

Comparative Study of Gender Disparity in The Mediterranean Zone: A Gender Approach in The Socio-Economic and Political Contexts of Morocco, Portugal and Spain

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Abstract

In recent years, Morocco has carried out a number of actions and reforms to encourage women to play a greater role in the country's social, political, and economic progress. In 2004, it adopted a new constitution that guarantees gender equality. The constitution lays the legal foundations for promoting gender equality and women's rights. The program to support universal preschool education and the reform of the family code (Moudawana) has had a positive effect on girls' education. Microcredit has been developed by the microcredit program to support women's entrepreneurship and economic empowerment. Morocco has devoted funds to the education of girls and women, particularly in rural areas, to improve their access to education and enhance their skills. In 2005, the (INDH) launched awareness campaigns to combat violence against women and promote gender equality.

Although Morocco has undertaken reforms and initiatives to promote gender equality and involve women more fully in the country's social, political, and economic development, analyses and studies by international bodies rank it very low. In this work, we examine the Global Gender Gap Report (GGGR) and other similar studies to find and identify areas of weakness and improvement, while comparing with Portugal and Spain.

Keywords: Women Gender; Gender Equality; Labor Market; Global Gender Gap Report; Benchmarking.

1. Introduction

Gender disparities constitute a major structural constraint to inclusive economic growth and sustainable development. Numerous studies highlight that unequal access to education, employment, income, and political decision-making reduces a country's productive potential and weakens social cohesion. In this context, gender equality is not only a social objective but also an economic imperative.

In Mediterranean countries, gender disparities reflect deeply rooted institutional, cultural, and economic structures. While Southern European countries such as Portugal and Spain have made significant progress in female labor market participation and political representation, Morocco continues to face persistent gender gaps, particularly in economic participation and political empowerment.

In this sense, developing countries suffer economic losses due to gender disparity. According to the World Bank's 2012 World Development Report, developing countries suffer around \$9 trillion a year due to gender inequality. This is partially due to the under-representation of women in the formal labor market, which limits their access to education, employment opportunities, and economic resources.

Furthermore, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) reports that women work more than men in developing economies, but their work is often underpaid and unrecognized. As a result, women and the communities in which they live suffer economic losses as a result (Hmid & Abbadi, 2026).

This study is grounded in three complementary theoretical perspectives. First, human capital theory suggests that gender gaps in education and skills accumulation translate into disparities in labor market outcomes and income levels. Second, institutional economics emphasizes the role of legal frameworks, labor market regulations, and political institutions in shaping gender inequalities. Third, gender economics highlights structural discrimination, unpaid care work, and social norms as persistent barriers to women's economic and political participation.

Previous empirical studies confirm that countries with stronger institutional support for gender equality exhibit higher female labor force participation, improved productivity, and more inclusive growth.

In many countries, including Morocco, Portugal, and Spain, gender disparity is a subject of growing interest. This literature review focuses on the social, economic, and political aspects of gender disparity in these three countries (Moghadam, 2007).



It will examine the historical and cultural context of Morocco, Portugal, and Spain in terms of traditional gender roles, social norms, and cultural expectations, to demonstrate how these factors have influenced gender disparity in these countries.

In addition, we will analyze gender disparities in education and employment by examining enrollment rates, access to education, career options, wage gaps, and career advancement opportunities for women and men in each country (Marro & Pasquier, 2019).

It is crucial to highlight the political participation of women in Morocco, Portugal, and Spain, examining their representation in political institutions, the difficulties encountered, and initiatives to encourage them (Kaiss et al, 2025).

It is also important to mention gender-based violence, such as domestic assault, sexual assault, and harassment. It is necessary to examine the regulations and measures taken in each nation to combat such violence and provide support to victims in this context.

The research will highlight persistent problems and promising initiatives to reduce the disparity between women and men in Morocco (Brière & Matinez, 2011). Portugal and Spain. Using a gender approach in the countries in question, this research will examine gender disparities in depth, highlighting the social, economic, and political factors that contribute to this disparity, and examining the actions taken to reduce it (De Haas, 2014; Hmid et al, 2025).

This paper aims to conduct a comparative analysis of gender disparities in Morocco, Portugal, and Spain using the Global Gender Gap Report (GGGR) as a benchmarking framework. By focusing on four key dimensions: economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment, this study seeks to identify structural weaknesses, explain observed disparities, and derive policy-relevant recommendations.

2. Methodology

To ensure data consistency, the comparative analysis primarily relies on the Global Gender Gap Report 2022, which provides harmonized indicators for Morocco, Portugal, and Spain. When references to other editions (2021 or 2023) are used, they serve exclusively to illustrate recent trends and are explicitly identified as such.

2.1. Measuring GGGR

This report, published annually by The World Economic Forum, an international organization for public-private cooperation, ranks players according to the compilation of data on women's involvement in various sectors of the life of nations.

It assesses gender disparities in four main areas: economic participation and opportunity, access to education, health and survival, and political participation and empowerment.

The percentage of women to men in the workforce, the percentage of women and men who have completed primary, secondary, and tertiary education, the percentage of male and female mortality, the percentage of women to men in political and leadership positions, and other indicators are used to measure these areas.

