
RESEARCH ARTICLE

Echoes of Transformation: Moroccan Youth's Political Voices in Ultras and Rap Music

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ABSTRACT

This article delves into the emergence of Moroccan youth as a significant social agent, a transformation that has unfolded in the wake of decades of patriarchal influence. The onset of the twenty-first century heralded an era characterized by the diminishing impact of political parties and a gradual erosion of the extended family's traditional role. This study aims to scrutinize the profound impact of this societal shift on Moroccan youth, who have exhibited a fervent desire to forge their unique mode of self-expression, thus liberating themselves from the constraints imposed by longstanding social institutions and values. To comprehensively investigate the development of Moroccan youth's visibility and their endeavors to challenge conventional institutions, this research predominantly employs qualitative research methods. Particularly, discourse and content analysis are applied to unearth the nuanced dynamics underpinning the transformation. The multifaceted examination encapsulates the diversification of youth subcultures, fueled by a fusion of globalizing influences and local dynamics, thereby presenting an alternative outlook on Morocco's evolving sociocultural landscape. The primary findings of this research underscore Moroccan youth's adeptness at responding to sociopolitical transformations. They have harnessed alternative channels for articulating their unique perspectives on reality. These avenues encompass public protests, rap music, and participation in Ultras activities, all of which serve as potent tools for expressing dissent and challenging established norms. This proactive response underscores the agency and active engagement of Moroccan youth with pressing social and political issues. Contrary to prevailing perceptions of apathy and disengagement, they have emerged as key proponents of change, effectively navigating the complex terrain of societal transformation and challenging entrenched norms and power structures.

KEYWORDS

Moroccan Youth, Social Change, Rap Music, Ultras, social media, Political Participation, Family code.

ARTICLE INFORMATION

ACCEPTED: 15 October 2023

PUBLISHED: 03 November 2023

DOI: 10.32996/jhsss.2023.5.11.1

1. Introduction

At the outset of the twenty-first century, Morocco found itself at a pivotal juncture marked by significant political and social transformation. Under the leadership of a youthful monarch, the nation embarked on a course of reforms aimed at bolstering its credibility and global standing. This shift entailed a departure from the historical legacies of the monarchy, with a deliberate break from some of the traditional aspects associated with the rule of his father. King Mohammed VI, as the youthful monarch, sought to assert his reign and legitimacy by implementing a "modernist democratic project." This transformative agenda garnered support from various segments of Moroccan society, including the government and civil society, particularly socialist and secular factions. The era witnessed a relatively more permissive environment for freedom of expression, exemplified by actions such as the removal of the controversial Minister Driss Basri (1938-2007), the release of key political opponents of the previous monarch, King Hassan II and the establishment of the Equity and Reconciliation Commission. These developments signified a nation poised for a new political trajectory, one that promised to have far-reaching outcomes within the social sphere. An emblematic manifestation of this interconnected political and social transformation was the comprehensive reform of the family code. This initiative, while indicative of progressive change, triggered conservative sentiments and catalyzed the emergence of a new political adversary: a visible and assertive Islamist faction. Alongside, traditional political practices and institutions began to lose their allure, partly due to the

waning influence of leftist ideology and the prevalent issue of nepotism within political parties. In response, Moroccan youth embarked on a quest to establish their own alternatives, forging diverse subcultures influenced by both globalizing forces and locally rooted dynamics.

The Moroccan sociocultural landscape underwent a noticeable shift as the country opened its doors to an array of television channels from both the Eastern and Western hemispheres, and the advent of the internet further accelerated the infusion of new lifestyles and cultural facets. The younger generation enthusiastically embraced these transformations, challenging entrenched traditional values, encompassing components related to family politics, religion, and matters of sexuality. This generational cohort found avenues of public expression through mediums, such as music and sports, effectively unsettling not only conservative social institutions but also compelling the state to contend with their activism, which in several instances metamorphosed into acts of protest and civil unrest. The primary objective of this article is to critically examine the complex relationship between the broader landscape of social change and the concurrent emergence of youth subcultures in Morocco through the examination of some specific cases.

