

WOMEN IN THE MOROCCAN ACADEMIC FIELD: RESPECTABILITY AND POWER


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Abstract - This paper aims at outlining the power and academic respectability that women have in Moroccan academia. The data, which privilege the perceptions that these academics have of themselves, were collected by means of a questionnaire distributed to 49 female professors, associate professors, assistant professors, assistants and researchers from three universities in Morocco. 12 of these women were also interviewed. Due to historical and cultural factors Arab women have entered the academic field only relatively recently, that is between three to four decades ago. There has lately been a very significant increase in the proportion of women in academia, and in some sectors more than 30% of University teaching staff are women. However, due to traditional and social constraints, these academics are not satisfied with their position and status. In this regard, the Moroccan academic field can be still considered to be dominated by men. This domination is crystallised in the way appointments to posts of responsibility are made, in the decision-making process at the administration level which, in most cases, favours men and in the attitude men have towards the academic abilities and achievements of women. In this respect, in spite of their scientific and cultural capital, many Moroccan women academics consider that the status and the recognition accorded to them leave much to be desired.

Introduction

"... women could never become just a sign and nothing more, since even in a man's world she is still a person, and since in so far as she is defined as a sign she must be recognised as a generator of signs..." (Lévi-Strauss 1969).

"Academic institutions, with their layers of authority and administration, represent the basic hierarchical, totalitarian model used throughout human history to concentrate and maintain power" (Ryan & Sackerey 1984).

ne of the most important things academics strive for is that their intellectual and scientific work achieves a certain degree of respectability. While this respectability may not be the main purpose for their activity, it is nevertheless one of its driving forces. In fact, sustained and recognised intellectual activity makes academic existence more enjoyable and comfortable (Wilson 1942:171). Moreover,

respectability consolidates the individual's position and status in the academic field.

Respectability can be crystallised in the regard, honour, authority and power a person enjoys inside and/or outside the academic field. Due to the relative economic and political uncertainty which prevails in Arab academia, it is self-evident that the academic, as possessor of scientific and intellectual capital and competence, will work to obtain, reinforce and increase his or her degree of respectability. As is the case with any value possessing symbolic and material properties, respectability embodies a pyramid-shaped hierarchy which varies significantly in its importance, dimension and prestige. In this regard respectability can be divided into at least four scales, as follows (see Fig. 1):

- (i) Employment in the state market (university) constitutes the first step on the ladder of respectability, that is being accepted as a *fonctionnaire* (state civil servant). In the Arab world, because of the weakness of the private sector, the state market represents for many of the highly educated the most important field for investing his or her knowledge. Moreover, institutions of higher learning are financed, managed and controlled by the State (e.g. Morocco). The integration takes place in the form of recruitment on the basis of examination or diploma.
- (ii) The second level represents a combination of "*delegated power related to a given field and branch of science*" (Sabour 1988:117). At this level the academic gains some sort of relative intellectual influence and authority in his or her area (Barnes 1988:74-75).
- (iii) The third level refers to the ability of the academic to defend his or her position in the academic field, having accumulated sufficient known and recognised intellectual capital in the form of power; he or she is able "*to defend himself or herself, or more exactly, to control the means of intellectual dissipation*" (Sabour 1988:118-119).
- (iv) Finally, the fourth level represents a situation where the individual has achieved intellectual eminence. This is based upon the status and recognition gained in the academic field. Holding power at this level can provide the academic with a sort of immunity (Sabour 1988:120). A position of immunity through scientific achievement is considered, however, to be very rare.

But what device or devices does the academic use or activate in order to obtain or reinforce his or her respectability? As far as the Arab academic community is concerned, we can enumerate four factors which are determinant and of greatest significance (see Fig. 2):

(a) The first device for acquiring a certain level of respectability that is concomitant with power is probably scientific and intellectual scholarship. The individual's intellectual and educational capital is measured in titles, diplomas and publications. The accuracy of this device is also evaluated by the quality, quantity and diversity of this work.

(b) The second device the academic can use in gaining respectability is the forging of alliances based on class or political commitment. But, by virtue of the unpollitical characteristics of the Arab academic field, this device remains fragile and relatively

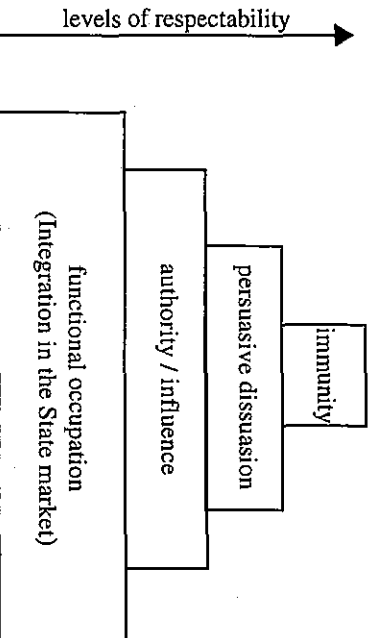


Fig. 1 Scale of respectability.

inefficient. It can be successfully used only when the academic is supporting and endorsing the predominant political paradigm. Pro-establishment alliances may, in this case, have a significant influence on academic career advancement and facilitate access to higher and influential spheres.