Data are collected from reliable sources such as international organizations, governments, NGOs, and other organizations. The indicators are then standardized so that they can be compared uniformly between countries.

The report ranks countries based on their relative performance in each area, using a gender disparity index. This ranking is used to encourage countries to reduce gender disparities and promote gender equality.

The report uses a method that weighs the different indicators in each area according to their relative importance to calculate the score. This means that measures considered to have a more significant impact on gender equality are weighted more heavily than measures considered to have a less significant impact.

(The gender disparity index) is the score used in the Global Gender Gap Report is gender equality.

For example, indicators such as the activity rate and average income of women and men are considered more important in the field of economic participation and opportunities than indicators such as the percentage of women and men in high-level professional positions. As a result, indicators that are considered more important are weighted more heavily.

Once all the indicators for each country have been weighted and normalized, an overall score is calculated by taking the weighted average of the scores for each area. To establish an overall ranking of countries according to their relative gender equality performance, each country's scores are then ranked and compared with those of other countries.

The overall score is calculated by taking the weighted average of the scores for each area. To establish an overall ranking of countries according to their relative performance in terms of gender equality, each country's scores are then ranked and compared with those of other countries.

2.2. The four areas explored by the GGGR

The Global Gender Gap report measured four main areas:

- Economic participation and opportunities: This area assesses women's and men's participation in economic life, including labor force participation rates, unemployment rates, the percentage of women and men in senior positions, average income, and women's and men's participation in entrepreneurship.
- Access to education: examines women's and men's access to education, taking into account literacy rates, primary, secondary, and tertiary education rates, and gender gaps in educational performance.
- Health and chances of survival: This category examines the health of men and women, taking into account factors such as the male/female mortality ratio, access to healthcare, and other reproductive health indicators.
- Political participation and empowerment: This area assesses the participation of women and men in political decision-making, including the percentage of women and men in high-level political positions, the percentage of women and men in decision-making positions, and the percentage of women and men voting in elections, as well as the level of participation of women and men in decision-making in organizations.

These areas are used to measure gender disparities in different dimensions of life and to identify where gender inequalities affect women the most.

The Global Gender Gap Report enables governments and decision-makers to implement policies and programs to reduce gender disparities and promote gender equality by measuring progress in these areas.

3. Results and Discussions

3.1 Study results

3.1.1. Comparative study Morocco – Portugal

The comparative results reveal a substantial gender gap between Morocco and Portugal, particularly in economic participation and political empowerment. While educational attainment and health indicators show relatively limited disparities, economic inclusion and decision-making power remain structurally constrained in Morocco. These results suggest that formal improvements in education have not yet translated into equivalent labor market and political outcomes, highlighting the role of institutional and cultural barriers.

In 2022, the Global Gender Gap Report ranked Morocco 136th out of 156 countries. It achieved an overall score of 0.624 out of 1, suggesting a slight gender disparity in the country.

In terms of the four areas examined in the report, Morocco ranks as follows:

In terms of economic equality between the sexes, it ranks 139th with a score of 0.447 out of 1.

This shows that women in Morocco still have difficulty gaining access to employment and being fairly remunerated for their work. In addition, women are less represented in management positions in companies.

Education ranks 114th with a score of 0.945 out of 1. Although Morocco has made considerable efforts and progress in the field of education, this ranking indicates that girls still have less access to education than boys, and that literacy rates between the sexes are still lower. Women's health and survival rank 131st, with a score of 0.961 out of 1.

In Morocco, women's health indicators have improved in recent years, but women continue to face problems in reproductive and maternal health, which still result in many maternal deaths every year. In terms of political participation and empowerment, it ranks 99th with a score of 0.145 out of 1.

According to the study, Morocco has a number of weaknesses in terms of gender disparity, particularly with regard to political participation, where women are very little involved in political affairs, including ministerial positions.

According to these results, Morocco still has some way to go to achieve gender equality in these areas compared with other countries.

- Analysis of the Morocco-Portugal situation in the GGGR rankings :

Table 1: Difference between Morocco and Portugal in the GGGR

	Morocco	Portugal
Economic participation and opportunity	0.447	0.737
Educational attainment	0.945	0.99
Health and survival	0.961	0.973
Political empowerment	0.146	0.364

Table 1 highlights substantial disparities between Morocco and Portugal across the four dimensions of the Global Gender Gap Report. Portugal consistently records higher scores in all indicators, with particularly large gaps in economic participation and opportunity (0.737 for Portugal versus 0.447 for Morocco) and political empowerment (0.364 versus 0.146).

By contrast, differences in educational attainment and health and survival are relatively limited, indicating that Morocco has made notable progress in these social dimensions. However, these achievements have not translated into comparable outcomes in economic inclusion or political representation, suggesting the persistence of institutional and structural constraints.