2. Literature Review

Social change is a multifaceted process driven by the interplay of numerous factors, resulting in the emergence of novel practices and behaviors that often confront resistance from social establishments. Fundamental among these institutions are the family unit, educational systems, and religious institutions. These entities traditionally bear the responsibility of nurturing and preparing the youth to become integrated members of their respective societies, cultivating values of responsible citizenship, conformity to established norms and adherence to the law. Social scientists have developed several theories to conceptualize the idea of social change. Like many social phenomena, each theory tends to emphasize specific aspects or factors over others and may be influenced by underlying ideologies and standpoints.

Modernization theory is one of the early frameworks regarding social change, and it can be traced back to the response of American politicians and scholars to the global context of the post-World War II period. (Tipps 1973,200). Several studies have examined various levels, from individuals to local communities and even national and international units. However, the national territorial state holds critical theoretical significance. It serves as the primary level where different aspects of the modernization process are combined. Regardless of how modernization is conceptualized, through industrialization, economic progress, political development, social mobilization and other factors, each component is considered a driver of change at the national level. Modernization represents a form of social change that brings about profound and positive effects. It is typically seen as a comprehensive process, a multifaceted one, which affects almost every aspect of society at some point. Moreover, these transformations within one aspect of society often lead to corresponding changes in other aspects. (Tipps 1973,202).

Political leaders can play a significant role in promoting modernism. In several countries, this process is often driven by the vision of a ruler. For example, we can look at the case of the Meiji Restoration period (1868-1889), which had a profound impact on the transformation of the Japanese empire or the first president of Turkey, Kemal Atatürk (1881-1934), who is considered a key figure in modernizing Turkey. These leaders aim to modernize the state, often as a response to outdated political institutions and social values. In the Moroccan context, the late monarch Hassan II (1929-1999) held multiple roles, including that of king, leader of the faithful, and father of the nation. He emphasized these roles in his speeches and attire, reflecting not only Moroccan identity but also the traditional aspects of the monarchy. His successor, Mohammed VI, faced the task of presenting himself as a modern and youthful leader. In contrast to his father's charismatic yet traditionally inclined personality, Mohammed VI introduced several initiatives to usher in a new era. He portrayed himself as the 'King of the Poor' and a monarch who seamlessly connected with his citizens. Significantly, for the first time in Moroccan history, a king introduced his wife to the public, and Moroccans could even follow his 'middle-class' wedding celebrations through the media (Hegasy 2007, 21).

Several procedures or reforms marked the new era, such as the reform of the family code and the religious field. The terrorist attacks in Casablanca on May 16, 2003, are considered the most significant political and security challenge of the new regime. It is argued that the sweeping transformations in the Moroccan family code can be attributed to a direct response to the aftermath of the attacks. Prior to this momentous development, Mohammed VI had encountered remarkable resistance to his family law reform initiatives, particularly from well-organized Islamist organizations. The reforms exceeded the longstanding demands of the feminist movement, which had fervently advocated for change since the mid-1980s. However, it is imperative to acknowledge that the feminist quest for the eradication of polygamy had consistently galvanized the Islamists, effectively obstructing other essential reforms. The Islamist movement has persistently depicted polygamy as an intrinsic element of orthodox Muslim identity despite its contemporary marginalization as a social practice in most Arab nations. With the landmark reform of 2004, a pivotal alteration was introduced, enabling grandchildren to inherit from both their paternal and maternal grandfathers. Furthermore, these reforms conferred equal rights to women in matters concerning child custody and divorce while simultaneously nullifying the obligation of spousal obedience (Hegasy2007,21). The family code also insisted on the status of children as several adjustments took place.

Under the former Personal Status Code, child custody was inflexible, with mothers losing custody if they remarried. The "Moudawana" introduced flexibility, with judges considering the child's best interests. It expanded the list of potential guardians and allowed the court to assess the best placement, even beyond the list. Women can now retain custody, even if remarried, for children under seven or those with disabilities. Fifteen-year-old girls and boys can choose their custodial parent. The new family code addressed the status of children born out of wedlock, allowing a wider range of evidence for paternity determination when there's no marriage record (Zoglin 2009, 974). In 2007, an amendment to Article Six of the citizenship law facilitated the acquisition of citizenship for children born to Moroccan women married to foreign nationals. Previously, this was only possible if the father was unknown and the mother was of Moroccan origin.

