

## Panel II: Gender and Sexuality in North Africa

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**Paper Title:** *Morocco and Tunisia's Progressive Personal Status Laws*

**Abstract:** In the Arab world, women's progress towards gaining equality has been a consistent battle. Yet, Morocco and Tunisia are two examples of how Islamic states can promote women's equality by instituting progressive personal status laws. The examination of these personal status laws is critical in order to create equality reforms in other Muslim societies. Therefore, this paper explores the different histories of Morocco and Tunisia to promote an understanding of the institutions and legal frameworks that enabled the adoption of these progressive personal status laws. Applying the theories of liberalization, globalization, rational choice, democratization, and modernization, facilitates a comprehension of the essential factors that contributed to these laws' progression. Lastly, this paper examines the existing problems in both states in regard to women's status in society, along with the impact Islam will continue to have on these two Muslim states. This allows the discussion of Morocco and Tunisia to conclude with proposed policy reforms that could further advance gender equality in Morocco and Tunisia. The exploration of the Tunisian Personal Status Code and the reformed Mudawwana in Morocco has revealed adequate models other Islamic states can emulate to achieve greater equality for women in the Arab world.