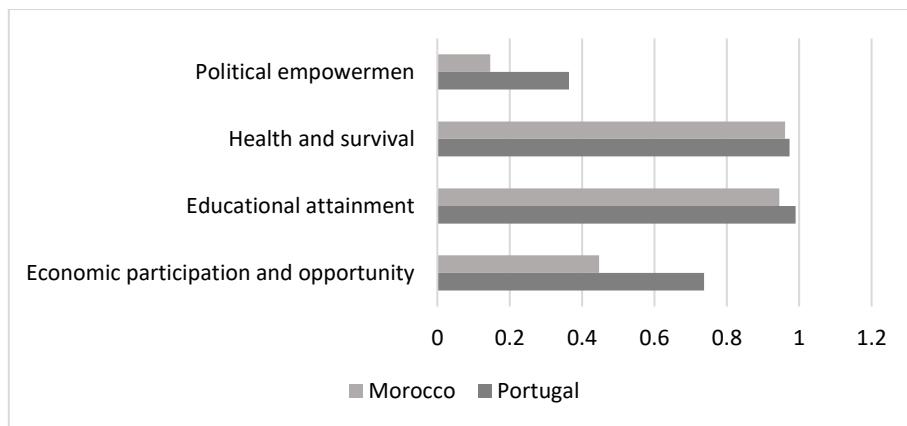


Fig. 1: Shows the Weakness of the Political Empowerment Indicator.

According to the Global Gender Gap report 2022, Portugal ranks 29th out of 156 countries with an overall score of 0.766 out of 1, demonstrating relative gender equality. Portugal ranks higher in the Gender Gap Index than Morocco, which ranks 136th out of 156 countries with an overall score of 0.624 out of 1.

Morocco's ranking has changed since the Global Gender Gap Report was first published in 2006. In 2006, Morocco had an overall score of 0.463.

out of 1 and was ranked 114th out of 115 countries. Since then, Morocco's overall score has gradually improved, reaching a score of 0.624 out of 1 in 2022.

However, despite this improvement, Morocco's position in the report has not changed significantly. Morocco is ranked 136th out of 156 countries in 2022, which is almost identical to its position in 2020, when it was ranked 143rd out of 153 countries, with an overall score of 0.628 out of 1.

This shows that Morocco still needs work to reduce the gender gap. The Moroccan authorities have taken steps to improve gender equality, such as adopting a new constitution in 2011 that protects gender equality and passing a law in 2018 against violence against women. But

to guarantee exemplary equality, challenges remain. The ranking and overall score of Portugal and Morocco have changed since the Global Gender Gap Report was first published in 2006.

In 2006, Portugal was ranked 30th, and in 2021, it will be 26th. Its overall score has risen from 0.738 out of 1 in 2006 to 0.794 out of 1 in 2021, suggesting a steady improvement in gender equality in the country. However, it's important to note that Portugal's overall score has fluctuated each year, peaking at 0.802 out of 1 in 2014 before dropping to 0.776 out of 1 in 2019.

Comparing the evolution of Portugal's and Morocco's overall scores, it is clear that Portugal has seen a more significant improvement in terms of gender equality. Portugal achieved a higher overall score than Morocco in 2006, and this trend has continued over the years, with Portugal achieving a higher overall score than Morocco in every edition of the report.

The differences between Morocco and Portugal in the four areas of the report are illustrated in Table 1 and Table 2, Figure 1 and Figure 2, based on (GGGR) data.

Table 2: Summary of Rankings and Scores for Morocco and Portugal According to the 4 GGGR Indicators

MOROCCO	Score	Portugal
Rank	Rank	Score
Economic Participation is an Opportunity	139	0,447
Educational Attainment	114	0,945
Health and Survival	131	0,961
Political empowerment	99	0,145

Table 2 provides a synthetic overview of both rankings and scores for Morocco and Portugal. Morocco ranks beyond the 100th position in three out of the four dimensions, while Portugal consistently ranks among the top performers.

The results underline a structural imbalance in Morocco, where relatively strong outcomes in education and health coexist with weak economic and political inclusion. This imbalance reflects a disconnect between human capital accumulation and women's effective participation in the labor market and governance structures.

To illustrate the discrepancies in scores, we have calculated the ratio of Portugal's scores to those of Morocco.

Ratio Portugal on Morocco indicator

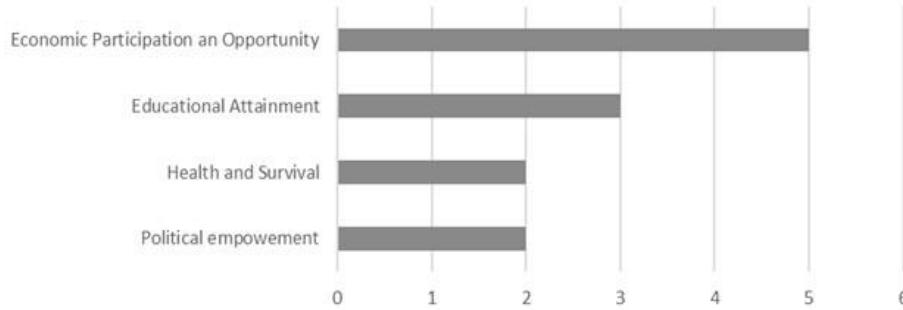


Fig. 2: Ratio Between the Value of the Portugal Indicator and That of Morocco.

Health and education are almost identical. There was a gap of 1.65 in women's involvement in the economic sector between Morocco and Portugal.

Morocco and Portugal have the largest gap of 2.51, which means two and a half times. Women's political involvement, Political empowerment and participation: Portugal ranks 33rd with a score of 0.364 out of 1, while Morocco ranks 99th with a score of just 0.145 out of 1.

