



"In Morocco, a Man is Like a Diamond:"

The 2004 *Mudawwana* Reforms and the Problem of Moroccan Masculinity

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In October of 2003, King Mohammad VI announced his intention to radically improve women's rights by reforming Morocco's *Mudawwana al Ahwal al Shakhsyyah*, or Code de Statut Personnel,¹ and in January 2004, parliament unanimously accepted a series of dramatic changes based on his suggestions. The new set of laws, renamed the *Mudawwana al Usrah*, or Code de la Famille, promises to increase women's power and authority in family and public life. Although some celebrate these changes as a revolution in human rights,² others express a range of ambivalent reactions to the reforms, viewed as threatening the stability of the family and calling into question the pillars of Moroccan religious and cultural identity.³ Based upon a period of ethnographic fieldwork in Fes and Rabat during the time of the change,⁴ this essay combines feminist and "Male Studies"⁵ perspectives to examine how individuals deploy constructions of authentic Moroccan "male-ness" and "female-ness" in discourses of opposition to the reform.

Gender Complementarity/Gender Equality

According to sociologists and anthropologists who study traditional North African marriage practices, the pre-amendment family laws are based on a logic of strategically maximizing procreation within the patriline while

encouraging a certain fragility in the marriage bond, in line with the Maliki interpretation of *shari'a* dominant in the area (i.e. Mounira Charrad,⁶ Fatima Mernissi,⁷ and Pierre Bourdieu⁸). For example, while the pre-amended Code's legal marriage for women (15 years) prolongs her legitimate childbearing years⁹ and the right to polygamy maximizes the male's reproductive potential,¹⁰ both practices undermine intimacy and reciprocity between the spouses. Other features heighten this disparity, such as the husband's right to confine the wife to the home;¹¹ the stipulation that women must be represented by a *wali*, or male tutor in the marriage contract;¹² and differential access to divorce.¹³ In turn, the pre-amendment Code positions the husband as undisputed head of the household, the sole provider¹⁴ responsible for regulating the behavior of female and junior members of his family. A model of the family based on the culturally sanctioned ideal of husband as provider and woman as passive consumer,¹⁵ is set against the economic realities of contemporary Morocco, where many women are economically active and where it is no longer uncommon to find women at the head of the household.¹⁶

Many of the Code's sex-specific factors were overturned or reformed in the 2004 amendments. Women's age of

marriage was raised from 15 to 18, thus made equal to that of men.¹⁷ The new Family Law places strident regulations on the man's right to polygamy.¹⁸ In addition, the new reforms radically equalize men's and women's access to divorce and improve divorced women's right to property and support in the event of divorce.¹⁹ In a radical re-formulation of how the rights and duties of husbands and wives vis-à-vis one another are constructed, the new regulations also guarantee the wife the same rights to employment and access to the public sphere as her husband, and make both spouses responsible for provisioning the family.²⁰ The new *Mudawwana* therefore, greatly minimizes—although it does not completely erase—the differences between the sexes in the eyes of the law. "The man is no longer the sole provider and legal representative," affirms Dr. Fatima Sadiqi, founder of the first Gender Studies department in Morocco (University of Fes), agreeing that the new *Mudawwana* has changed the legal definition of what it means to be a husband and father in Morocco.²¹

Hanan and Sulṭa

For those who advocate a culturally specific form of justice based on sex-role differentiation, the pre-amended regulations are not seen as disadvantageous to women, but rather as giving men and women separate sets of rights and responsibilities most suitable to their respective natures, in line with a religiously and socially sanctioned ideology of gender complementarity. Discourses of protest to the reform open up the way for a critical examination of how systems of apparent "male-privilege" are grounded in everyday practice, offering the opportunity to question how such systems compromise the quality of life for men as well as women. Men's Studies innovator Harry Brod encourages such an approach in the introduction to his *The Making of Masculinities: The New Men's Studies*: "In its explorations of the debilitating effects of various codes of masculinity on men's lives. . . men's studies. . . demonstrates the connections between the pursuit of patriarchal power and various sorts of male self-denials" (Brod, p.8-9). In line with this critical perspective, my work is committed to exploring masculine domination as a source of limitation for men as much as for women.