Certainly, the reform of the family code in the direction of providing women with more rights is not the single factor that would reshape gender roles, family politics and the family structure. Women's roles and family structures in the context of Muslim family law have gone through significant changes, sparking debates involving feminists, fundamentalists, and the state. Especially in urban areas, there was a shift from the traditional extended family model, typical of classical patriarchy, to a more modern version known as neopatriarchy. In some cases, families in the contemporary Middle East look quite like the classic nuclear families associated with the Western lifestyle. Others show signs of moving away from male-dominated structures to more equal gender dynamics (Moghadam 2004, 157).

The political drive in Morocco to modernize the country coincided with the emergence of new technology, a domain significantly dominated by young people. By the early 2000s, cybercafés had proliferated, primarily driven by the fact that internet access was not affordable for the Moroccan middle and lower classes. These enclosed spaces were mainly frequented by young Moroccans who sought to explore the world beyond the confines of social and security restrictions. For example, during the American war in Iraq, radical movements such as Al Qaeda disseminated videos depicting the beheading of Americans and traitors. They utilized the internet to recruit fighters. In contrast to traditional media, young Moroccans were no longer mere consumers of news. Instead, they engaged in open discussions about political and religious matters in what were known as chatrooms. Furthermore, they became creators of news. With the subsequent explosion of social media, they gained effective agency and networking capabilities. They initiated acts of protest and revolt throughout the Arab world, transcending the limitations imposed by traditional media (Wolfsfeld et al., 2013, 119-120).

Moroccan youth has consequently given rise to a new generation, as exemplified by their active involvement in the 20 February movement. This generation is considered a significant historical and sociological cohort. The emergence of this generational shift can be attributed to several factors, including the acceleration of individualization. This acceleration has rendered young Moroccans more independent from established social and political institutions. Their recognition and influence are now linked to the acknowledgment they receive from these institutions, making them not just passive members of society but effective agents for social change. This new generation has emerged in a distinct context under the reign of Mohammed VI. His rule promised young Moroccans increased rights and a transformed perception of freedom, particularly through their utilization of new technology to disseminate their values. This contrasts with the older generations, who predominantly control traditional media and institutions. The young generation has reaped the benefits of the new king's agenda, aimed at ending their exclusion from the political arena. This initiative was launched in response to the perception of young Moroccans as a potential threat to the existing regime and its traditional values (Desrues 2012,24).

Rahma Bourqia, a prominent Moroccan Sociologist, has delineated three key elements for understanding the interplay between social structures, social relations, and values. To begin, in the past, a reservoir of traditional values played a vital role in shaping interpersonal relationships and community dynamics. This repository of values was transmitted through established channels across generations. Secondly, this reference system has encountered various challenges linked to changing lifestyles. Factors such as emerging needs, increased population mobility, and shifts in the production of values through institutions like schools, the media, peer interactions, networks, and the complexities of contemporary society have disrupted the traditional order. Thirdly, this transformation has given rise to a multitude of competing values and a diverse range of channels for their production. The result is an open market of values and an ongoing process of redefining value systems, which encompasses both traditional and emerging values (Bourqia2010,106). In essence, young Moroccans now have a broader spectrum of options for shaping their identity, with possibilities ranging from modernist to conservative or even hybrid identities. This freedom of choice reflects profound changes in the morphology of Moroccan society, indicating a gradual transition from the extended family model to the nuclear family structure.

3. Discussion

The reform of the family code has contributed to raising the marriage age, acknowledging the wife's responsibilities within the family, and placing restrictions on polygamy. In addition to these legal changes, women's financial contributions and family planning, particularly in urban areas, have had a profound impact on gender roles and family structures. Notably, the extended

family, once a prevalent feature, has gradually faded into obscurity, leading to a decline in the traditional roles played by male relatives such as grandfathers and uncles in the upbringing of the younger family members. With fathers spending a substantial amount of their time outside the home due to work pressures and leisure activities, the role of child-rearing has increasingly fallen on mothers. Consequently, this shift has led to a decrease in the influence of patriarchal values on the formation of children's identities.

