



Bawader / Commentary, 19 May 2021

# The Role of Petitions in Strengthening Citizens' Participation in Morocco: Stakes and Outcomes

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A Moroccan anti-government protester with a petition and a megaphone, Rabat - February 2011. © EPA/KARIM SELMAOUI



## Introduction

The 2011 Constitution paved the way for a new take on citizens' participation in Morocco, carrying it to new heights by establishing new mechanisms that support citizens in their oversight of public policies, such as legislative petitions, which were anticipated to improve public action and bridge the gap between the citizen and the state. However, the practical legal and regulatory implementation of constitutional requirements, as well as the nature of the dominant political and administrative culture, have somehow constrained the acquisition of these tools and weakened their impact on dismantling the traditional course of action in public intervention.

In this paper, we will look into the gains of the Moroccan experience in participatory democracy by analysing the new requisites and the impact of the petitions presented to public and territorial authorities. Considering our initial findings, we will examine the legislative and practical constraints hindering these efforts, while trying to foresee enabling factors for improvement.

## The Political and procedural dimensions of the legislative framework of local petitions

The submission of petitions<sup>1</sup> to the public authorities in Morocco has guaranteed the introduction of participatory democracy techniques to representative democracy, further enabling citizens' participation and strengthening its impact on public policies. However, there are still some doubts surrounding the ability of procedural instruments to meet constitutional requirements related to the diversification of citizen democracy mechanisms, as well as popular aspirations when it comes to promoting fair access of citizens to public services.

## The role of petitions in developing the

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# path of participatory democracy in Morocco.

Participation in political life is an effective indicator to measure the progress made in the democratic process and the impact of political and legislative reforms on the ground. In general, the political participation of citizens remained quite limited, as reflected by the participation indicators during the 2016 legislative elections, where it only reached 42.29% and 53.67% during the 2015 regional elections. These indicators reflect the lack of trust in political parties and further deepens the gap between representative institutions and the social fabric.

Amid this void, civil society witnessed considerable growth, with over 200 thousand organisations mostly working in development and service provision. However, this growth cannot hide the multitude of issues related to the discrepancy in accessing public funding among national and local organisations, the lack of good governance in the work of organisations, such as the absence of democratic methodology and financial transparency in development projects,<sup>2</sup> and favouring service provision to advocacy and mediation,<sup>3</sup> which is the result of the limited number of associations with the organisational and communication capacities to practice advocacy.

On a practical level, public authorities utilised the same kind of exclusivity where citizen engagement in decision-making depended on the will of central and local officials. Realising the importance of participation in consolidating social peace and prompting Morocco to honour its obligations towards sustainable development,<sup>4</sup> - by creating several programmes to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development - the official rhetoric today emphasises the necessity of putting new mechanisms in place that enable wide citizen participation. This would be based on a new social contract that narrows the gap between rulers and citizens and restores a democracy that is hijacked by the political elite back to the people.<sup>5</sup>

Taking these stakes into account and in response to the upsurge of political demands during the Arab Spring, participation became a crucial guiding principle for the 2011 constitutional reforms, both as an essential foundation for the state



and its institutions and as a precondition for the enactment of democracy. This was presented through several mechanisms in the form of consultative bodies and legislative petitions. As such, the Moroccan Constitution, together with that of Tunisia, became two of the very few constitutions in the Arab world to include participatory democracy,<sup>6</sup> particularly petitions as a way to implement constitutional requirements related to citizens' participation and as a proposal mechanism capable of actuating citizens' engagement in putting forward, tracking, and evaluating public policies.<sup>7</sup>

In the provisions of the Constitution, petitions have several different objectives: political (as a framework to overcome individuality and hierarchy in the relationship between citizens and decision-makers), pedagogical (as a procedural approach to familiarise citizens with the administration of public affairs,) and organisational (as a chance to build the capacities of the societal fabric and give more value to mediation and advocacy). This begs the following question: to what extent do the legislative and regulatory texts reflect the spirit of the Constitution?