This suggests that women in Portugal have better political representation than women in Morocco.

In sum, Portugal outperforms Morocco in all areas of the Global Gender Gap Report 2021, with a higher overall ranking and higher scores. However, gender inequalities remain unresolved in both countries.

These changes indicate that both nations have acted to improve gender equality, while Portugal has made more significant and consistent progress.

According to the most recent (World Economic Forum 2023 WEF) Gender Disparity Index report, Morocco faces significant gender equality challenges. Out of 146 countries surveyed, the country ranks 136th with a score of 0.621, down -0.003 on previous rankings. Looking at the various aspects of gender equality, it is clear that Morocco's performance in terms of economic participation and opportunities is particularly worrying, ranking it 141st with a score of 0.404.

This means they have dropped two places from their previous position (139th in 2022 with a score of 0.447). Morocco ranks 115th with a score of 0.95 for access to education. The country ranks 130th with a score of 0.961 for health and survival.

However, Morocco ranks 90th with a score of 0.165 on the political empowerment index, while more than 20% of ministers are women. These results show that Morocco continues to strive to reduce gender disparities.

Portugal, on the other hand, fell from the 29th position out of 156 countries in 2022 to the 32nd position in 2023. The country's overall score fell from 0.766 in 2022 to 0.765 in 2023, indicating a decline in gender equality.

The persistence of gender disparities in Morocco, despite improvements in education and health, can be explained by structural labor market rigidities, limited childcare infrastructure, and enduring social norms regarding women's roles. In contrast, Portugal and Spain benefit from stronger welfare systems, active labor market policies, and gender-sensitive political institutions.

These findings confirm that gender equality outcomes depend not only on human capital accumulation but also on institutional capacity and policy coherence. The comparative analysis highlights the importance of aligning educational progress with labor market inclusion and political empowerment.

The Global Gender Gap Report examines the fourth area, which is women's political participation and empowerment. Morocco has points to understand, such as:

Percentage of women and men in high-level political positions: this measures the representation of women in high-level positions in the public and private sectors, as well as in parliaments and governments.

The percentage of women and men in management positions measures the representation of women in management positions in the public and private sectors, such as companies and non-profit organizations.

The percentage of women and men taking part in elections is an indicator of women's and men's participation in political life and their ability to have an impact on political decisions.

Laws and regulations that support gender equality are assessed according to the presence of laws and policies that promote gender equality and women's empowerment.

Economic opportunities and women's empowerment are measured in terms of women's access to employment, income, and economic resources, as well as their ability to make economic decisions and be financially independent.

The report aims to highlight gender inequalities (Scheele, 2021) in political decision-making and women's access to economic and legal autonomy by measuring their political participation and autonomy. These inequalities can hurt economic growth and social development, as well as the lives of women and men. By identifying these inequalities, the report encourages governments and decision makers to take action to reduce gender disparities in these areas and to promote gender equality.

- Comparative and analysis study MOROCCO – SPAIN

Morocco ranks low in international reports on competitiveness, human development, and decent work. One of the most important reports is the World Economic Forum WEF research report, which measures the country's ability to create an environment conducive to economic growth and well-being. The WEF is based on twelve pillars, including the labor market. This pillar assesses the flexibility, efficiency, and quality of the labor market in each nation.

Our aim in this study is to identify the factors that contribute to Morocco's poor ranking in international reports, particularly the World Economic Forum Study and the International Labor Organization report. To understand the causes of Morocco's poor ranking in this area, it is necessary to research the measures used by the WEFS to highlight the shortcomings of the Moroccan labor market. According to a report from the International Labour Organization (ILO), the source used by (WEFS), the indicators are as follows: the unemployment rate in 2020 is 11.9%, the highest in the MENA region (Middle East and North Africa), and the activity rate is 46.1% in 2020, the lowest in the MENA region. The informal employment rate in 2019 was 62%, the highest in the MENA region. The rate of women's participation in the labor market is 21.5% in 2020, the lowest in the MENA region. The lack of dynamism, formalization, protection, and inclusion in the Moroccan labor market is demonstrated by these indicators. The country's productivity, competitiveness, and human development are hampered by these factors. To improve its position in international rankings, particularly the WEFS, Morocco needs to implement structural reforms to modernize the labor market and strengthen social institutions.

(The World Economic Forum WEF) has published (the Global Gender Gap Report 2021), which measures the gap between men and women in four key areas: economic participation and opportunity, access to education, health and survival, and political empowerment. According to the report, closing the global gender gap will take another 135.6 years, a generation longer than 2020, as women are more affected by the COVID-19 pandemic than men. The report ranked 156 countries according to their Gender Gap Index (GGI), which ranges from 0 to 100, indicating total inequality. This still leaves a gap of 32.3% to be closed compared to the world average of 67.7%. The report also focuses on policies and best practices that can help reduce gender inequality. (The Global Gender Gap Report 2021) uses a global index to benchmark 153 countries and track their progress over time.

It presents a more in-depth analysis of gender gaps in various industries and the role of gender-based occupational and skills imbalances. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated disparities.

We will use this database to compare the rankings of Morocco and Spain and identify differences according to the different indicators used in the study.