(c) The third device is related to the use of administrative or 'intellectual' functions (faculty councils, university committees, board of educational planning, posts of head of department, deanship or rectorship, etc.). In the Arab academic world, administrators and bureaucrats possess great centralised power decision-making power and control (see *The International Encyclopedia of Higher Education* 1977:2895-2903) and in contrast to academics they can enjoy all kinds of material benefits and advantages.² For this reason high academic administrative jobs and posts are not only the centre of gravity in the university's activity but are also the centre of attraction and covetousness in the competition between power seekers and those lacking respectability (Sabour 1990).

(d) In addition to this device there is what can be called the 'social channel'. This involves a network of social relations in which the family, clan, tribe, friends, acquaintances, and other similar types of groups constitute important basic elements. These relations may involve pull, clientism, favouritism and nepotism. If the academic has a large and solid network, he or she possesses what Bourdieu (1980) refers to as *social capital*.³ Such a network of relations and acquaintances is very valuable in the social and academic field, for it can give access to stipends, travel grants, publishing opportunities, career promotions and so on (see Eisenstadt & Roniger 1984; Barrow 1989; Garrett 1989). In such a context, newcomers and 'unknowns' who are deprived of social capital may be the most disadvantaged.

One needs to ask whether such devices enabling acquisition of the highest level on the scale of respectability are activated separately, simultaneously or in a complementary manner. Needless to say, the more devices the individual can use or activate the larger his or her degree of power and respectability. But what kind of power and authority do women have in the Arab academic field? In other words, what

degree of respectability do they enjoy in academia? The aim of this paper is primarily to assess how Moroccan academic women evaluate their position, status and power in academia, to determine how they evaluate their respectability, as well as to identify the devices they use in gaining access to such status.

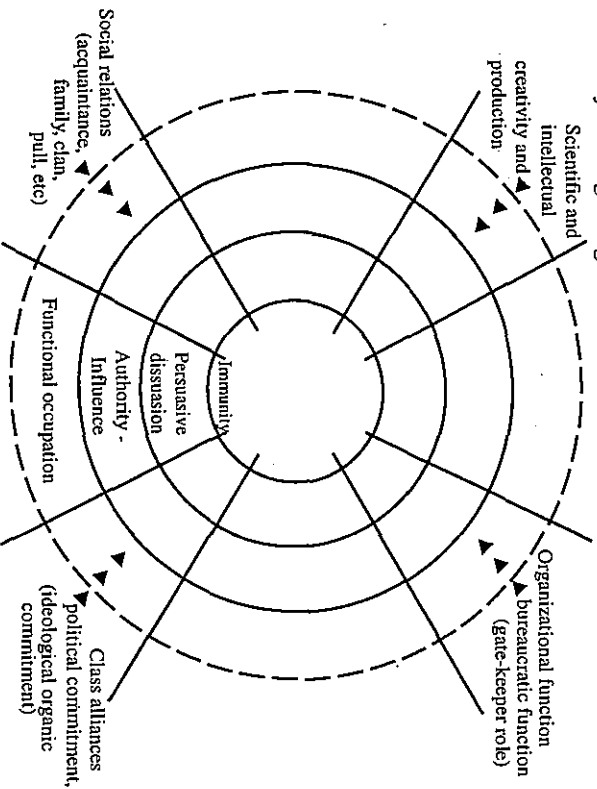


Fig. 2 Devices for getting respectability.

Methodology

While in this paper the focus is on women academics, the data reported constitute part of a larger research-project regarding "Intelligentsia and Development in the Arab Countries". The latter study involved 640 members of the intelligentsia from four Arab countries, namely Egypt, Syria, the United Arab Emirates and Morocco. A total of 49 women teachers (professors, associate and assistant professors, assistants and researchers) from three Moroccan universities provided the material for the present analysis (see Table 1). All 49 completed a questionnaire, and 12 were interviewed. All the data were collected between 1988 and 1990, and participants were selected through snow-ball sampling. The age of the academics ranged between 25 and 51 years, with the mean-age being 33.6 years. The fields of activity of the majority of the participants' parents (father) were teaching, administration and involvement in the private sector. It seems, therefore, that women academics come from a family context that is in contact with the 'modern' realm of activity (business, education, language, dwelling, etc.). Moreover, highly educated women are often socially and geographically from urban areas.

Academic Positions	Social Sciences/ Humanities	Natural Sciences/ Medicine
	N	N
Professors	4	3
Asst. professors	5	4
Lecturers	8	3
Assistants/Researchers	13	9
Total	30	19

Table 1. Distribution, Academic Positions and Fields of Activity of the participants.

