

# The Cultural Switch Gear in the Arab Spring of Morocco

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## Abstract

Adapting a famous Weberian metaphor, we explore cultural dimensions of the 2011 social uprising in Morocco. The latter seems to usher in modest political change and some lifting of consciousness, but it has the potential promise of much more to come. The crucial point we make in this study is that no change, institutional or other, takes place in a cultural vacuum except just possibly in wholly revolutionary times—during which old rules, guidelines and meanings no longer apply—which these circumstances are not. Essentially, the new potentials are lived out and experienced in old cultural patterns. In this respect, we examine the role of maraboutic and Islamist cultural forms in the current conjuncture in Morocco. For most subalterns, meaning and action do and will take place in and through these local cultural designs, but whether such local traditional cultural structures will crystallize and calcify so as to freeze and reverse progressive developments or mollify and adapt, within their own vectors and logics, to accommodate change and aid a specifically Moroccan coming into modernity is a matter for careful cultural analysis allied with culturally sensitive modes of politics, influence and interventions on the ground. In this context, the activities of the 20<sup>th</sup> February movement and their use of new media are also examined. We conclude that new revolutionary cultural forces may not be at play in Morocco today but imagining and building believable counter-hegemonic cultural struggles which can lay the groundwork for really fundamental change are a possibility.

**Keywords:** Arab Spring, subaltern consciousness, popular Islam, Islamism, maraboutism, saints, Morocco, the 20<sup>th</sup> February movement.

## 1. Introduction

In any given society there are always gaps and mismatches between material circumstances, material changes, political conjunctures, cultural forms and practical consciousness. We want to specify the mosaic a little more closely in the case of Morocco and its subaltern classes through the adoption and application of a famous metaphor from Weber where he compared culture's role to the role of a railroad switchman. He averred that "not ideas, but material and ideal interests, directly govern men's conduct. Yet, very frequently the 'world images' that have been created by 'ideas' have, like switchmen, determined the tracks along which action has been pushed by the dynamic interest" (1946, 280). Weber (1930/1992) showed us in *The Protestant Ethic and Spirit of Capitalism* how the cultural switchman embodied in religious formulations influenced how people worked, spent their money and organized their economic lives.

We argue that the role of the 'switch gear' of the Arab Spring has been underestimated and is complex; Morocco is our example. We see maraboutism and Islamist organizations, as well as conflicts within them, as cultural forms that are crucial sources and frames of meaning during the current social upheavals. Western influenced secular media and commodity forms are also growing in influence and may be important new centers of switching gear. All can be involved in complex hybrid switching operations. Liberal doctrines of emancipation à la western philosophy and practice may be wholly misplaced and certainly cannot be imposed as a guide or framework to these switching operations. There is enough historical and sociological work available to show that average Moroccan Muslims tend to dichotomise the world differently. They do not rationalize it in terms of a binary division between the natural and supernatural. As members of a faith community, they are socialized to render the discursive into the real with miracles, mysticism, divinations and epiphanies taking on material form and power. Desiccated abstract doctrines from the West mean little in the face of available and palpable local options bedizened with symbol, ritual and spirituality.

In this article we deal with three main social types: Islamist, maraboutic and secularist.<sup>1</sup> The difference between these is not an issue of paradigm but of degree of involvement and the prioritizing of one of the resources of the cultural mix. Moroccan culture is a terrain of negotiation and exchange between class, ethnicity, 'race', gender, generation and sexuality. These are cultural forces pulling the subject in different directions. A hybrid compromise equilibrium of hegemony amalgamating the different types of cultural conflict ranging from western liberal like notions to traditional or Islamist ones is established; think for instance of some female bodies dressed in tight jeans, a codified American style of dress, and wearing *hijab* as a sign of religiosity, respectability, or Islamic consciousness. These hybridities, however, are not stable and do not proceed under a cultural logic alone or in settled hegemonic orders. There is the possibility for unexpected and forced collisions on the railway tracks. Collisions mean that some of these life worlds/repertoires may be forced into mutual critique, mutual penetration, mutual invalidation, invalidation of one against another, etc. Similarly 'multiple subjectivities' might not survive