To justify resistance to all or parts of the reforms, many of my informants describe the basic nature of women and men as crystallized in two complementary essences: the woman is the source of *hanane* or tenderness, and the man is the source of *sulṭa*, or authority. Citing the Qur'an and *Hadith* as the sources of this philosophy, informants elaborate that women's propensity to become pregnant and especially to breast-feed makes them subject to a greater sense of integration with another human being, the child, but this propensity for integration is generalized and affects her relationality with other human beings

as well. Thus, not only in the act of breast-feeding, but in all her interactions, she has a tendency to bare her heart and sacrifice her own interests in favor of an empathetic bond with another human being. While this is a strength in terms of being a mother or a wife, it is seen as a liability in the public sphere, where people are likely to take advantage of her trusting, giving nature.

The man's *sulṭa*, also rooted in biology, is described in contrast to the woman. Because man is not required to open the boundaries of his body in making love to a woman, in giving birth, or in nursing a child, he is thus constitutionally better suited to rationally protect his self-interest and that of his family. His family is constructed as an extension, but not as an invasion of himself. Within relationships between men and women, the man has the right to be "the head of the household" because he thinks with his head, not with his heart. To a greater or lesser extent, I found that this opposition of *hanane* and *sulṭa* came into play in almost all discourses of opposition to the changes. It was most often invoked to critique the reform which gives women the right to contract their own marriages—which I found to be the least popular of the reforms.²² Following this logic, women are constitutionally unfit to independently choose their marriage partners because they think with their hearts and not with their heads, and thus are likely to make impulsive choices based on emotion.²³ While men too may make choices based on love, this tendency is mediated by their rational capacity to discern what would be in their best interests and, also importantly, in the best interests of their family of birth, to which, given the fact that Morocco is a patrilineal society, he still owes allegiance and support. In addition, the wrong marriage choice would not be as catastrophic for a man as for a woman because he has far less to lose in the transaction. Indeed, given that the main source of symbolic capital for a woman is her virginity,²⁴ she has everything to lose in choosing the wrong partner.

Sex and Money

In her study, *Beyond the Veil*, which came out in 1975 and which deals with male-female dynamics in Morocco, Moroccan sociologist Fatima Mernissi examines the responsibilities of the archetypal male sole provider/head of the household and describes how the features of current socioeconomic reality make this role untenable: "A respectable man is not simply someone who acquires some degree of economic power, but also who controls the sexual behavior of his wife, daughters and sisters. But this is possible only if he is able to control their movements, to limit their mobility and thereby to reduce their interaction with the strange men with whom they threaten to 'sully the family's honor'. Once again, money and sex are intimately linked in the definition of identity, both for women and men" (Mernissi, 1987, p. 149). Given

the high rate of unemployment and difficulties of finding steady work,²⁵ men are no longer in a position to oppose their wives' employment, as the survival of the family may depend on women's income. Therefore, men are frustrated in fulfilling the societal demand to "protect female honor," as women's entry into the workplace represents a loss of control over their movements.

In this vein, Brod's essay also analyses the destabilization of masculinity in the passage from precapitalist to capitalist systems: "A transfer of power from the hands of individual patriarchs to the institutions of capitalist patriarchy. . . creates a gap between institutional and personal power. For men, this creates a disjuncture between the facts of public male power and the feelings of men's private powerlessness." He continues, "Persisting images of masculinity hold that 'real men' are physically strong, aggressive and in control of their work. Yet the structural dichotomy between manual and mental labor means that no one's work fulfills all these conditions" (Brod, 1987, p.14).

Borrowing a useful term from sociologist Emile Durkheim,²⁶ Mernissi identifies "anomie" or deep and persistent confusion about societal norms as the salient response to the sudden socioeconomic change that characterized her period of analysis, the 1970's. If, as Mounira Charrad claims, "Family law by definition embodies an ideal of the family and social relations" (Charrad, 2001, p .5), it would seem likely that the advent of a new *Mudawwana*, which sanctions changes in the gendered breakdown of labor in contradiction to traditional ideals, would intensify such confusion. In light of this, many of my informants have been answering my questions about their views on the new Family Law by reporting on a "crisis of marriage" in Morocco, marked by the rising age of marriage for both women and men²⁷ and also by men's—but not women's—rising disinclination to marry at all. Some informants predict that this crisis will be brought to a head by the *Mudawwana* changes, a set of reforms which "turn marriage into a prison for men."