The Moroccan academic

Morocco has had a long and ancient academic tradition. The mosque university *Al-Qarawiyine* was founded early in the 9th century, and numerous colleges (*madaris*, plural for *madrasa*) developed later on and are brilliant examples of scholarship. In addition to this so-called 'traditional' education, a European educational system was introduced by France and Spain during the period of colonisation. Once independence was achieved in the 1950s, Morocco undertook the task of modernising and universalising its educational system in response to the aspiration of nation-building. The need for education has tremendously increased university enrolment (Sabour 1985), and females have entered this sector in significant numbers (see Table 2). Even if, for social and cultural reasons, the female university population has remained relatively low, it has nevertheless reached an unprecedented level in the history of the country. For example, more than 40% of university students in some disciplines are female (*Annuaire Statistique du Maroc* 1992:288). So, thanks to increased access to formal education, women have been able to acquire scientific knowledge and intellectual capital, something that has put them on a relatively 'equal footing' with men and provided them with an equal opportunity to enter the academic field (see Table 3).

Moroccan academic institutions are similar to their European counterparts in many respects. But this similarity is more structural and administrative than qualitative and functional. As has already been noted, the hierarchy of organisation, the process of decision-making and academic policy-making is under the strict centralised control and supervision of the State (Souali and Merrouni 1981). Therefore, the autonomy of

Table 2. Number of undergraduate and postgraduate students in different Moroccan universities (Academic year 1988-1989)

	Moroccan			Foreigners			Total	Female
	Total	Female	Total	Female	Total			
<i>Université Mohammed V (Rabat)</i>	31 213	12 436	709	168	31 922	12 604	999	
Faculté de Médecine et de pharmacie.....	3 156	971	99	28	3 255	3 336	3 336	
Faculté des lettres et sciences humaines.....	6 298	3 284	139	52	6 437	3 271	3 271	
Fac. des sci. jurid. économ. et sociales.....	8 294	3 216	316	55	8 610	3 272	3 272	
Faculté des sciences.....	6 188	2 408	99	17	6 287	2 425	2 425	
École Mohammadia d'ingénieurs.....	502	59	10	1	512	60	60	
Faculté des sciences de l'éducation.....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Faculté de médecine dentaire.....	480	196	24	12	504	208	208	
Faculté des lettres (Kénitra).....	2 782	1 313	18	3	2 800	1 316	1 316	
Faculté des sciences (Kénitra).....	3 435	968	4	-	3 439	968	968	
École supérieure du Roi Fahd de la traduction	78	21	-	-	78	21	21	
<i>Université Mohammed B. Abdellah (Fès)</i>	41 034	15 119	605	49	41 639	15 168	1 516	
Faculté de lettres et sciences humaines.....	9 581	4 228	73	7	9 654	4 235	4 235	
Fac. des sci. jurid. économ. et sociales.....	6 687	2 056	44	5	6 731	2 061	2 061	
Fac. des sci. jurid. économ. et sociales.....	6 208	1 855	444	30	6 652	1 885	1 885	
Faculté des let. et sc. humaines (Tétouan).	4 253	2 004	14	6	4 267	2 010	2 010	
Faculté des let. et sc. humaines (Mekrès).	5 267	2 523	14	-	5 281	2 523	2 523	
Faculté des sciences (Tétouan).....	3 279	1 134	12	-	3 291	1 134	1 134	
Faculté des sciences (Mekrès).....	5 574	1 294	3	1	5 577	1 295	1 295	
École supérieure de technologie (Fès).....	185	25	1	-	86	25	25	
<i>Université Quorouyne (Fès)</i>	6 921	2 285	97	3	7 018	2 288	2 288	
Faculté Charia (Fès).....	3 840	1 200	80	3	3 920	1 203	1 203	
Faculté Charia (Agadir).....	834	135	2	-	836	135	135	
Faculté Ossonl Eddine (Tétouan).....	1 176	413	3	-	1 179	413	413	
Faculté Alloghna Arabia (Marrakech).....	1 071	537	12	-	1 083	537	537	
<i>Université Mohammed I er. (Oujda)</i>	16 464	5 838	255	11	16 719	5 849	5 849	
Faculté des lettres et sciences humaines.....	5 855	2 921	31	2	5 916	2 923	2 923	
Fac. des sci. jurid. économ. et sociales.....	5 009	1 579	206	7	5 215	1 586	1 586	
Faculté des sciences.....	5 570	1 338	18	2	5 588	1 340	1 340	
<i>Université Cadi Ayyad (Marrakech)</i>	32 798	10 170	381	19	33 179	10 189	10 189	
Faculté de lettres et sciences humaines.....	6 288	1 850	262	10	6 550	1 860	1 860	
Fac. des sci. jurid. économ. et sociales.....	6 571	2 902	47	4	6 618	2 906	2 906	
Faculté des sciences.....	9 697	2 636	65	4	9 762	2 640	2 640	
Faculté des sciences (Agadir).....	3 998	693	2	-	4 000	693	693	
Faculté des let. et sc. humaines (Agadir).....	4 160	1 226	5	1	4 165	1 227	1 227	
Centre des Etudes littéraires (Bent Mellal).	2 084	863	-	-	2 084	863	863	
<i>Université Hassan II (Casablanca)</i>	42 375	17 210	542	86	42 917	17 296	17 296	
Faculté de sc. jurid.économ. et sociales.....	9 534	3 677	235	25	9 769	3 702	3 702	
Faculté de médecine et de pharmacie.....	2 594	881	163	33	2 757	914	914	
Faculté de médecine dentaire.....	471	214	24	6	495	220	220	
Faculté des sciences I.....	4 467	1 634	34	9	4 501	1 643	1 643	
Faculté des sciences II.....	5 773	2 102	8	2	5 781	2 104	2 104	
Faculté des lettres et sciences humaines I.	4 175	2 226	40	9	4 215	2 235	2 235	
Faculté des lettres et sciences humaines II.	3 530	1 908	20	1	3 550	1 909	1 909	
Faculté des lettres et sciences humaines III	2 279	1 157	11	-	2 290	1 157	1 157	
Faculté des lettres (El-Jadida).....	3 861	1 823	5	1	3 866	1 824	1 824	
Faculté des sciences (El-Jadida).....	5 289	1 514	-	-	5 289	1 514	1 514	
École supérieure de technologie.....	177	34	1	-	178	34	34	
École n. sup. d'élect. et de Mécanique.....	225	40	1	-	226	40	40	
<i>Total</i>	170 805	63 058	2 589	336	173 394	63 394	63 394	