Moroccan youth openly express their reliance on their mothers and convey their gratitude through various means. For instance, a song widely shared on social media featured a group of young supporters of the RAJA club appealing to their mothers to send them money so they could attend the 2013 Club World Cup in Marrakech. Furthermore, prominent rap artists like Muslim, Hliwa, Bad Flow, 7-Toun, and Jocker have dedicated songs to their mothers with titles such as "Mama," "Yema," and "LHanana" (The Loving). These musical tributes serve as both expressions of gratitude and confessions of the challenges they have faced in their lives in poor neighborhood, including struggles with addiction, illegal immigration and gambling. Similarly, Moroccan football players who took part in the 2022 Qatar World Cup celebrated their victories in the presence of their mothers in the stadiums. In interviews with the media, some of these players emphasized the vital roles their mothers had in their achievements. They insisted that their success in football would not have been possible without the sacrifices and encouragement provided by their mothers. For example, in an interview with *Bundisliga.com*, Hakimi underscored the fact that his mother used to work as a maid to support his pursuit of a football career. Ziyech, in an interview with *Vogue* magazine, elaborated on his profound connection with his mother. The king himself has recognized these players and their mothers, stressing that their roles extend beyond national team achievements and that they are active agents in promoting Moroccan values. It is worth noting that mothers seem to wield influence over the careers of Moroccan players, given that football is still perceived by the older generation as a mere pastime rather than a viable profession, particularly considering the Moroccan national team's recent disappointments. As a result, the primary source of encouragement often comes from mothers. Another noteworthy aspect is the role these mothers play in maintaining their children's connections to their home country, especially as most of them are immigrants and married to foreigners.

The retreat of patriarchal authority in the lives of the youth was prominently evident when high school students left their classrooms and took to the streets to express their anger and opposition to the government's decision to implement daylight-saving time. In 2018, Protests erupted in various regions, including the capital city, where adolescents gathered at the gates of the parliament. They directed profane language towards the prime minister and even burned the Moroccan flag, repeating one of the slogans of Ultras: "You don't want us to study, you don't want us to work, you don't want us to be aware, so you can control us". In rural areas, students reacted strongly to the decision, as it significantly affected their early morning routines by adding an extra hour (Baron2018). Notably, the event featured young people as young as fifteen or even younger taking the initiative to challenge the major authorities in their lives, including the family, school administration, and the state. In contrast, adults had a subdued response, primarily limited to expressing their grievances on social media platforms. In other words, Moroccan youth have cultivated a culture of protest to communicate their demands to the state. They have chosen the streets as their primary channel for expressing discontent, while other institutions, especially political parties and civil society organizations, have not played a significant role, serving as intermediaries between the government and the disgruntled students. As a result, recruited teachers and medical students have operated through national coordinating committees (Tansikiat) to manage their protests and select representatives for negotiations with the state. This approach serves as an alternative to labor unions, which have often left Moroccan workers dissatisfied on several issues, such as the approval of an increase in the retirement age. Additionally, the influence of the political agendas of these parties on youth activism cannot be overlooked.

However, the king's call for political parties to facilitate youth access to decision-making positions was met with resistance by most leaders who demonstrated a preference for nepotism and favored notables and businessmen when selecting their candidates for elections. As a potential response to the youth activism during the Arab Spring protests, Morocco established a national list of 30 parliamentary seats reserved for candidates under the age of forty. Despite these encouraging initiatives, some parties, such as the PAM, advocated for the cancellation of this list, arguing that parties exploited it not to empower young politicians but rather to reward their relatives (Ouahbi 2021). During the 2021 election campaigns, certain political parties relied on unemployed individuals and even children (Faraj 2021), raising questions about the status of young activists within these parties. Consequently, despite a significant number of eligible young voters, the actual enrollment of young people on voting lists remains limited. This reflects not only political apathy but also the perception that political parties have become profit-driven and stagnant institutions (Elghazouli 2021). For example, when the influence of the Arab Spring reached Morocco through the 20 February movement, most political parties discouraged their members from participating in the "suspicious" protests. However, when the king approved some of the young activists' demands, these parties changed their discourse and even claimed credit for the protest's achievements, opening the door for the Islamists to lead the government for the first time. Moroccan youth has emerged as a significant political force that reacts spontaneously and independently of strict ideological boundaries. In other words, political party membership is not the sole indicator of political activism. As Zerhouni emphasizes, "*Youth activism in Morocco is not primarily defined by the formal spaces*