Many of my informants describe marriage as something men can gladly do without or indefinitely postpone, given society's tacit approval of out-of-wedlock sexuality for men in the form of their recourse to prostitutes or girlfriends. According to Mernissi, whether married or not, "men are encouraged to expect full satisfaction of their sexual desires, and to perceive their masculine identity as closely linked to that satisfaction" (Mernissi, 1987, p.161). However, while masculine identity is affirmed through sexual conquest, Moroccan society closely links women's honor with virginity before marriage, and women's identities remain somewhat centered around their achievements as mothers and wives. Given this tilted playing field, many argue that the government is actu-

ally doing women a great disservice with the advent of the Family Law reforms, and suggest that if the government really wanted to help women, it would be doing all that it could to make marriage more attractive to men instead of exacerbating the problem by introducing another obstacle in the form of a controversial and threatening family law.

Sadiqi provides a modifying perspective on these alarmist claims. Although she agrees that there is a "crisis of marriage" in Morocco, based on "complex causes that range from unemployment, women's education and work, to suspicion towards 'mixity' and fear of failure in marriage (which for women brings shame to the family)," she doubts that the *Mudawwana* reforms will actually exacerbate the problem. Rather, Sadiqi expresses the more positive view that these changes will "gradually be in favor of a better image of women," adding, "As in the case with any major change, there will be a phase of uncertainty and doubt, but that is only normal. The royal support, the legal and political support, as well as the support of the feminist movement will certainly help in this regard."²⁸

A Man is like a Diamond

A specific social myth that has emerged with regularity within my interviews is a pervasive belief that women greatly outnumber men in Morocco, with informants estimating from three to five times as many women as men. Although demographic realities of such as male immigration and the longer lifespan of women undoubtedly play a role in shaping these perceptions, the estimation of difference is greatly exaggerated. The myth of the overabundance of women²⁹ expresses a belief in their dispensability and emphasizes the symbolic overvaluation of the man. "In Morocco, a man is like a diamond," one Moroccan sociologist recently related to me. "If a woman gets one, she considers herself very lucky." If in Morocco, a man is like a diamond, what is a woman like? When I asked this question to the sociologist, he only laughed sadly.

"Women—who are citizens of [the] domestic universe and whose existence outside that sphere is considered an anomaly, a transgression—are subordinate to men, who (unlike their women) also possess a second nationality, one that grants them membership of the public sphere. . . . Having been identified as primarily citizens of the domestic universe, women are deprived of power even in the world in which they are confined, since it is the man who wields authority within the family" (Mernissi, 1987, p.139). The feminist men's studies approach defined by Brod would challenge us to rethink this uneven division in different terms. Instead of imagining men as possessing a dual citizenship in both worlds, Brod would rather invite us to consider the price

of masculinity as a sort of emotional exile from the domestic sphere.

"Paradoxical as it may seem. . . men's public lives in an important sense represent a retreat and escape from their personal lives, a shrinkage rather than an enlargement of their spheres. . . [Richard] Ochberg writes: 'Men may attempt to escape their private troubles by migrating—like souls fleeing diseased bodies—from their private lives into public ones' (Brod, 1987, p. 3). In the case of Morocco, the burden of masculinity carries with it a set of untenable financial responsibilities and harsh emotional denials. In my interviews, many describe the *Mudawwana* reforms as "a victory for women," or even, upon further questioning, "a victory for women over men." Yet, a consideration of the various, albeit more

subtle ways, the reforms encourage greater sex-role flexibility for men as well as women, lead to a more expansive assessment of the reforms, deflecting the conversation away from an unproductive reiteration of conflict model or "battle of the sexes" rhetoric. By shifting the focus to capture how the heavy burdens of the masculine dominant role compromise men's opportunities for self-actualization and the opportunity to experience a full range of interpersonal dynamics, including vulnerability and mutual dependence with an intimate partner, studies of masculinities across different cultures and historical periods promise to collectively debunk the myth that "masculinity is a positive desideratum of male personal identity," and reveal the "pernicious effects" (Brod, 1987, p. 2) of this belief upon the lives of both women and men.

END NOTES

1. For the full text of the speech in which H.M. King Mohammed VI announced the reforms at the opening of the Parliament Fall Session on October 10, 2003, see the Magreb Arabe Presse website www.map.co.ma. Since its original drafting in 1957-8, directly following the French occupation, the Code had been slightly reformed once before, in 1993. For a summary and evaluation of the 1993 changes see Malika Benradi's 2003 article, "Le Code de la Famille: la Moudawana," especially section 1.2 "La timidité des révisions de 1993" (Benradi, 1993, p. 69).