Table 3: The Difference in the Ranking between Morocco and Spain

	Morocco	Spain
Economic participation and opportunity	0.447	0.699
Educational attainment	0.945	0.998
Health and survival	0.961	0.985
Political empowerment	0.146	0.491

Table 3 reveals even wider gaps between Morocco and Spain. Spain achieves very high scores in educational attainment, health and survival, and especially political empowerment (0.491 compared to 0.146 for Morocco).

These results place Spain among the most advanced countries in terms of gender equality and emphasize the persistent structural lag experienced by Morocco, particularly in political representation and economic opportunities for women.

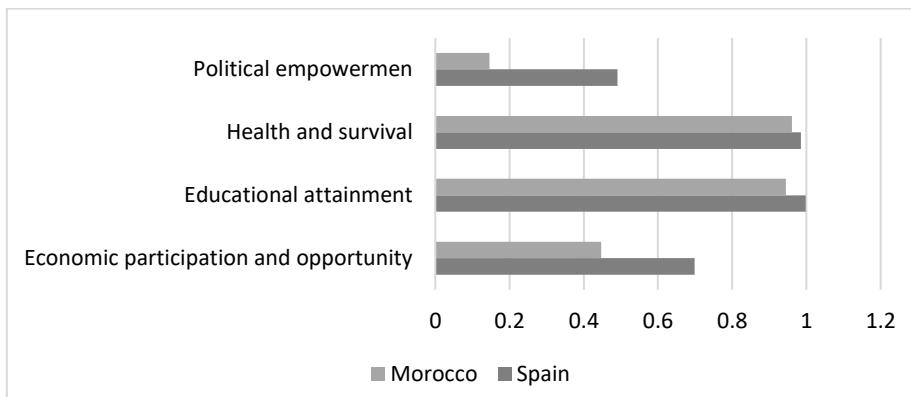


Fig. 3: Big Difference between Spain's Ranking and Morocco's of the Political Empowerment Indicator.

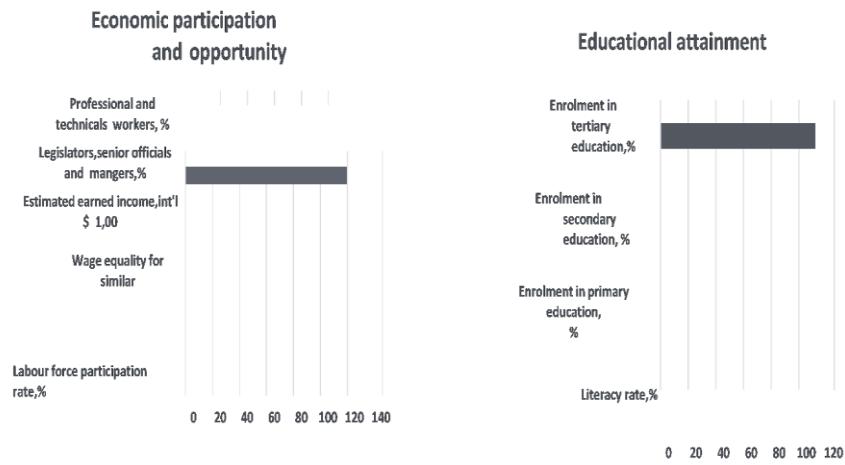
According to the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2021, Spain is ranked 6th out of 100 in the European Union's Gender Equality Index. This suggests progress in gender equality in Spain since 2010.

In contrast, Morocco has a score of 0.62 out of 1 in the Global Gender Gap Index, ranked 136th out of 146 countries. This suggests that there is a significant gender gap in Morocco compared to other nations.

According to the Global Gender Gap Report 2021, Spain shows greater progress in gender equality than Morocco.

The results of this graph are extracted to determine the significant gaps that make such a difference in the ranking.

- Rank Report-Morocco/Rank-Spain



Health and Survival Political Empowerment.

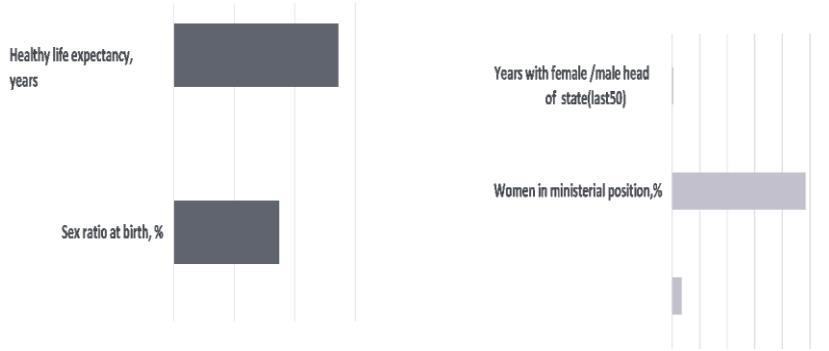


Fig. 4: GGGR Rank: Morocco Rank/Spain for the Four Domains Used.