## The Procedures of Petitioning in Morocco: Guarantees or Constraints?

To clarify constitutional requirements, several laws and regulatory texts were issued to regulate national petitioning, such as Organic Law No. 44-14, which specifies the conditions and the processes of the right to submit petitions to public authorities. The Law defines a petition as a written request that include demands or proposals that citizens present to the public authorities to take what they see as appropriate measures. The public authorities empowered to receive petitions are limited to the prime minister and the presidents of both houses of parliament. To ensure the seriousness of petitions,<sup>8</sup> the law sets formal and objective requirements and subjects the exercise of the right to file petitions to the requirement of exercising rights from within the system of representative democracy and abiding by its obligations as well as the enjoyment of political and civil rights.<sup>9</sup> It also emphasises the need to register in general electoral rolls and to link the subject of the petition to legitimate demands and public interest.

Moreover, certain topics must be avoided to prevent the rejection of a petition.



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These include infringing on the unifying pillars of the nation (Islam, national unity, the constitutional monarchy and the democratic free choice), interfering with the work of the judicial and legislative powers, undermining national security, violating the principles of public utilities, causing harm to institutions and persons, expressing narrow discriminatory or partisan views in the petition, or expressing grievances or complaints that fall within the competence of other constitutional institutions.

Along with the text of the petition, which must be clear and concise, the petitioners are required to attach a detailed memo citing the reasons for the submission and its purposes, a copy of the minutes of the meeting of the Petitions Committee, a list of at least 5,000 signatures supporting the petition with copies of their national ID cards. Associations are excluded from petitioning at the national level, despite being a vital actor in strengthening the collective representation of civil society and contributing to consolidating the culture of advocacy amongst citizens in ways that might increase the impact on public decision-making.

On the other hand, local petitions – which are governed by the organic laws of local collectivities issued on 7 July 2015 - are any written request by a citizen or a local association demanding that a topic be added to the agenda of the elected councils. To regulate the petitioning process, several legal requirements were included. In addition, multiple decrees were issued that contained the template of the petition along with the submission procedure for individuals and associations.

For local petitions submitted to elected councils by citizens, the law requires that the petitioners be residents of the collectivity and registered in the electoral roll, but exempts petitions submitted to regional councils from this condition. Another condition is shared interest, leaving the interpretation of this requirement to the discretion of the receiving authority, which could prevent citizens who do not have any direct interest in the matter from signing a petition in solidarity.<sup>10</sup> As for the required number of signatures, it ranges between 100 and 500, depending on the type of the territorial collectivity and its population.

For local petitions submitted by associations, the law requires the association to be founded in Morocco, with its headquarters or one of its branches located within the territories of the concerned collectivity, and to comply with all laws and at



least three years old. Although petitions submitted by associations are exempted from the requirement on the number of signatures, except for those directed to the councils of the prefecture or the province (in which case the association must have more than 100 members), the law required that the petition be limited to the work area of the association.

The law sought to integrate democratic processes by requiring associations to abide by democratic principles<sup>11</sup> and institutionalising the way petitions are presented to avoid heads of collectivities hijacking them for their interests and putting in place key guarantees to ensure elected officials deal seriously with the petitions and their outcome. Elected councils are obligated to respond to the petitioners, to publish the minutes of their meeting and their decision regarding the eligible petitions.<sup>12</sup> They are also required to give reasoned rejection of any petition, against which the petitioner can appeal before the administrative courts.

## Enabling Factors Allowing Petitions to Promote Citizens' Participation in Morocco

Eight petitions have been submitted to public authorities, while more than 212 petitions have so far been submitted at the territorial level. This reflects a considerable development in using petitions compared to other Arab states. However, these numbers cannot hide the load of constraints that tie the hands of petitioners and threaten to turn this tool from a steppingstone to consolidating democracy into an opportunity to add social legitimacy to top-down policies.