2. Dr. Nouzha Guessous, one of the members of the royal consultative committee for drafting the reforms, elaborates "Le nouveau code de la famille constitue une avancée historique incontestable en ce sens qu'il consacre les principes de dignité, d'égalité et de responsabilité au sein de la famille et par là même dans la société marocaine en général. C'est une avancée des droits humains au Maroc car il concerne la protection des droits et de la dignité de franges parmi les plus vulnérables de la société, à savoir les femmes les enfants" (Hassan, 2003, p.1).

3. As detailed by Abderrahim Sabir, much of the public controversy over the *Mudawwana* reform has taken shape within the larger debate that raged over the adoption of Le Plan d'Action National pour l'Intégration de la femme au Développement (PANIFD), officially introduced to Prime Minister Abderrahmane Youseoufi in March 1999, of which the Family Code reform constitutes one of the most controversial parts. Sabir characterizes opposition to the reform by focussing on the rhetoric of two major Islamist groups, Adl wa al-Ihsan and Al-Islah was al-Tawhid: "The antagonists of the Plan fiercely denounce it, arguing that it would discourage men from marriage, would incite 'prostitution and debauchery,' and would be against Islamic law" (Sabir, 2000, p.3). In this vein, Souad Eddouada sums up the tenor of the dialogue between advocates and opponents during the pre-reform years as regards the issue of cultural authenticity: "The main demand of Moroccan women's associations was reform in accordance with international conventions such as the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), a factor that enfeebled the feminist's claims. Representatives of Moroccan reli-

gious parties challenge the feminist struggle for "gender equality" which is, according to them, a western, secular value that promotes the primacy of the individual over that of the family. According to this outlook, both the culturally specific and the religious importance of the family are disregarded by Moroccan proponents of CEDAW-guided reforms (Eddouada, 2001, p.1). However, the King himself defends against these claims: "In my capacity as Amir Al-Muminin (Commander of the Faithful), I cannot make licit what God has forbidden, nor forbid what He has made lawful. It is necessary to be mindful of the tolerant aims of Islam, which advocates human dignity, equality and harmonious relations, and also to rely on the cohesiveness of the Maliki rite and on *ijtihad*, thanks to which Islam is a suitable religion for all times and places. The aim is to draw up a modern Family Law which is consistent with the spirit of our glorious religion" (Magreb Arabe Presse, 10/3/2003).

4. September 2003 to July 2004, under the support of a Fulbright IIE grant.

5. As formulated by Harry Brod: "The most general definition of Men's Studies is that it is the study of masculinities and male experiences as specific and varying social-cultural-historical formulations. Such studies situate masculinities as objects of study on a par with femininities, instead of elevating them to universal norms (Brod, 1987, p. 2).

6. See especially Chapter 2, "Islam and Family Law: An Unorthodox View," in *States and Women's Rights: The Making of Postcolonial Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco*, where Charrad summarizes, "An aspect of Maliki family law emphasized in this chapter is the fragility of the conjugal unit. The legality of polygamy, the unilateral right of repudiation, the absence of common property between husband and wife, all tend to facilitate the dissolution of the marital bond. The message of the law is that the nuclear family does not constitute the significant locus of solidarity. Islamic law in effect defines the conjugal unit as potentially short lived. By contrast, it identifies the blood ties united the extended patrilineage as those likely to endure" (Charrad, 2001, p. 49).

7. In her 1974 *Beyond the Veil*, Mernissi writes, "Muslim wariness of heterosexual involvement is embodied in sexual segregation and its corollaries: arranged marriage, the important role of the moth-

er in the son's life, and the fragility of the marriage bond (as revealed by the institutions of repudiation and polygamy)" (Mernissi, 1987, p. 45).

8. In *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, Pierre Bourdieu identifies the strengthening of the patriline as the first goal of Algerian tribal matrimonial strategies. The customs described in the section, "Matrimonial Strategies and Social Reproduction" (Bourdieu, 1977, pp. 58-71) offer a productive point of comparison to the tendencies codified in the 1957-58 *Mudawwana*. "The mythic world view which accords [women] only a limited existence and never grants her full participation in the symbolic capital of her adoptive lineage, the sexual division of labor which restricts her to the domestic tasks leaving the representational functions the man—everything combines to identify the interests of the men with the material and particularly the symbolic interests of the lineage" (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 66).

