articles in the first paper and 9 times in 12 articles in the second.

(42) www.tunisie.com

In compliance with its editorial line, «La Presse» was first interested by governmental activities carried out by women. The most covered profile by the paper was appointed women, members of the Government, for a rate of six out of ten, followed by members of political parties' instances, i.e. leading women members of the ruling party, the RCD, hence four times.

Female company managers were cited twice, as many as women active in associations. The last profile cited by the paper was and one elected woman.

As opposed to this trend, the daily «Eshourouk» mainly focused on civil society women activists, hence 4 times out of 9, with a variety of profiles, including managers of cultural, political and professional structures or presidents of women organizations.

Women participating in political instances were cited in three articles. The first related to the RCD's political thinking forum while the two others concerned activities of the liberal women organization, a structure run by an opposition party, the liberal social party.

Women members of the government and elected representatives are the least covered, with only one report for each.

The paper publishes a weekly column called «Les Coulisses d'Eve» (Eve's Secret Garden) echoing activities conducted by women's organizations, where one can find information about women's political participation or their contribution in civil society in general. A woman journalist launched this column, which constitutes an attempt to put the light on activities performed by this women category.

Journalists writing about this topic are mainly women. In general, their attitude in both papers is considered to be supportive as they focus on positive aspects. However in all cases, interest is punctual, related to the news, with a prevalence of dispatches issued by the public press agency, «Tunis Africa Press».

The most used press genres are wrap-ups and reports. We noticed the absence of interviews, portraits and news reports, lively genres that could

have shown actions of politically active women and their impacts on their environment.

Women's expertise is not solicited, unlike men's. Even when a woman MP makes the news by stating her intention to denounce the Tunisian anchor Ala Chebbi to the Minister of Women as he omitted to inform women about their rights in his TV program called «I've got something to tell you», the article was a written indirect interview, illustrated by the anchor's photo and not a picture of the woman MP, who identified an anomaly in information broadcast in the program. That was a rare opportunity when a political woman produced a personal discourse. The woman was interviewed by another woman journalist Eshourouk, February 27, 2009).

In general, articles related to women's political participation as published in the two study papers were well placed, on odd pages with attractive headings. Nevertheless, «La Presse» did not use illustrations. Photos help readers to recognize various political actors and hence to recognize women.

Both papers rarely talked about political activities carried out by women within opposition political parties. This choice is more obvious in the case of «La Presse».

According to a report analyzing written supports, women do not influence the country's political choices through their media discourse. There was only room in subject papers during the study period for women reproducing official discourse.

C- Radio coverage of Tunisian women's political participation

A week long observation of the 2:30 PM news bulletin broadcast by the national radio channel showed that five news stories reported on women's activities, including four relating to women's political participation. For all activities that were cited, three women were covered, and are all government appointees or directors within one single Ministry, that of women.

In total, during the week seven women spoke on the radio versus twelve men. Their interventions concerned general topics and not only women related issues.

The following profiles were mentioned: women members of the Government and women members of political parties. They all belong to the ruling party, the RCD. In fact, some women members of the Government are cited in their capacity of members of the party, ministers or managers of public institutions. Women acting in organizations or associations are cited twice, as many times as women managers of public offices. The least cited profiles i.e. only once are ordinary female citizens and intellectual or academic women.

Information transmitted by the radio relies on press agency dispatches reporting on women's related activities. Globally, broadcasts reflect a positive image on women. Nevertheless, bulletins were mainly presented by women during the observation period.

The coverage of women replicates a rather general discourse, with the exception of the Minister of Women, Family, Childhood and the Elderly, who produced a personal discourse.

We noticed little interest about politically active women. If we exclude the women's domain, there is almost no information in radio bulletins. This is the reason why the Minister of Women enjoys the most important coverage on the radio.

There was no variety of press genres, though we don't know whether politically active men were subject to various genres, i.e. absence of direct contact through interviews for instance.

Activities that were covered do not directly relate to politics but rather to conferences, including a conference on gender approach and equality, the celebration of the international year to fight violence against women, access of women to decision making positions at the federal level, the meeting of the administrative mediator (a woman) with a women's delegation representing the German civil society, and the Prize of the Center for Research, Studies, Documentation and Information on Women (CREDIF) to women's literary works and research.

The image is positive highlighting achievements of Tunisian women.



**United Nations International Research and Training Institute
for the Advancement of Women (UN-INSTRAW)
Center of Arab Women for Training and Research (CAWTAR)**

7, impasse n° 1, Rue 8840 - Centre Urbain Nord
P.O. Box nr 105 - 1003 Cité El Khadra - Tunis - TUNISIE
Tel. : + 216 71 792298 - Fax : +216 71 780002
E-mail: info@womenpoliticalparticipation.org
Webpage : www.womenpoliticalparticipation.org



ISBN : 978 - 9973 - 837 - 34 - 9