Source : Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale

*Table 3. Teaching staff in different Moroccan universities
(Academic year 1988-1989)*

	(Involved in Research)			Teaching Staff (Not Involved in Research)		
	Professors	Asst. Prof.	Lecturers		Assistants Researchers	Total
<i>Université Med V</i>						
Total.....	318	298	1.045	161	1.822	213
Females.....	36	52	307	43	438	106
Foreigners.....	16	12	35	9	72	8
<i>Université Hassan II</i>						
Total.....	85	163	891	137	1.276	220
Females.....	13	29	214	33	289	73
Foreigners.....	7	5	29	2	43	15
<i>Université Med B. Abd</i>						
Total.....	58	103	797	50	1.008	167
Females.....	7	6	134	10	157	61
Foreigners.....	2	8	14	-	24	13
<i>Université Quarronyne</i>						
Total.....	3	7	34	12	56	28
Females.....	1	-	-	-	1	2
Foreigners.....	1	-	-	-	1	-
<i>Université Cadi Ayyad</i>						
Total.....	31	73	567	32	703	121
Females.....	2	4	99	9	114	30
Foreigners.....	3	2	7	1	13	5
<i>Université Med I</i>						
Total.....	9	37	256	17	319	20
Females.....	1	3	19	1	24	5
Foreigners.....	2	-	6	-	8	-
<i>In All Universities</i>						
Total.....	504	681	3.590	409	5.184	769
Females.....	60	94	773	96	1.023	277
Foreigners.....	31	27	91	12	161	41

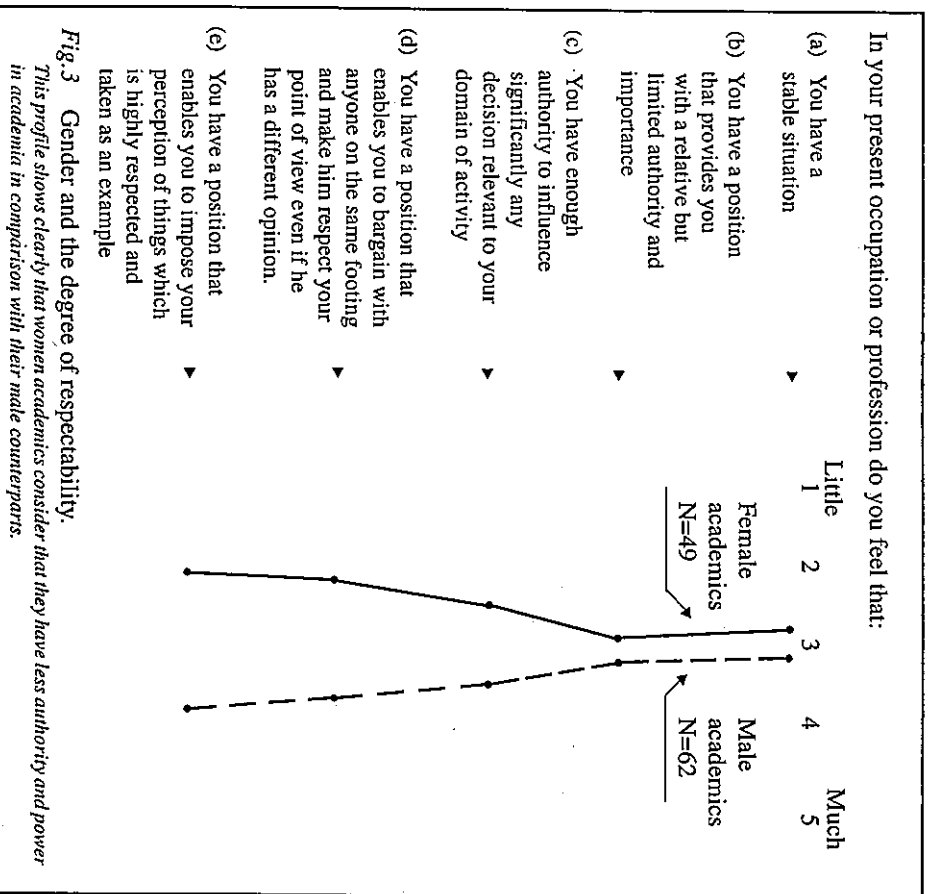
Source: Ministère de l'Education Nationale

the Moroccan academic field is very relative and nominal. Moreover, by its rules, stakes, activities and specificities, it is a part of the whole realm of society. In other words, all the rules, structures and symbols which exist in the society it is embedded in are reflected in it. This can be exemplified in the way power is acquired, divided, purchased and delegated. The woman academic is well aware of this (see Fig.3).