9. *Moudawana Code de Statut Personnel et des Successions* Art. 8 (1996, p.45).

10. *Ibid.* Art. 30 (p. 57).

11. As Mernissi points out, Art. 35.3 (*Ibid.* pp. 60-61) of the original code provides that husbands should authorize wives' visiting their parents, with the implication that women's access to the outside world in general is mediated by their husbands (Mernissi 1987, 109).

12. *Ibid.* Art. 12 (p.47).

13. Book II, articles 44-81 detail men's and women's differential rights to divorce (pp. 69-85). Within these pages, we find that men have the right to unilateral repudiation, and that for women, divorce is a more lengthy, complicated and expensive ordeal.

14. *Ibid.* Art 115 (p. 97). Mernissi's translation: "Every human being is responsible for providing for his needs (*nafaqa*) through his own mean, with the exception of women, whose husbands provide for their needs" (1987, p.148).

15. "The fact that we cling to images of virility (economic power) and femininity (consumption of the husband's fortune) that have nothing whatever to do with real life contributes to making male-female dynamics one of the greatest sources of tension and conflict" (Mernissi, 1987, p.149).

16. According to Fatima Nessif's 2001 study: "Female headed households are increasingly established in Morocco. . . [where] one fifth of households depend on women for their needs and livelihood. Based on 1991 statistics, this percentage reaches 22.5 in urban areas compared to 16.0% in rural areas" (CERED, 1995, p.123) . . . Nationally, the percentage of this type of household has increased from 11.2% in 1960 to 19.3% in 1991. . . most important is the strong probability of continued increase (Nessif, 2001, p. 274).

17. *Al Mudawwana al-Jadidah al-Usrah* (Le Nouveau Code de la Famille) 2004, Art. 19 (2004, p. 19).

18. See *Ibid.* Art. 40. (2004, p. 22). Also, according to an online fact sheet issued by the Association Démocratique des Femmes du Maroc/Women's Learning Partnership, entitled "Comparison of former Moroccan Family Law with the new provisions:" "Polygamy is allowed, subject to the judges authorization [the former code did not require this authorization] and to stringent legal conditions. . . The woman now has the right to make her acceptance of marriage conditional upon a pledge by her husband-to-be to refrain from taking other wives" (2003, p. 1).

19. *Ibid.* Arts. 78-128 (2004, p. 36-43). As summarized in the ADFM/WLP factsheet: "Repudiation and divorce, defined as the dissolution of marriage, are a prerogative that can be exercised as much by the husband as by the wife, under judicial supervision, and in accordance with the legal conditions set for each party. (Under the [former] legislation, repudiation and divorce are left to

the discretion of the husband only, and are often exercised in an arbitrary way) (2003, p. 1).

20. In the pre-amended code, the rights and obligations of the spouses are divided up and described under three separate sub-headings: Art. 34, "The Rights of the Spouses *Vis-à-vis* One Another"; Art. 35, "The Rights of the Wife *Vis-à-vis* Her Husband;" and Art. 36 "The Rights of the Husband *Vis-à-vis* His Wife" (60-61). This section of the Code authorizes many aspects of spousal inequality: Art. 36.1 demands the wife's fidelity to the husband; yet we find no complementary demand for the husband's fidelity to the wife; Art. 36.2 establishes the wife's "obedience" to the husband; Art. 36.4 places "the management of the household and its organization" squarely in the male spouse's hands; and Art. 35.4 implicitly gives the husband the right to monitor his wife's access to the public sphere. The amended Code radically reformulates these rights and duties under the single Art. 51 (2004: 109), "The Mutual Rights and Duties between the Husband and Wife." Art. 51.1 makes fidelity a mutual obligation, and also replaces the stipulation of the wife's "obedience" (*ta'ah*) to the husband with a call for mutual "respect" (*ihtiram*). In addition, Art. 51.3 affirms, "The husband and the wife are both responsible for caring for the house and the children," and 51.4 stipulates, "consultation before making decisions concerning the family and family planning," thus newly placing the authority over the family as well as the responsibility for its economic survival into the hands of both husband and wife. The ADFM/WLP factsheet sums up these changes as follows: "Equality with respect to the rights and obligations of both parties. . . In return, the wife must contribute to the household expenses (2003, p.1).