There is a glaring discrepancy in technical and higher education work, as well as in political positions. As we can see in Table 3, Figures 3 and 4

- F/M Comparison Morocco – Spain

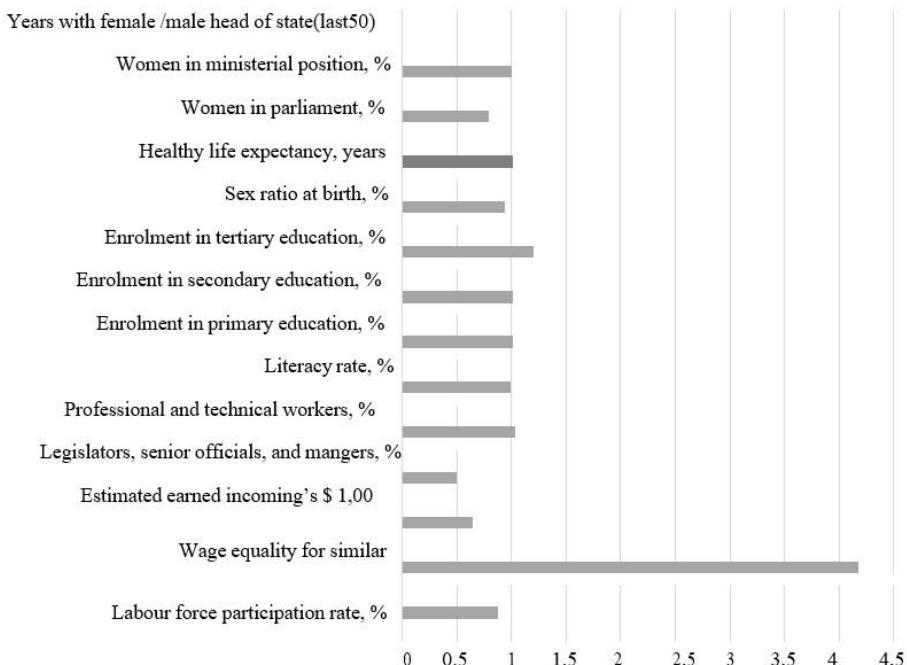


Fig. 5: The Moroccan Spanish F/M Ratio to Highlight Differences in Parity Across All the Indicators Used in the Study.

The activity rate of Morocco's working-age population is 25%, well below Spain's 52.2%.

This low activity rate is mainly due to the low participation of women in the labor market. However, women are an important part of the country's economic potential and can benefit from their contribution to development. It is therefore imperative to adopt public policies that encourage women to join the workforce, eliminate the social, cultural, and legal barriers that prevent them from working, and promote opportunities and equality between the sexes.

Table 4: Labour Force Participation Rates and Unemployment Rates in Morocco and in Spain

	Women	Men
Labour force participation rates in Morocco	25	74.1
Labour force participation rates in Spain	52.2	63.8
Unemployment rates in Morocco	10.1	9.1
Unemployment rates in Spain	18.9	16

Table 4 highlights a stark contrast in labor force participation rates. Female participation in Morocco (25%) is less than half that observed in Spain (52.2%), reflecting significant barriers to women's economic inclusion.

Although unemployment rates among women appear lower in Morocco than in Spain, this result should be interpreted with caution, as it largely reflects the low participation of Moroccan women in the labor market rather than more favorable employment conditions.

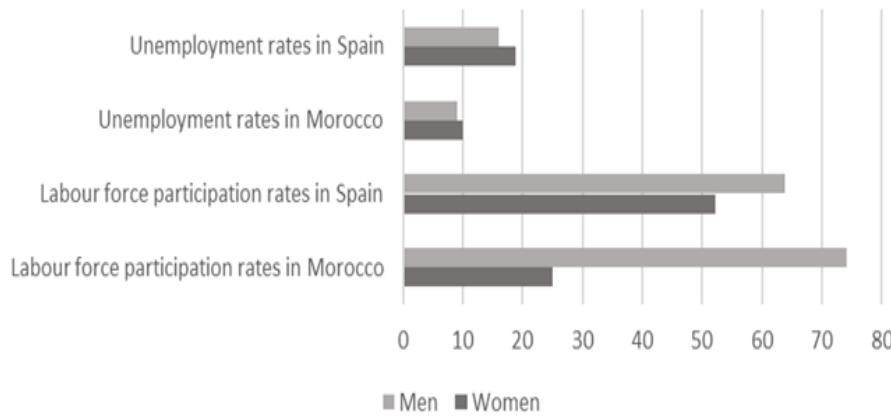


Fig. 6: World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends for Women.

The unemployment rate is 10.1%, while Spain's is 18.9%. It seems that the unemployment rate for women in Morocco is lower than in Spain. As we can see in Table 4, and figure 5 and 6.

According to data published by the Haut-Commissariat Plan, Morocco's unemployment rate reached 10.1% in the second quarter of 2023. According to the National Institute of Statistics, this figure is considerably lower than that of Spain, which had an unemployment rate of 18.9% over the same period. According to a more detailed study, Moroccan women are less affected by unemployment than Hispanic women (El Aidaa & Sabil, 2022). The unemployment rate for women in Morocco is 9.7%, compared to 20.4% in Spain. Many factors can explain this difference, such as level of education, sector of activity, family environment, and work culture.