... *Having or not having power in academia is not the main question for women. The question is what this power can provide and how it is accepted and respected...*
 Question: *Don't you think that having some degree of power is a good achievement in itself in this society...? Power may bring some advantages... it is better than being powerless...!*

Answer: ... *in order to be significant this power must be endorsed by social and*

political factors outside the academic domain... without this endorsement it is a very dependent and limited power..." (Literature professor)



Power in Arab academia is very structured and hierarchical. The entrance of women into this field must be seen in the light of this structure and hierarchy. The field is, practically from the outset, male-dominated. In other words, the Arab academia is - through its aims, division of power, and process of decision-making - an almost entirely man-moulded, man-minded and man-oriented institution and place.

Academic women in the bureaucratic field

As newcomers to the field and because of the patriarchal cultural environment,

women trying to find and establish a position find themselves confronted with many difficulties. They need, as has been contended by Graham (1973:170), to struggle against the prevailing 'cultural stereotypes'. These cultural stereotypes constitute obstacles for women in the administrative and bureaucratic sphere if they intend to use them as a device for career advancement and fulfilment. This becomes quite clear in the following evaluations of the academic field (see Fig.4):

"When I was elected to many councils and committees I thought that I could make the woman's voice heard. But later on, I realised that regardless what I say, only the men's views and decisions are taken into account. In fact, it is not surprising that the absolute majority of these councils and committees are male-dominated..." (Biology professor).

"on many occasions when I see how the debate is directed and how the correctness of male opinions is taken for granted, I feel that I am just a part of the decor of the meeting room...maybe my presence is needed to demonstrate some sort of democracy but it is also to justify their (male) superiority" (Spanish language assistant).

This culturally-related difficulty is visible in the process of decision-making. It is often thought that women provide more efficient contributions when they are subordinate to men in administrative positions (Graham 1973:173). In this respect, men have adopted an attitude and an expectation concerning the role women 'deserve' and the position they can be placed in (see Acar 1990:129-143).

"... bureaucracy is a domain which involves all kinds of powers and authorities...If you are integrated into it, whatever your position, they (men) expect you to look at things in their way and behave or decide accordingly...If you deviate from this expectation, they consider you to be ignorant of bureaucratic procedures or looking for trouble...After all this, a woman starts to think that her judgement is worthless" (Physics researcher).

Bureaucracy and administration are spheres of the public domain. Women have had access to these domains for more than two decades but, with a few exceptions, such access has been limited to subordinate posts and functions. Women who, thanks to their academic capital and expertise, have been able to attain higher posts and increased responsibilities in the bureaucratic and administrative hierarchy within the university, are outnumbered by men. In other words, such women constitute a minority who are obliged to accept the hegemony and rule of the majority despite their disagreement and dissatisfaction with the latter's policy and philosophy. This means that women who can use the device of academic capital and expertise in order to obtain power are only those who possess - and are capable of activating - other forms of capital, such as 'symbolic' (bright name and fame) and 'social relations' capital.

Social relations and social capital

Social relations and ties have always played a major role in Arab society (Josepha

How much *Social Status* and *Prestige* does a person with a similar level of higher education to yours enjoy in your country, among different groups of people? Is it low, medium or high?

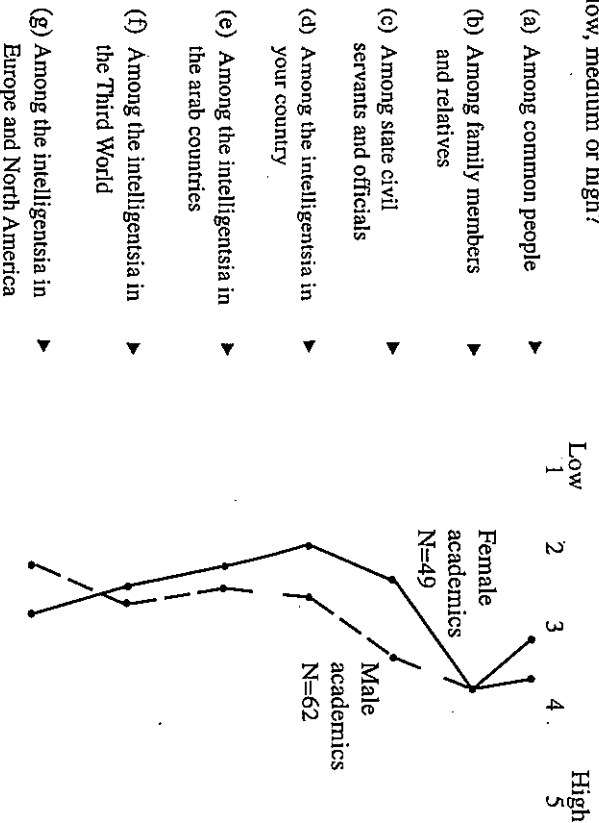


Fig. 4 Status and prestige of the academics as they evaluate it themselves. *In this profile it becomes evident that women academics consider that their status and prestige is weaker among their country's intelligentsia than among foreign intelligentsia. This attitude may explain the manifest or hidden conflict of gender where women feel that the intelligentsia and the bureaucracy does not hold them sufficiently in esteem.*