## Primary Outcomes of Petitions in Morocco: Advantages and Impact

The initial assessment of petitioning showed a popular enthusiasm to try this new advocacy mechanism, as opposed to a lukewarm official reaction to it both nationally and locally. At the national level, eight petitions were submitted, seven of which were rejected.<sup>13</sup> The one accepted sought to establish a fund to fight



cancer on 28 September 2020,<sup>14</sup> where the government committed to taking several steps in response, such as transforming the National Oncology Institute into a public institution, and making diagnosis and treatment centres public, but did not commit to the solution put forward by the petitioners such as adding a public budget line to cover cancer patients. After a year and a half, the government has not yet started to honour its obligations regarding this petition, which reflects negatively on the government's commitment to dealing with citizens' initiatives.

This petition, which obtained over 40 thousand signatures – contributed to triggering wider public debates on health policies with the help of petitioners who were mostly from academic backgrounds. This shows the impact of petitions in bridging the gap between university research centres and civilian and political actors, and integrating citizens in the real dynamics of advocacy that would allow them to get their message across in a reasonable format, limiting the risks of violent or negative protests emanating from feelings of helplessness and lack of trust in public institutions.

There is currently one national petition being examined. It was submitted to parliament on 3 February 2021, with almost 14 thousand signatures, and calls for the establishment of true constitutional parity by 2030. Through campaigning to gather signatures, meetings with the media and the parliament's Petitions Committee, this petition has brought gender equality in the electoral field to the forefront of public discussion.

In the economic sector, one petition is being developed to request dropping the residency right regarding guardianship over ancestral land,<sup>15</sup> led by women groups calling for the review of Decree No. 2-19-973 related to implementing the provisions of Law No. 62-17 on the administrative supervision of Soulaliyat lands and the management of their properties. The Decree considers residency as a condition to become a member of the collectivity, which is an unjust condition that deprives large social groups of their right to benefit from collectivity lands.

At the local level, citizens increasingly benefitted from the right to petition, with 212 petitions submitted, according to the Ministry of Interior. Many of them were turned into projects related to local services and basic amenities. Successful



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initiatives led to the construction of roads or local cultural centres, while other petitions were rejected under various pretexts, including the lack of financial resources.<sup>16</sup> Regardless of the contradictory positions of certain elected councils, simply urging them to include topics of interest to residents in their agendas is an important win that could be built up in the future.

Thanks to petitions, signs of synergy started to appear between participatory and representative democracy, with local actors coming together to address local issues. For example, a petition based on the conclusions of a seminar on freeing public property in the city of Meknes from the trespasses of shop owners led to an intervention of the elected council - in coordination with the local authority - to end the phenomenon of pavement occupation by retailers and coffee shop owners.<sup>17</sup> Petitions have even become an essential method of understanding the popular rejection of certain transformation projects. This is the case of the “Thinking for Fnideq” initiative led by the local elite, pushing the regional council to find progressive economic solutions to the social issues resulting from closing the Fnideq crossing point linking Morocco to Spain through the occupied city of Ceuta.

The submitted petitions reflect - to a certain extent - the intellectual foundations of citizenship, as they draw attention to key issues, such as gendered approaches and the rights of people with disabilities. Many petitions called for the creation of accessible cities and resulted in decisions to make public spaces more accessible. Other petitions also call for the preservation of historical monuments and natural reserves, based on a legal approach to the right to a healthy environment. One relevant petition in this regard was submitted by the Youth Initiatives Forum in Agadir in December 2020 to create underground waste containers; another was submitted by the Observatory for the Protection of the Environment and Historical Monuments in Tangier calling for the three-stage treatment of wastewater in May 2019.

Many dynamics contributed to the increase of petitioning in certain regions, where the petition preparation and tracking process was a key indicator of the importance of cooperation between civil society organisations. Associations that succeeded in developing quality petitions have been part of local and national networks. Given the challenges related to resources and expertise, associations



lean more towards networking and distribution of advocacy roles.

Politicisation has further amplified the use of petitions through the leadership role of former elected officials with the necessary tools and resources, to exert influence on candidates for elected officials who are riding the wave of petitioning to expand their reach and power and strengthen their relationship with decision-makers. There is an increased agreement between elected councils and regional actors on transforming some of the petitions into decisions that affect the living environment of citizens. This was the case, for instance, with the Tangier collectivity taking measures in May 2019 regarding the adoption of the participatory budget at the local decision-making structure, and the Marrakesh collectivity establishing the Agency for City Development and Protection of its Cultural and Environmental Heritage in October 2019.