The labor force participation rate among women is 9% in North Africa (Morocco) versus 2% in Europe, helping to reduce the gender gap in the economy and development of these countries. (The World Economic Forum WEF) has published (the Global Gender Gap Report 2021), which measures the gap between men and women in four key areas: economic participation and opportunity, access to education, the economics of health and survival, and the gender gap in economic development.

The labor force participation rate among women is 9% in North Africa (Morocco) versus 2% in Europe, helping to reduce the gender gap in the economy and development of these countries. (The World Economic Forum WEF) has published (the Global Gender Gap Report 2021), which measures the gap between men and women in four key areas: economic participation and opportunity, access to education, the economics of health and survival, and the gender gap in economic development.

political participation. In the report, 156 countries are ranked on an index ranging from 0 to 100, meaning they are completely equal. According to the report, due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, gender equality has decreased worldwide since last year. Closing the global gender gap will now take 135.6 years, compared with 99.5 years in 2020. What is the situation in Morocco and Spain, two neighboring countries with very different economic and social realities, in this context? What is the situation of unemployed women in these two nations? What factors contribute to the observed gap? How can inequalities be reduced and women's employment improved? In the Global Gender Gap Report 2021, Morocco received a score of 59.8, ranking 133rd out of 156 countries. Due to lower performance in the areas of economic and political participation, the country dropped four places from the previous year. This makes Morocco one of the least advanced countries in terms of gender equality in the world (Walker et al, 2022).

In 2020, the participation rate for women in Morocco was just 19.9%, while that for men was 70.4%. The proportion of people of working age who have or are seeking employment is known as the activity rate. A number of factors, including sociocultural constraints, lack of vocational training (El Aidaa & Sabil, 2022), lack of childcare facilities or unpaid domestic work, may explain the low participation rate of women. The unemployment rate in 2020 is 16.2% for working women, compared to 8.1% for men. Due to the health crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, the female unemployment rate has increased by 2.7 points compared to 2019. Young women (30.6%), female graduates (31.8%), and women living in urban areas are the most affected by unemployment. Women often face instability, discrimination, or harassment when working in agriculture (44.8%), services (40.4%), or industry (14.2%). It is necessary to strengthen education and training for women in Morocco, promote female entrepreneurship, guarantee equal pay, and combat discriminatory prejudices in order to reduce the unemployment rate among women in Morocco.

In the Global Gender Gap Report 2021, Spain scored 79 out of 156 countries. Thanks to better results in the areas of economic and political participation, Spain moved up two places from the previous year. This places Spain among the world's most advanced countries in terms of gender equality. In Spain, the participation rate for women in 2020 is 53%, compared to 64% for men. In 2020, women in Spain will be 53% active, while men will be 64% active. In 2020, women in Spain participated at 53% and men at 64%. In 2020, 53% of women and

64% of men will participate in Spanish society. In Spain in 2020, women are 53% active, while men are 64% active. Due to higher levels of education, access to social services, and psychological development, the women's activity rate has increased by 10 points since 2002. The World Economic Forum publishes the Global Gender Gap Report 2023, which assesses gender parity around the world. Economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment are the four dimensions in which the index measures the gender gap. Morocco ranks 141st in the global gender gap index, with a score of 0.580 (1 being full equality), according to the report. There has been a drop in the level compared to previous reports. With a score of 0.803, Spain ranks 12th in the global gender gap index. Portugal, with a score of 0.776, ranks 22nd in the global gender gap index. According to the report, in all the dimensions examined, Morocco has a significant gender gap. Particularly, the gap is widest in the dimension of economic participation and opportunity, where Morocco ranks 142nd. In this dimension, indicators such as labor market participation, remuneration, and representation in management positions are used to measure the gender gap.

Morocco shows a significant disparity in all areas, but it is particularly evident in the first and fourth areas of political and economic participation. The automation of gender inequality highlights the decline in Morocco's performance.

It occupies 142nd place in this ranking, making it one of the countries with the lowest proportion of women to men. This inequality can be explained by many factors, including socio-cultural constraints, lack of vocational training, lack of childcare options, and unpaid family chores. The report also highlights the increasing percentage of children abused by women, with higher proportions among young women, employed women, and women living in urban areas.

These findings highlight the need for concrete measures to improve the situation in Morocco and achieve balance, underlining the importance of targeted policies aimed at strengthening women's participation in economic and political spheres and reducing gender inequality in various economic and social contexts.

3.2. Discussions of the global results of the ranking score between Morocco, Portugal, and Spain

This analysis highlights the ranking score between Morocco, Portugal, and Spain. Portugal and Spain, generally, outperform Morocco in most of the categories examined, namely economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival, and political empowerment. Portugal and Spain stand out for their excellence in the political empowerment of their citizens. Both countries also boast high levels of educational achievement, health, and survival. In contrast, Morocco, while making significant progress in areas such as health, survival, and educational attainment, faces greater challenges in terms of political empowerment. (As we can see in Table 5 and Figure 7). The analysis highlights the persistent gaps in socio-economic and political development in these countries, while also highlighting areas where improvements could be envisaged to promote more balanced and inclusive development.