of participation; rather, it is about the degree of influence that they can exercise through one venue or another. The institutional setting plays a major role in obstructing young people's political participation, particularly their involvement in formal politics" (Zerhouni 2017, 3).

The Ultras represent a form of informal political activism that has been remarkably effective in conveying messages through Tifos, which are prominently displayed in stadiums. These Tifos not only showcase the team's logo but also communicate specific political stances and symbols. As argued by Ali Anouzla, a Moroccan journalist known for criticizing the state, an example of this is when Raja club supporters inscribed "Room 101," drawing a parallel to the issue of torture as symbolized in George Orwell's novel *1984*. The Moroccan journalist established a connection between this message and the claims of torture made by detained activist Zafzafi. Additionally, there have been instances where supporters of RAJA and WAC have attempted to politicize football, a domain often regarded as merely a sport, if not a form of entertainment that diverts youth from political engagement (Anouzla2019). Furthermore, the Ultras have created songs that shed light on the hardships of youth life and their discontent, placing blame on the state for extinguishing their passion, stifling their talents, and eradicating any hope for a brighter future. Examples of these songs include "Fi Bladi Delmoni" (They Unjustly Treated Me in My Country) and "Lkalb Hzin" (The Sad Heart). The political messages conveyed by Morocco's two major Ultras groups, Winners and Green Boys, have also addressed other issues, including the relationship with Algerians and the Palestinian cause.

The members of the Ultras remain active even after the Interior Ministry's decision in 2016 to ban their activities. This decision came in response to growing criticism, particularly considering incidents that included deaths, violent street confrontations, and acts of vandalism in stadiums, such as the events of Black Sunday. The prohibition of the supporters' activities, rather than achieving its intended purpose, had the contrary effect of further politicizing and consolidating the Ultras movement. Hence, numerous Ultras groups came together, actively opposing the prohibition through a series of actions. They organized protests outside stadiums, picketed at sports federation offices, expressed their dissent on various social media platforms, and even managed to infiltrate matches for demonstrations. When the police responded with severe strategies, forcibly ejecting Ultras from stadiums, it inadvertently strengthened the Ultras' claim, portraying the authorities as the perpetrators of violence. Recognizing the potential for a backlash, the authorities ceased enforcing the ban in 2018, allowing Ultras to return to the stands. While the state has exerted significant influence over the main sports institutions, fan groups maintain their independence from both the state authority and club administration. Some ultras groups often stand against their clubs' managers as a reaction to their team's malperformance and corruption (Cox2022).

Football clubs received directives to prohibit all Ultras-related activities, as these groups were not recognized as authorized associations, rendering their activities illegal and subject to penalties as stipulated by the law. However, banning the Ultras may not constitute a comprehensive solution to the issue of hooliganism. The phenomenon of individuals attending matches specifically for violent purposes is not as widespread in North Africa as it is in other countries, as argued by Sébastien Louis (2018). Louis posits that the authorities might not fully grasp the underlying dynamics and the philosophy of the Ultras movement, whose members creatively express the aspirations of Arab youth (Louis2018). The influence of the Ultras among Moroccan youth may be attributed to the diversity of its members and supporters, who come from various social, educational, and cultural backgrounds. For example, during campaigns against daylight-saving time in front of the parliament, students chanted "Fi Bladi Delmoni," which has become a slogan representing a generation's sentiments more than a mere football chant. When the supporters of RAJA found themselves in the presence of Prince Moulay Rashid, the king's brother, at the Throne Cup final, they directly appealed to him to secure the release of Zakaria, the leader of the Ultras known as "Skwadra," who had been arrested in connection with the events of Black Saturday. The prince responded with a smile, and the supporters broke into applause. The behavior of the youth in the stadium can be interpreted from various perspectives. Firstly, they aim to demonstrate that the Ultras are a non-violent group. Secondly, the Ultras exhibit solidarity among their members. Lastly, they express their respect for the monarchy and acknowledge its position of authority while simultaneously displaying a lack of fear towards security officers as they openly engage with a member of the royal family.