1977; El Khayat-Bennai undated) and in most Mediterranean countries (Boissevain 1974). These relations and ties differ in importance according to class origin and the family's symbolic power, wealth and functional position. These sources of influence can be seen at work in the academic field (Sabour 1993). In the case of Moroccan universities, social capital has a significant impact on women in academia (Dialmy, undated), for though it may not provide high respectability, it does, however, provide some sort of protection. Analysis of the data shows clearly that the majority of the respondents are from the middle and upper classes (economic capital), and from families possessing relatively good cultural capital (see Table 4).⁵ This reflects the class backgrounds of the female University student population in general. A wise use of these different forms of capital could lead to the acquisition of influence and advantages.

Father's status	Participants N: 49	
	N	%
Upper class	15	30.6
Middle class	22	44.9
Lower class	12	24.50
Total	49	100.0

Table 4. Social class origins of the participants

Due to many factors, the delimitation of social classes in Moroccan society is very difficult. The division followed here has mainly taken into account the economic and social status of the father. According to this criterion, the majority of the participants are from the middle and upper class, and this reflects the findings of another study (Salimi 1985) which confirms the fact that most female post-graduates come, indeed, from middle or upper class backgrounds.

Some of the participants actually came from backgrounds deprived of capital. But these were exceptions, and such women were both aware and proud of their achievement against all odds:

"According to many I am an exception to the exception... I have realized the unthinkable in reaching this position. Coming from a poor and illiterate family, I am the first 'tightly educated' person in the family and in our village... and the only one of my group who entered my school in the 1950s..." (Professor, Lycée principal).

Other participants cautiously declared that their social origin had had a relative impact on their academic life:

"... my social background was important in enhancing my academic success but it was not the most determinant factor... I had to work hard and rely on my personal ability..." (Chemistry professor).

Another group of participants recognised rather less ambiguously the importance of social and familial ties:

"Indeed, my familial and social origin did significantly help my educational success and career... This origin, of which I am proud, gives me the feeling of looking self-confidently forward..." (Social Sciences researcher).

In other words,

"...family background, good friends and acquaintances ... are a precious thing to have in this society... it can facilitate certain academic activities ... it may even help in attaining some goals that you cannot reach otherwise..." (Sociolinguistics lecturer).

What is the best way for an educated person like you to protect, reinforce and improve his/her social position? Please tick two of the following items which best represent what you think. He/she must therefore:

- (a) / 21.2% / Be from an influential and famous family
- (b) / 19.3% / Have acquaintances in the state apparatus and official circles
- (c) / 2.5% / Be a member of a political party
- (d) / 4.5% / Be a member of a professional or scientific association
- (e) / 26.0% / Be industrious and enterprising
- (f) / 17.7% / Have creative ability and intellectual productivity
- (g) / 6.4% / Conform to the orders and instructions of his/her superiors
- (h) / 1.8% / Be motivated by nationalist drives in his/her function
- (i) / 0.6% / Others

Table 5. Devices for obtaining a position in the academic field and in society.

This table shows that women academics rely strongly on their own scientific achievement and work for obtaining a status in the academic field. However they also seem to consider social capital as equally important for this purpose. By the same token the identification with - and the membership in - political parties or professional associations do not gain significant endorsement.

But even when knowledge, power and competence are obtained - after studies abroad or through one's familial and social relations - this does not always ensure acceptance by the main players in the academic arena, especially if a woman uses this knowledge to question the predominant values in her society (see Table 5). As one interviewee pointed out:

"The comprehension and assistance of my family was determinant in getting a chance to study abroad. Being educated at an American university is a tremendous achievement for a woman like me who comes from a society that has restricted woman's existence, career and free choice for centuries ... there is always someone seeking to find a way to underestimate you... You can easily find a so-called 'authenticity advocate' to stigmatize you as a culturally-alienated and intellectual outsider if you base your arguments on Western schools of thought..." (Education professor).

It is for reasons such as these that the work of Professor Fatima Memissi on the status of women in Morocco, though acclaimed internationally, has failed to gain the recognition it deserves in her own country (Charak 1990). Memissi is criticised for her use of a 'Western feminist' approach in the study of Moroccan women, and for her

attempt to 'deny[th]y' patriarchal Islamic law and rules. By activating her intellectual competence on solid grounds, Memissi has constructed a strong *scientific discussion* which has apparently irritated some of her male colleagues. It is important to note that Memissi has, in many of her writings, effectively distanced herself from Western feminist views. Moreover, in her analysis of the status of women in the light of Islamic tradition, she has attacked the ahistorical interpretation of her Islamist critics by turning their own sayings and arguments against them (Memissi 1973, 1987). Because of her social background, educational training and social commitment Memissi has been labelled a petty-bourgeois, culturally alienated and 'desacralising' intellectual (see Charak 1990). In fact, Memissi, as an eminent scholar and academic, could be considered to be intellectually 'deviant' because she refuses to submit to the hegemonic paradigm of thinking established by a patriarchal society. Her creative 'deviance' and challenge has stimulated a multidimensional discourse about the status of women in modern Moroccan society. Because of its tone, Memissi's discourse has broken down the boundaries between the intellectual and ideological realms. Such processes lead us to consider the field of ideology and politics.