## Limits and Prospects of the Contribution of Petitions to Citizens' Participation in Morocco

The petitioning experience in Morocco revealed shortfalls that go beyond legal and practical issues. This makes it necessary to review the petitioning procedures and take decisive measures to truly achieve participatory democracy.<sup>18</sup> Putting excessive formal conditions and interpreting substantive conditions arbitrarily hollows citizens' participation of its purpose.<sup>19</sup> Rather than consolidating it and turning it into a culture of public action to improve and increase the level of trust in public institutions.

Among the immediate amendments that need to be integrated into any prospective reforms of the petitioning system, the following are noteworthy: widening the scope of public authorities to include every public legal person with administrative powers,<sup>20</sup> overriding the shared interest condition as all public issues are of interest to all citizens regardless of their geographical location and the impact the issue may have on them. Also, the conditions requiring associations to file petitions that fall within their area of work should be removed so any arbitrary interpretations that may be used as a legal excuse to reject a petition,<sup>21</sup>



or at least allow the examination of the subject of the petition based on the association's statutes and not merely on its name, considering that most associations cover numerous social, economic and cultural issues.

In parallel to expanding the scope of national petitioning, the number of signatures required must be reduced to a minimum or disregarded altogether,<sup>22</sup> not to mention the “crippling condition” related to being registered in electoral rolls to submit a petition and sign it, both at the local and national level. This poses a disturbing question related to the added value of this mechanism if it can only address the concerns of an elector instead of an active and engaged citizen.<sup>23</sup> This condition also contradicts the very purpose of participatory democracy, which was initially established to connect directly with and mobilise citizens who are not participating in the political process and who do not believe in the role of representative institutions, to build trust in public institutions and integrate the process in the management of public and local affairs.<sup>24</sup>

One of the shortfalls of the petition process is the requirement of having hard-copy signatures, which highlights the need to democratise the digital structure of the electronic signature<sup>25</sup> by providing platforms to receive and track local petitions while developing a national portal for citizens' participation. Despite providing the option to submit petitions digitally, the numbers are still very low or non-existent. Even the petition submitted to the Prime Minister on 3 February 2021, out of a total of 13,816 signatures, only 125 were submitted digitally through the national portal. There was no promotional campaign for the launch of this portal to introduce it to the public, not to mention the technical difficulties related to scanning certain documentation, as well as failing to update the portal's services or upgrade the digital solutions it offers to promote citizens' participation.

The time wasted on setting formalities that complicate the petition submission procedure could have been put to better use had it been dedicated to simplifying these procedures, by reducing the number of formal conditions, setting mechanisms to overcome the difficulties related to drafting and tracking petitions, establishing consultancy offices specialised in accompanying initiatives and connecting with their petitioners on ways to improve and optimise them.

If petitioners are asked to consider the process as a cooperation mechanism,<sup>26</sup>



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then political and official actors must deal with it objectively, away from partisan interests that may threaten the democratic aspect of citizens' participation, undermine its independence, and lead to its replacement by an “artificial” form of participation that can be manipulated through clientelism and that hinders the growth of an independent civil society.<sup>27</sup> Without these considerations, petitions can become a tool to give social legitimacy to public policies that were drawn by the elite and imposed top-down on the people outside the requisites of participatory democracy.

The same concern is present at the local level, with the increased awareness of the risks of turning the participation of citizens and associations into a tool to fulfil the desires of locally elected officials and to serve electoral purposes.<sup>28</sup> To prevent this, petitions must be utilised as a powerful tool to influence public authorities and urge them to heed the actual priorities of citizens.<sup>29</sup> This requires building trust between civil and political actors that could dismantle the conflict-based administrative culture and open new paths to address the demands of citizens in a participatory manner.