21. Email communication 29 February 2004.

22. Most agree that this reform undeniably contradicts the teaching of the Maliki school, which envisions marriage as "a contract between families" rather than individuals (Charrad, 2001, p.32). In this vein, my informants unanimously claimed that even with their new right, women will not exercise the prerogative of independently contracting their marriage, for in doing so they would alienate both their family of birth and their husband-to-be, who would "not respect" a woman who did so. The idea of a woman entering into marriage on her own was mainly met by anxiety and disapproval, as it goes directly against the grain of the still widely-held view of marriage as an affair between families, not individuals. Interestingly, the idea of a man opposing his parents' wishes to marry the girl of his choice was not considered a catastrophe, but rather seen as a surmountable difficulty. Of the four majors schools within the Sunni tradition, only the Hanafi gives women the right to freely contract their own marriage (Ikkaracan, 2003, p. 14).

23. Raja Rhouni, in her analysis of the cultural resistance to this change, draws upon the work of Ait Sabbah: "The tutor (*wali*) represents the interests of a Muslim patriarchal social order, in which the woman is believed to be uniquely motivated by her libidinal desire in her choice of a husband. Thus, in reading the symbolism of an institution like the *wali*, we find a reiteration of the androcentric binary opposition inherent in orthodox Muslim discourse: the woman and the male tutor come to represent respectively the confrontation between the forces of nature and those of culture; anarchy and the ordering force of Muslim civilization (Rhouni, 2004 p. 153; Sabbah, 1984, pp. 64 & 113). Incidentally, within her dissertation Rhouni argues that Fatna Ait Sabbah is actually the pen name for Fatima Mernissi.

24. For a discussion of the significance of female virginity in Morocco, see Mernissi's chapter "Virginity and Patriarchy," in her collection *Women and Rebellion in Islamic Memory* (1996).

25. For a discussion of socioeconomic instability Morocco, see "Reform and Politics of Inclusion in the Maghreb," in which

Azzedine Layachi summarizes: "In Morocco today, around 20 percent of the population of 30 million live in poverty, ten percent in sheer misery and 30 percent (mostly the young and the elderly) are classified as vulnerable. . . . Unemployment is around 20 percent. . . and job creation cannot keep up with the increasing number of job seekers. The educational system, which has been turning out more and more unemployed graduates, is ailing and in need of major overhaul (Layachi, 2001, p. 11).

26. Emile Durkheim, "L'Education Morale," in Selected Writings, edited by A. Giddens, Cambridge 1972, p. 174.

27. According to Beamish and Tazi Abderrazik, "The mean age at marriage in Morocco has risen dramatically to 26.4 years in 1997 (27.8 in cities and 24.7 in rural areas). Citing a 2002 study by Tazi Benabderrazik, Beamish and Abderrazik continue: "The rising age at marriage in Morocco indicates that marriage during adolescence is becoming less common. In 1960, nine out of every ten young women ages 20-24 years and four out of every ten ages 15-19 were married; almost 40 years later, only four out of every ten young women (39%) ages 20-24 and just over one of every ten young women (13%) ages 15-19 were married." Citing a 2000

CERED study, Beamish and Abderrazik note: "A study of urban adolescents in 1999 found even more striking figures: less than 6% of women and 1% of men married by the age of 20, down from less than 18% and 3% respectively, in 1994 (Beamish and Abderrazik, 2003, p. 6).

28. Email communication 29 February 2004.

29. According to the Afrol Gender Profile for Morocco, in terms of the 2000 total population estimate, we find 1 male/female. However, we find the male/female ratio shifting according to age, with males slightly outnumbering females under 15 years (1.05 males to females). For the 15-64 age category, we find .98 males/females, a tendency which increases as the population ages (www.afrol.com/Categories/Women/profiles_women.htm). However, this slight difference in no way approximates the exaggerated nature of the claims that women significantly outnumber men. Furthermore, data from the U.S. census bureau's demographic data on Morocco, which provides more precise age breakdown into four year periods, states that men slightly outnumber women until age 30, but again the gender difference remains a negligible one (www.census.gov/cgi-bin/ipc/idbsum?cty=MO).

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