The supporters of RAJA resorted to violence in Marrakech stadium, attacking the security forces and causing extensive damage to hundreds of seats. Their act of violence was purportedly a response to the prohibition of displaying their Tifos (Raad, 2018). Regardless of the credibility of this claim, it is evident that the Ultras' independence from both the club administration and the law governing associations enables the supporters to utilize stadiums as a platform for expressing their political stances and channeling the frustrations of a segment of Moroccan youth, often characterized as unemployed and involved in substance abuse. The videos of the supporters' activities circulated on social media platforms garner significant attention. Their use of the term "Tborisha" or thrill conveys a sense of belonging, akin to the emotions associated with patriotic scenes, such as the recitation of the national anthem by the audience at national team matches or the parades of the royal military forces. The Ultras also demonstrate support for national causes, such as the Moroccan Sahara. For instance, during a football event hosted in Algeria, Nelson Mandela's grandson referred to the Moroccan Sahara as the last colony in Africa, which stirred a political controversy within the African

football association. In response, the Ultras of Raja displayed a Tifos with the message: "Little Mandela, the only colony left in Africa is Orania," alluding to the Algerian conflict with the Kabylie region, which seeks independence (Kasraoui2023).

While the politicization of stadiums in Morocco is a relatively recent development, the use of music as a medium for conveying ideology, both implicitly and explicitly, has been prevalent for several decades. Musical groups such as Nass al Ghiwan, Jil Jilalal, and Lmchaheb, often associated with "committed art," have addressed a range of issues, from social injustice to illegal immigration. However, in the 1990s, Rap music began to gain popularity among young Moroccans. Early Moroccan Rap groups, such as H-Kayne, established in 1996, attempted to blend Western musical influences with local rhythms. Their song "Issawa Style" (2003) was a testament to their recognition of the musical heritage of their hometown, Meknes. These pioneering Moroccan Rappers aimed to strike a balance between preserving the "spirit of the art" as a form of musical dissent and adhering to social values that inherently reject obscenity (Almeida2017,10). Given that television channels and music festivals in Morocco are often state-funded, young artists found it necessary to seek alternative means of expression that operated independently from social or political authorities. Firstly, they organized their own festival called "L'Boulevard," which provided a platform for Moroccan Rappers who cannot afford financial support and offered opportunities to emerging talents (Almeida 2017, 36). Secondly, they harnessed the power of social media to connect with a vast audience. This approach not only enabled them to reach thousands of followers but also afforded them financial independence, as they were compensated based on the number of views their video clips generated.

In 2006, Tawfiq Hazib, a prominent Moroccan Rap figure known as Don Bigg, released an album titled "Mgharba Tal Moute," which translates to "Moroccans until death." The album featured songs addressing various social issues and political corruption. Notably, he criticized the inherent contradictions within Moroccan society, as evidenced in his song "Bladi Blad." In this song, he touched upon topics such as terrorism, Islamist elections, and unemployment. To add depth to his music, Don Bigg incorporated the voice of Al Ghiwan's member, Boujmei (1944-1974), thereby invoking a sense of continuity with the spirit of insurgency. However, it's worth noting that his language in these songs is often offensive, and he occasionally uses foreign words. During the height of the Arab Spring, Don Bigg released another song. This time, the song featured the participation of public actors and was accompanied by a music video laden with symbolism. The themes in this song were somewhat reminiscent of his earlier work, as he satirically targeted various groups claiming to represent the people. This included criticism of unqualified parliament members; the youth symbolized as "Brahesh Wekalin Ramdan" (children who call for personal freedom), and the Islamists referred to as "Rbaet Lhaya" (the bearded people). Despite their ideological disparities, the Islamists had chosen to form alliances. Essentially, the rapper was questioning the credibility of the activists involved in the 20 February movement and the reliability of their "reformist" agenda. Don Bigg's perspectives in these songs aligned with the state's discourse, which encourages citizens to actively participate in elections and vote for candidates who uphold the sacred triangle of values: God, the nation, and the monarchy.