The ability of petitions to contribute to instilling democracy does not rely solely on legislative reforms, but also on the positions of political actors. The role of elected officials must be structured and their communication with their constituents<sup>30</sup> enhanced. They must be convinced of the democratic and developmental consequences of the petitioning mechanism, and trust the capabilities and expertise of citizens without worrying or fearing the emergence of opposing parallel authority.

By contrast, civil actors still hold significant responsibility to abide by the legislative and regulatory requisites and to be aware of the impact of civil society's advocacy actions as a framework to defend citizens' rights rather than to serve personal interests. Associations are also expected to enhance their internal governance and transparency, including by making publicly available administrative and financial documents and promoting the values of openness, volunteerism, and initiative.<sup>31</sup> Associations should also seize opportunities and ensure that they integrate petitions with other participatory democracy tools, such as legislative petitions, advisory opinions, and public discussion forums, whose activation has been delayed, contrary to constitutional requirements.<sup>32</sup> So far, no



legislative petition has been submitted due to the difficult formal and procedural conditions.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, no consultative bodies - as stipulated under Chapter 13 of the Constitution - have been created to engage various social actors in drafting, activating, implementing, and evaluating public policies.

### Conclusion

The petitioning mechanism was introduced as an attempt to diversify citizens' engagement in decision-making processes and to consolidate the pillars of citizen democracy, which was a guiding principle of the constitutional and political reforms introduced by Morocco following the first wave of the Arab Spring. The existence of a legal framework for submitting petitions to public authorities and territorial collectivities allowed the launch and trial of this new tool and promises to uncover future opportunities to deliver social demands to decision-makers through public institutions. Many petitions turned into projects dedicated to fulfilling the needs of citizens and improving public functions.

However, various difficulties emanated from the practice, hindering the effectiveness of this mechanism and its potential to contribute to strengthening citizens' participation. Legislative reforms were not followed by administrative and pedagogical actions that urge public authorities and territorial collectivities to deal positively with the submitted petitions. There was also a clear paradox between working to promote the propositional and participatory aspect of petitions and the rising tension between State and society. Social protests increased considerably, negatively impacting the means of communication and participation in responding to pressing social demands.

The complexity of the legal and regulatory conditions, as well as the weak culture of participation, threaten to turn petitioning from an opportunity to strengthen citizens' participation into a political marketing tool to legitimise public policies and give them popular approval,<sup>34</sup> without reflecting the demands of the people. This shows a need to deepen the democratic mechanism of petitioning to avoid them increasingly a tool for the elite to settle scores.

The weakness of representative democracy and the retreat of the advocacy and mediation<sup>35</sup> roles of civil society could risk further deepening the gap between



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society and the State. Simplifying the petitioning procedures could increase citizens' participation in setting and tracking public policies, be it directly or through civil society associations. However, this is contingent on implementing legal and regulatory reforms, which fall under the bigger picture of consolidating the pillars of representative democracy and renewing the tools of participatory democracy.