Political allegiances and alliances as a device to attain respectability

The male has reserved for himself the management of all affairs in the key public spheres of Arab society. This dominant role is played out in decision-making processes, economic planning, legislation and political practice, to mention just a few of the more important areas. Here, women are conspicuous by their absence, and this is particularly true with reference to the political field (Nelson 1984:214-215). This invisibility is often not voluntarily chosen, but is imposed. It is either forced onto women intentionally - through the promulgation of strict rules and prohibitions - or it is imposed tacitly - through the lack of educational opportunities, and through socialisation and conscientisation practices (Tessler and O'barr 1983:138-139). Given this situation, the utilisation of political devices to attain a degree of respectability seems, at least for the time being, less probable and feasible. This is particularly true for Morocco where, despite the existence of the parliamentary system for the past three decades, women are still almost excluded from this domain,⁶ in contrast to Syria and Egypt, for instance, where women have gained seats in parliament. Such an absence from the political field is surprising given that women have penetrated almost all other spheres of Moroccan society.

The reasons for this state of affairs are, according to academic women, varied. Some participants claimed that it is society, through its rules and values, that is responsible for excluding women from politics:

"The general view of society is not ready to admit women into the political field. The reasons are to be found in the culture, traditions and the family education..."
(Sociology lecturer).

Others argue that the cause lies rather more with the political 'habitus' internalised

through socialisation and education (see Lindsay 1980:27):

"It is possible that women are not yet ready to use the political device in the struggle to improve their position. Socialisation and education have certainly played a determinant role in weakening the interest of women in politics. It will take a long time before Moroccan women become active in the political arena..." (Anthropology researcher).

Others emphasise the lack of trust and chauvinism of male politicians,

"The political parties in this country don't seem to be ready to engage women in their ideological struggle, through political discourse, elections.. Maybe, they think that the public will not take them seriously. Therefore, they don't like to take this risk..." (Psychology associate professor).

Politics is also considered to be a risky business, controlled by men in the context of a culture where there is no deeply-rooted female politicisation:

"Politics is seen as a tricky and serious business reserved for men. The Moroccan woman is expected to keep out of it. In fact, the hegemony of man in the political field makes it somewhat risky for woman to enter it, especially when she uses her position to question the policy created and managed by him..." (Social Sciences professor).

In this same perspective Memissi (1990) contends that as far as women's activism is concerned, the political field in Arab (Moroccan) society is littered with mines and traps, especially when the person is opposing the prevailing paradigm (Akharbaeh & Rehaye 1992). The unpredictable risks existing in this field are due not only to the dominance of men but also to the lack of political professionalism and an informed public. In this situation, women's discourse can easily be manipulated and misrepresented. Men still control the political mechanism; this fact allows them to distort the messages, thoughts and intentions that women attempt to convey through political activism and struggle. This is why Memissi contends that while waiting for a better and more favourable time to get their message across, women should be involved in an intellectual struggle in which their ideas and thoughts can be disseminated through the mass media (books, reviews, films, newspapers and so on). In other words, the attainment of status and recognition on the part of educated women rests on their ability to use the field of science and intellect. By so doing, they will not only improve their own position, but they will also express the interests - and defend the status - of all women, constituting as these do half of a society's population. Memissi's view is shared by many of the interviewees involved in the present study:

"The only effective and sole weapon a woman has for struggling for her rights and better status is to acquire a large amount of educational and cultural capital. Her power resides in her ability to use this capital to defend her cause and propagate her ideas in the largest sphere possible..." (Mass Media lecturer).

And,
"If an academic diploma and intellectual achievement cannot open the 'royal

road to honour and glory they can, at least, secure a position of respect and dignity for women. Therefore, I think that more women must be given access to higher learning..." (Dentistry professor).

The utilisation of the device of political involvement as a path to respectability is, therefore, considered to be a formidable and risky affair for women. Furthermore, women can find the process of integration in academia a very difficult and demanding task, not only because of the educational and academic challenge this represents, but even more so because of the cultural and socio-psychological factors at stake. In fact, in addition to her involvement in academic activity, the Moroccan woman is expected to play the role of mother, housewife, and so on. In this sense, the familial situation may be a factor that hinders the academic aspirations of some academics, or serves as an explanation for their weak motivation in this regard:

"In addition to my teaching, which takes a lot of my time, I also have familial obligations. In other words, my teaching and my family take a lot of my time and energy. So, I do not have enough time to publish or to do scholarly work. But, I do not regret this too much. I think I can enjoy my life without them. In fact, I would not like to be an eternal student burdened with eternal stress: presenting papers to people and worrying about what they say and what things will be liked ... teaching is enough for me ..." (Linguistics assistant professor).