On the other hand, some young singers will go further by referring to the king in their songs. Mouad Belaghout's "Lhaked", or the upset, was among the voices that could criticize the monarchy and engaged with the protesters, singing against social injustice and calling for revolution. The young singer had been arrested three times for several crimes, including defaming the police, calling them "Klab Dawla", the dogs of the state. His political engagement was recognized by several human rights agents, and he received a prize for freedom of speech in London. The opposite singer moved to Belgium as his political asylum, yet his later songs received less attention, unlike other rappers who focused on the artistic side of their clips, especially at the visual level, more than the political Engagement.

The tracks of Rap artists, including notable figures like Muslim, Dizzy Dross, and 7liwa, received millions of views on YouTube in a short period. Audiences of these artists engage in heated debates defending their preferred artist's style and lyrics. Essentially, young Rap music fans do not form a homogenous group, as different artists try to cater to various categories within the Moroccan youth. For instance, Muslim lyrics can be considered less offensive compared to those of Dizzy Dross and 7liwa. Notably, 7liwa found himself in a dispute with Don Bigg, who released a video featuring provocative lyrics attacking the "new generation" of Rappers. In this video, Don Bigg presented himself as a master of the craft while portraying the others as his subordinates. Dizzy Dross responded with a track titled "Moutanabbi," featuring lyrics laden with sexual offenses directed at Hazeb and his family. Dizzy Dross emphasized the change in Don Bigg's discourse following the receipt of a royal medal and his alignment with "Ayasha," or the supporters of the monarchy. While Dross's song may not overtly reveal a political agenda, the clash highlights the belief that independence from authority, if not outright disobedience, is a fundamental aspect of Rap music. In 2023, Dizzy Dros released a controversial song titled "M3A L3ECHRANE" (Among Friends), in which he addressed several social and political issues. These included the situation of Salafi prisoners, the ideological conflict between Islamists and secularists, and an assessment of the government's performance. Notably, in the song's lyrics, Dizzy Dros stated, "I only seek the approval of God and my mother because I might not get the palace approval." This statement underscores his commitment to maintaining a critical attitude toward the political landscape in Morocco despite various developments, such as the election of a new government. The spirit of disobedience is prominently portrayed in the song "Acha Sha'b" (Long Live the People), produced by three singers in 2019 who openly criticized the state and its institutions, including the monarchy. The song used aggressive language, even defaming the

king personally. One of the singers, Lgnawi, faced arrest, but the charges were related to an incident in one of his videos, not the song itself. Despite a decline in political tension initiated by the 20 February movement, certain Rap artists continue to employ their music as a platform to express the dissatisfaction of the younger generation. Notably, the song "'Acha Sha'b" garnered over forty million views, underscoring its significant impact.

Beyond the tradition of Rap clashes, artists frequently use live videos to react to various issues. These include topics like the budget allocated by the Ministry of Culture to certain artists who have submitted their projects. Dizzy Dross, for example, criticized Noaman Lhlou, a Moroccan singer and composer, questioning the need for public funding for his song when he could produce it without relying on taxpayers' money. Lhlou's perspective reflects a common negative perception held by certain "classic" musicians and other segments of society regarding Rap music. This perception stems from the belief that Rap music often involves a limited number of musicians, employs slang or "Klam Sharie," and relies on relatively few instruments. This debate between the two singers not only highlights an artistic difference between formal and informal styles but also underscores a generation gap, with Lhlou representing a more traditional mindset and Dizzy Dross embodying a more revolutionary one.