## Endnotes

1. Immediately after the Petitions Committee was formed at the end of May 2017, both male and female citizens were able to submit petitions to the Prime Minister. It is worth noting that the Petitions Committee, chaired by the Prime Minister, comprises representatives of seven governmental sectors, including internal affairs, justice, foreign affairs, General Secretariat of the Government, economy, finance, and the relationship with civil society and human rights organisations.
2. Bouchra Sidi Hida, *Development NGOs: Actors Logic and Development Strategies: Morocco Case Study*, Catholic University of Louvain, 2006, p.30
3. The traditional role that defines the historical identity of civil society organisations as mediators between the society and the political authority is in decline. Organisations specialised in advocacy and fighting for rights and freedoms have considerably diminished in favour of “service provision” organisations, which are thriving on the level of economic and social development, by providing health and education services and employment opportunities, in partnership with ministerial sectors, public institutions and international non-governmental organisations.
4. Abdullatif Qassem, *Monitoring and Tracking Public Policies on a Local Level*, Bada’el Al-Maghreb (Morocco Alternatives) platform, 2018, p.41.
5. Najib Ba Mohammed, *Representative and of “Participative”*, *Democracy in Question*, Remald, No. 105-106, July-October, 2012, p.14..
6. *Participatory Democracy at the Local Level Report*, Democracy Reporting International, Tunisia Office, p.8.
7. *Synthesis Report on National Dialogue Regarding Civil Society and the New Constitutional Roles*, The Ministry of State for Human Rights and the Relations with Parliament and Civil Society, 2014, p.54.
8. Rachid Lrizk, *The Moroccan Constitution and the Right to Petition: A Comparative Study of the Right to Petition between the International and Moroccan Models*, 12 February 2021, available on: <https://bit.ly/3kCYKBZ>
9. Massaab Al-Tijani, *Petitions as a Mechanism to Implement Participatory Democracy Practices; The Moroccan Experience between Constitutional Provisions and Legal Implementation Thereof*, *Journal of Constitutional Law and Administrative Sciences*, second issue, The Democratic Arab Centre, 2019, p.130.
10. Moulay Hisham Al-Marani, *The Right to Petition in Moroccan Law in light of Comparative Experiences*, *Journal of Constitutional Law and Administrative Science*, sixth issue, The Democratic Arab Centre, Germany, 2020. p. 149.
11. The regulatory laws of territorial collectives require organisations submitting petitions to abide by democratic principles and their basic systems. They also need to be in good standing with the laws and regulations in force (Article 121 of Regulatory Law No. 111-14, Article 115 of Regulatory Law No. 112-14, and Article 124 of Regulatory Law No. 113-14).
12. *The Second Transparency and Accountability Development Policy Loan*, The World Bank, *Governance Global Practice*, MENA Region, 2015, p.24.
13. The rejected petitions include: a petition related to the implementation of the development project on the riverbanks of Wadi Martil, submitted to the Prime Minister on 17 January 2017, rejected in January 2019; a petition submitted to the Prime Minister on 28 March 2018 related to integrating the extra hour GMT+1 to the education sector and all public administrations and institutions; a petition related to optimising the official and sovereign status of the Arabic language, submitted on 26 April 2018; a petition related to creating a water facility in “Wadi Shaq Al-Ard” in “Awtat Al-Hajj”, Boulemane Province, submitted on 23 March 2018; a petition from a resident of Tarfaya demanding Armas company to remove the ship wreckage that has ran aground to the coast of Tarfaya, submitted on 7 March 2019. All these petitions were rejected for not fulfilling the formal and substantive requirements.