Table 5: Comparison of the Scores between Morocco, Portugal, and Spain

	Portugal	Spain	Morocco
Economic participation and opportunity	0.737	0.699	0.447
Educational attainment	0.99	0.998	0.945
Health and survival	0.973	0.985	0.961
Political empowerment	0.364	0.491	0.146

Table 5 provides a comprehensive comparison of gender gap scores across the three countries. Morocco consistently records the lowest values in all four dimensions, with particularly large deficits in economic participation and political empowerment.

Portugal and Spain perform strongly across all indicators, with Spain showing a relative advantage in political empowerment, while both countries maintain near-parity in education and health.

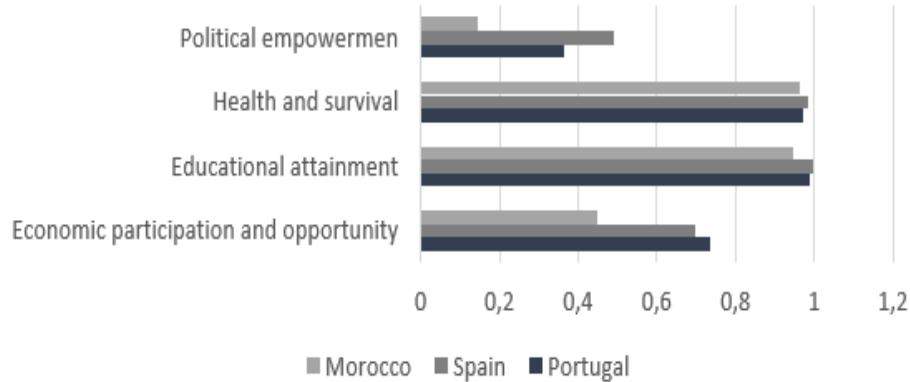


Fig. 7: Big Difference in the Political Empowerment Index of Morocco Compared to Spain and Portugal.

4. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that gender disparities remain significant in Morocco compared to Portugal and Spain, particularly in economic participation and political empowerment. While progress has been achieved in education and health, structural and institutional barriers continue to limit women's full integration into economic and political life.

These results underline the importance of taking specific measures to improve overall gender indicators. Women can benefit from civic education and political literacy, which will help them better understand their role as citizens and become more involved in political processes. To ensure fair representation of women in decision-making processes, covering areas such as electoral candidacies, political appointments, and decision-making committees, it is also recommended to establish gender quotas in political institutions. Another crucial aspect is to encourage women's participation at local and regional levels, with a more direct impact on the issues that affect them.

The comparative perspective underscores the importance of coherent gender policies that link education, labor market inclusion, and political representation. Strengthening institutional frameworks and addressing social norms are essential to achieving sustainable and inclusive development in the Mediterranean region.

Policy recommendations:

Based on the comparative analysis between Morocco, Portugal, and Spain using the Global Gender Gap Report indicators, several policy recommendations can be proposed to reduce gender disparities in Morocco and promote more inclusive socio-economic and political development.

- Strengthening Women's Economic Participation

Despite progress in education and health, women's participation in the Moroccan labor market remains structurally low. To address this challenge, a comprehensive set of economic policies is required.

First, labor market reforms should aim to improve women's access to formal employment by reducing segmentation and informality. This includes simplifying administrative procedures for women-owned businesses, strengthening labor inspections to combat discrimination, and enforcing equal pay for equal work legislation.

Second, investment in childcare and care infrastructure is essential. Limited access to affordable childcare services significantly constrains women's labor force participation. Public-private partnerships could be encouraged to expand early childhood education and care services, particularly in urban and peri-urban areas.

Third, female entrepreneurship and financial inclusion should be actively promoted. Targeted credit lines, microfinance programs, and business development services tailored to women can enhance economic autonomy and resilience. These initiatives should be complemented by financial literacy and digital skills training to improve women's competitiveness in the labor market.

- Enhancing Political Participation and Leadership

Political empowerment remains one of Morocco's weakest dimensions in the Global Gender Gap Index. Addressing this deficit requires both institutional reforms and capacity-building measures.

First, strengthening gender quotas in elected bodies and public decision-making positions can help ensure more balanced representation. Quotas should not only apply to parliamentary elections but also extend to local councils, ministerial appointments, and senior public administration roles.

Second, leadership and political training programs for women should be expanded. These programs can enhance women's confidence, negotiation skills, and understanding of political processes, enabling them to compete more effectively in political arenas.

Third, political parties should be encouraged to adopt internal gender equality mechanisms, including transparent candidate selection processes, mentoring systems for female candidates, and financial support for women's electoral campaigns.

- Reducing Structural and Cultural Barriers:

Beyond economic and political reforms, gender inequality in Morocco is deeply rooted in social norms and institutional practices.

First, awareness and education campaigns should be strengthened to challenge gender stereotypes related to women's roles in the family, labor market, and public life. Integrating gender equality principles into school curricula can contribute to long-term cultural change.

Second, legal and institutional frameworks must be fully enforced. While Morocco has adopted progressive laws on gender equality and violence against women, implementation gaps remain. Strengthening judicial capacity and ensuring access to legal support for women are critical steps.

Third, recognition and redistribution of unpaid care work should be incorporated into public policy. Measures such as parental leave for both men and women, flexible working arrangements, and social protection for informal workers can help reduce the unequal burden placed on women.

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