Arab Reform Initiative

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Lessons from Morocco's women's rights movement: Overcoming divisions to push for reforms

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**This paper is the winning submission of our 2022 Student Essay Contest. It has been slightly edited for style; the arguments, tone and content are those of the author.*

The history of the women's movement in Morocco is that of a social movement that has emerged as a significant actor in the socio-political reform context of the country thanks to the effectiveness of its lobbying for feminist reforms. This is evidenced by the Women's March (2000), the change of the Family Code (2004) or the proclamation of gender equality in the new Constitution (2011). The Moroccan women's movement is composed of different associations, collectives and initiatives that have managed to come together at key moments to lobby for reforms. This essay analyzes the women's movement in Morocco with an eye to drawing lessons on how can movements overcome social divisions when lobbying for feminist policies.

What makes a social movement effective at driving change?

Five factors determine the efficiency of social movements in their lobbying practices: A clear identity of the movement, constant pressure, coalition building, variety of mobilization and knowledge of its opponents – although these criteria are often undermined by social divisions. We distinguish two kinds of divisions: (i) internal ones emerging from within the movement itself and (ii) general challenges in the sociopolitical context affecting the movement. Drawing on the strategies employed by the women's movement in Morocco, we present the following guidelines to meet key factors to successfully lobby for feminist policies:

Lobbying Challenges	Strategies to be implemented	Lobbying factors to meet

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About the author



Hamza Bensouda

Hamza Bensouda is a recently graduated Moroccan student from Agadir. He holds a Masters in Comparative Politics from Sciences Po Paris specializing in Gender, State and Violence and the MENA region (with a focus on Maghreb). He is the co-founder of Socie'tea, a podcast on Maghreb societies, cultures and history, and founder of La Revue du Maghreb. He has a particular interest in the North African region that he studies and analyzes through his journalistic work. Hamza is also a poet and singer. You can find Hamza's Instagram page here.

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- We produce original research informed by local experiences and partner with institutions to achieve impact across the Arab world and globally
- We empower individuals and institutions to develop their own concept of policy solutions
- We mobilize stakeholders to build coalitions for positive change

Our aim is to see vibrant democratic societies emerge and grow in the region.

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