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- health policies and the cleverness of the team who oversaw it, comprised mostly of academics.
14. Petition submitted to the Prime Minister on 14 February 2020 with over 40 thousand signatures following a national campaign submitted to the Prime Minister regarding the residency of citizens in the 033 areas subject to the provisions of Law No. 62-17 on the administrative supervision of Soualiyat lands and the management of their properties. It considers residency as a condition to become a member of the collective, a clause that was rejected because it prevents many of them from accessing all the rights cited in the aforementioned law.
  15. A petition submitted to the Prime Minister regarding the residency of citizens in the 033 areas subject to the provisions of Law No. 62-17 on the administrative supervision of Soualiyat lands and the management of their properties. It considers residency as a condition to become a member of the collective, a clause that was rejected because it prevents many of them from accessing all the rights cited in the aforementioned law.
  16. Francesco Collin, (Non-) Participatory Democracy? The Limitations of Institutional Petitions in Morocco, the Moroccan Institute for Policy Analysis, Rabat, 24 December 2019, available on: <https://mipa.institute/7171>
  17. A petition submitted by the citizens to enforce legal and administrative measures to end illegal occupation of public property in the territory of Meknes. The petition was accepted in February 2020, with several measures taken to free occupied public properties in coordination with the relevant local authorities.
  18. Sarah Anne Rennick, Civil Society and Developing Public Policies: Strategies from Morocco and Egypt, Arab Reform Initiative, 4 July 2017, available at: <https://bit.ly/3c0QyHO>
  19. At the local level, many petitions are rejected because of simple flaws that could have been corrected and completed by petitioners had they been informed, such as not including a title for the petition, addressing the petition to the wrong the receiving party, not attaching the authorisation letter of the organisation's legal representative, or because of a narrow interpretation of the conditions related to the organisations field of work and the interests of the territorial collective.
  20. Abdullah Harressi, Promoting the Participation of Organisations: A Lever for Local Governance in Morocco, Badael Al-Maghreb (Morocco Alternatives) Forum, Rabat, 2015, p.37.
  21. Ahjam Mohammed, Regional Petitions: Between Law and Practice, the Moroccan Journal for Legal and Economic Studies, Issue 6, 2020, p.133..
  22. Most international experiences have relinquished the number requirement in petitioning, where every citizen has the right to submit a petition in Germany (Chapter 17 of the Constitution), Belgium (Chapter 28 of the Constitution), and Spain (Chapter 29 of the Constitution). Some countries even provide the opportunity to submit a petition regardless of nationality, age, and residency status, such as Denmark and The Netherlands, while others integrated the right to petition within their citizen's basic rights, such as Canada.
  23. Abdul Ghani Emrida, The Participatory Mechanisms and Petitions of Territorial Collectives in Morocco, The Moroccan Journal of Public Policies, issue 16, 2015, p.147.
  24. Tarik Zaïre, Local Participative Democracy: Outline of Foundations and Prerequisites, op. cit., p.18.
  25. Organic Laws: Obstacles facing the petitions by the dozen, 24/08/2016, <https://bit.ly/3kITLzN><https://bit.ly/3kITLzN>
  26. Abdul Wahed Al-Qourayshi, Political Participation and the Question of Citizenship in light of Participatory Democracy Mechanisms, Pathways to Legal Research and Studies Journal, first issue, 2016, p.59.
  27. Bruno Jobert, Clientelism, Patronage and Popular Participation, Tiers Monde journal, vol. 24, issue 95, 1983, p.541.
  28. Tarik Zair, Local Participative Democracy: Outline of Foundations and Prerequisites, Remald, No. 91-90, 2010, p:29.
  29. Adel Ben Yakhlef, Local Democracy and the Participation of Citizens in Municipal Action, Centre of Training and Decentralisation Support (CFAD), Tunisia, 2014, p.10.
  30. Mathias Le Galic, Participatory Democracy: Nantes Case Study, Harmattan, 2004, p.205.
  31. Touhtou, Rashid. Civil Society in Morocco under the New 2011 Constitution: Issues, Stakes and Challenges. Arab Centre for Research & Policy Studies, 2014, [www.jstor.org/stable/resrep12647](http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep12647). Accessed 2 Mar. 2021, p.34-35.



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32. Governing towards efficiency, equity, education and endurance, a systematic country diagnostic, world bank group, June 2018, p.126.
33. Among these conditions are: The need for the petition to be signed by at least 25,000 supporters; the need to attach a copy of their national IDs; the excessive number of obstacles increasing the risk of having the petition rejected. These include imposing ambiguous conditions, such as fulfilling public interest, not violating the unifying pillars of the nation, not contradicting the treaties and conventions ratified by the Kingdom (Articles 4-7 of Regulatory Law No. 64-14 on defining the conditions and methods of submitting legislative petitions).
34. In the context of national petitions, the Prime Minister and the Presidents of both Houses of Parliament are obligated to show the measures taken to respond to the subject of the petition without committing to the solutions presented by the petition's authors, which forms a loophole enabling them to subvert popular demands and decontextualize them, leading to contradictory outcomes. At the local level, elected councils are only obligated either to accept or reject the petition without clarifying the measures taken to address the issues mentioned therein..
35. The reason for this decline might be the global trend encouraging the developmental role of civil society with the support of international donors with, states forsaking their direct intervention roles; in addition to internal factors such as social divisions and the inability of official intervention to respond to the increasing demands for basic services. Moreover, civil actors are increasingly becoming partners in managing public affairs, rather than simply playing the role of mediators, using development programmes to reach all social groups in search for legitimacy, which would enable them to hold their ground in the face of public authorities and elected bodies..



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