Despite the openness and revolutionary character of Rap culture, female singers have received limited recognition from fans of this music genre. They address similar themes as their male counterparts but also defend their role as female Rappers, such as the case of the singer Khtek, who uses profane language in her performance. Moreover, they tackle issues related to women, including prostitution, such as the case of Krtas Nssa. However, their involvement in Rap may be viewed as inappropriate due to its associations with youth deviance, alcohol, and drugs. For example, Ilham al Arbaoui, also known as Ily, identifies herself as the daughter of the singer Stati, but he denies her claim. Many social media followers justify his stance based on her perceived disreputable behavior, which includes smoking and engaging in sexual affairs with other Rappers. During a performance at the "L'Boulevard" festival, the audience reacted negatively by throwing bottles at Ily, preventing her from completing her performance. The controversy surrounding the presence of female artists in the Rap domain may be attributed to the inherent nature of Rap as a street art form and the societal boundaries that constrain the visibility and behaviors of girls in public spaces.

Recently, some politicians and scholars have advocated for "Tamghrabit," or Moroccanism, emphasizing the need for recognizing linguistic diversity, institutionalizing national identity, and integrating it into the public space. This integration should encompass aspects of both Arab and Amazigh cultures (Sguenfle 2021). While the emphasis on patriotic values during times of internal crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic or in response to external threats, is certainly essential, it may prove futile if the youth are still perceived as minors, lacking self-awareness, and unable to lead not only online campaigns but also revolutions capable of toppling decades of tyranny. Furthermore, while some young Moroccans express their discontent through activities like stadium protests and music, others do so indirectly through illegal immigration. In 2021, the world witnessed shocking scenes of hundreds of Moroccans, primarily young people, including girls, attempting to cross the sea to reach Ceuta following a period of political tension with Spain. This episode was just one in a series of attempts to fulfill the "European dream." Regardless of the claims that the state may have employed minors to exert pressure on its Mediterranean neighbor or the profiles of the immigrants, the sight of children swimming to escape their homeland is disheartening. This is especially true given the high rate of unemployment and the limited impact of the national initiative for human development in reducing poverty.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, this research delved into the myriad ways in which young Moroccans exercise their agency and amplify their social and political visibility. It underscored the profound impact of social change on their engagement. King Mohammed VI's initiatives to modernize the state, coupled with the rise of the internet and social media, have given rise to a new generation of Moroccan youth. With formal institutions like political parties and workers' unions waning in influence, young Moroccans have turned to alternative, informal platforms for expression. Notably, the Ultras and Rap Music have emerged as prominent channels for their voices.

The Ultras have transformed the stadium from a simple entertainment venue into a platform for articulating collective opinions and advocating for national and Arab causes. Their independence from traditional authority and fixed ideologies has positioned them as representatives of a significant segment of Moroccan youth, who readily incorporate Ultras chants into their protests. Rap music, deeply rooted in street culture, provides another avenue for young Moroccans to convey their concerns and daily struggles. Some Rap artists boldly express political views, critiquing formal institutions like the police and the monarchy engaging in spirited debates against more conventional figures, emblematic of a generational divide within Moroccan society.

Nevertheless, it is essential to acknowledge the gender disparities within the Ultras and Rap music scenes, as both remain predominantly male domains. This gender gap potentially hinders young females from effectively raising their concerns within these realms. Furthermore, the study's primary reliance on content and discourse analysis is a limitation. The absence of other qualitative data sources, such as interviews with Moroccan youth, Rap artists, or Ultras members, represents a constraint on the

study. Additionally, the variation in political engagement among different Ultras groups calls for a more nuanced examination of the factors contributing to this disparity in Ultras discourse. Moreover, the varying political stances of Rap artists—some distancing themselves from politics while others remain deeply engaged—highlight the need for further investigation into the underlying factors driving these disparities.

Considering these limitations, future research endeavors should aim to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted landscape of Moroccan youth expressions. As the boundaries of traditional institutions continue to blur, it becomes increasingly crucial to explore the evolving dynamics of contemporary Moroccan society and youth activism. This research can serve as a catalyst for future investigations, shedding light on the ever-changing panorama of Morocco's socio-political landscape.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Publisher's Note: All claims expressed in this article are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of their affiliated organizations, or those of the publisher, the editors and the reviewers.

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