Others deplore the fact that their intellectual motivation is undermined by the attitude and lack of support evinced by their husbands:

"Highly educated or not, in the view of some husbands you are mainly and above all a wife. This means that your academic value is the last thing to consider when it's a question of defending your position in the family..." (Medical researcher).

Such an attitude can also be encountered on the campus:

"In spite of your educational and academic achievement some colleagues (men) still look at you as a helpless creature whose contribution to the world of knowledge is not important... You rarely get any positive feedback and encouragement from them..." (Geography assistant professor).

In this situation a woman may find herself confronted with a complex dilemma. As a member of a minority in academia, and being under the control and dominance of men, a woman's entrance into the academic field is, explicitly or implicitly, conditioned by the demand for conformity with the prevailing situation. She is expected to find her place in the institution without openly questioning the existing rules or disturbing the prevailing balance of power. As a newcomer striving to construct an academic identity and image, the woman can, in principle, and thanks to her capital and expertise, gain power, authority and respectability. However, due to the factors previously noted, her position seems to be subordinated and characterised by *conditional* and *conditioned* requirements. It is conditional in that she is tacitly or openly pressured to play the same role as the man, to demonstrate her intellectual ability and plausibility. But her position is conditioned by the fact that there is a set of

rules, structures and stereotypes which regulate her activity and academic existence. Patterson (1973:314) argues that "the woman who enters the male-dominated spheres of academe or the professions, for example, will be defined as deviant; she is not what we think she should be". In these circumstances, adds Patterson, she develops compensatory strategies for minimising her 'deviance': in order to be accepted she acts like a man or conforms to the "expectations of the feminine role" (p.315).

Conclusion

In their search for recognition and better status, women discover that intellectual and academic achievement are crucial but not the most determinant devices. They have to struggle on three other fronts: the socio-cultural (attitudes, tradition, gender role, stereotypes, etc.), the private (household, motherhood, division of labour), and the economic (salary, financing of academic activity, daycare).

If we take into account the limited material possibilities that academic facilities offer in Morocco in terms of library, research, equipment, financial support for research, then we realise the extent to which academic achievement is also determined by the cultural and economic capital women possess. In other words, those academic women who emerge from culturally and economically deprived backgrounds face enormous problems in carrying out their academic activity.

The origin and position in the social structure have, therefore, a significant impact because they condition the academic existence of women on campus and at home. Delamont (1989) argues that intellectual and academic achievement alone do not bring esteem, honours and visibility. She contends that for a woman scholar "to make her own work rhetorically weighty, for others in the field ... it is probably less a question of publishing more, or even through doing 'better' research, but of personal contacts, friendships, visits, conferences, seminars..." (p.260). But Moroccan women academics find this a difficult route to travel. As suggested earlier, family duties over and above economic factors restrain their freedom of movement. They find themselves 'chained' to their familial obligations. In fact, while women often adjust their academic careers to family needs (and sometimes their husbands' work), the man, in most cases, adapts the family's life course to his career and work requirements. In this sense, many of those Moroccan academics who publish more, take part in various conferences and have international contacts are mainly single, divorced or have enough economic resources to sustain their activities. Finally, while Moroccan women academics have greater opportunities and possibilities than ever before to improve their status, gain recognition and attain visibility, they are not always able to activate all the devices (intellectual, social, administrative and political) autonomously and efficiently. Therefore, while women have experienced significant advances in terms of authority, power and immunity, their overall achievement of respect in the Moroccan academic field remains fragile.

Notes

- ¹ The 'intellocratic function' refers to that situation where the individual in question is by training an academic and scholar but is mainly involved in bureaucratic or administrative work.
- ² Those who occupy high administrative and bureaucratic positions often gain different material advantages, including lodgings, cars, trips, authoritative prerogatives, and so on.
- ³ 'Social capital' refers to potential resources mobilised through a network of social relations by means of inter-acquaintance and/or inter-recognition. It consists of a set of mobilisable relations which can provide support, protection, assistance or better chances for promotion.
- ⁴ Symbolic culture represents aspects of prestige, reputation, fame, celebrity, talent and so on which, once established and recognised by others, enable its owner to obtain credit, esteem and honour.
- ⁵ Broadly speaking, 'cultural capital' consists of the ownership of cultural goods (e.g., books, instruments, and so on). The term also has an institutionalised aspect which consists of the possession of educational title (e.g. academic diploma) and recognised ability (e.g. knowledge of languages). In addition, cultural capital includes a dimension which is to be found in the disposition of the organism in incorporating the previously mentioned forms of capitals as characteristics of his or her behaviour and personality (e.g. bodily movement, manners, life-style, and so on).
- ⁶ In Morocco the illiteracy of women is still very high, and stands at over 65% (Salmi 1985). It is worth noting that almost half of the participants involved in this project had educated mothers. This is of course linked to class origins and helps to explain the successful career paths of the participants. In fact, it seems that daughters with educated mothers are more likely to continue their studies than those whose mothers are not (Sabour 1988).
- ⁷ During the last Moroccan parliamentary election (1994) two females - both of whom were academics - were elected for the first time in country's history.

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