the concentrations of the ‘modernity shock.’ Cultural forms and the switching gear do not remain in a steady state in moments of crisis. The Marxian critic, Raymond Williams (1973/1980), speaks of situations where there are possibilities of the deconstruction of the dominant ideology during times of exceptional change and creativity. But all of this still runs along cultural tracks of some kind except in the wholly unlikely event of the emergence of a bottom-up new revolutionary culture and worldview. Recent uprisings in Morocco and more widely are making dramatic changes whose possibilities for daily living arrangements are not yet clear to the people; the political situation may worsen especially since new ideologies are not yet constructed, illiteracy not yet combated and dominant cultural worldviews not yet transcended. At the least, revolutionary movements should evolve their own anti-hegemonic cultures; otherwise they will fall within the grip of the old deep-rooted politico-cultural patterns of co-optation, clientelism, patronage with personalized relations merely reproducing them, running along all too familiar cultural tracks.

The Arab insurrections arose as a response to the ‘unsettled times’ of massive demographic shift and multiple failure in the economic sphere. They started as political revolutions that sought to establish new political systems without giving an explicit role for cultural meanings, traditional or emergent. The danger here is that contemporary political developments may be switched into old cultural meanings removing the ‘con’ from contemporary so making them only temporary and producing the experiences of anomie all over again. If cultural awareness and at best innovation do not lead the process from now on there is the danger that unbridgeable gaps will remain between new political institutions and the local cultural bed, and received cultural forms unable to become politically adaptive, especially among the silent majorities untrained in innovative social and cultural practices. The new possibilities may simply run down the old tracks of a cultural mindset based on tribalism/segmentarity and booties (see al Jabiri 1990, 1992), and ideological survivals of the rentier-state. What existing and emergent cultural resources can still be used for genuine switches into an ethics of democracy to be properly internalized by subaltern populations? Is there a scope for a micro cultural switching gear that may be made operational through cultural awareness and self-awareness and may be directable for political purpose?

## 2. Maraboutic Cultural Forms

Not always in consciously recognised ways, maraboutic structures, cultural symbols and schemas traverse large tracts of Moroccan life. It is a genetic part of religious culture reinforcing other aspects of religious sensibility and symbolic cosmology in various hybrid formations. From the outside maraboutism may seem to lay foundations for the popular acceptance of authoritarian rule and the successful exercise of power where even apparent resistances may be seen ultimately as merely socially reproductive. But seen from the ethnographic resources of a ‘bottom up’ subaltern perspective, we find surprising seeds of rebellious, alternative and emancipatory perspectives that have actually always been there and might be contained for the moment but which through shocks of the modern might find new political attachments in the great awakening sweeping Morocco. In so far as they hold to traditional maraboutic beliefs, Moroccan subalterns so to speak stumble through life as secular innocents thinking their steps and mis-steps are pre-formed by Fate (*al-maktub* [the Written]). But in the present conjuncture, it is increasingly likely that their stumbling might be revealed to them as actually determined by secular forces and structured by human hands. Resistance then might take on a more material rather than mystic form. For we argue that there really is an historical resource to be mined in a different way, an historical articulation of proto-resistant forms and subject positions worked through maraboutic mystical experience. Modern subjects can feel secular rage in part driven by maraboutic structures and predispositions. Current and recent events may force a re-arrangement of repertoires and skills to render the resistant subject real rather than fictitious.

The shocks of modernity and the Arab Spring are real enough. The asymmetrical rapports between the masses and structures of power are being eroded by the constant friction of the new waves of modernization. New expectations arise and are not being met on the ground either by economic development or local and national governments. Grievances persist about basic services and widespread, growing under-and-un-employment. How these factors are played out with respect to the maraboutic cultural terrain depends on a range of contingencies, one of which is the perception and operation of the cultural switch gear. The wave of political transactions sparked by the Arab Spring has heightened the stakes in Morocco. Economically fragile and conflict-ridden, the country stands at historic cross-roads. Will the cultural switch gear allow peaceful progress towards institutionalization of new forms of knowledge/power settlements in governmental institutions with strong legitimation or produce, violent and uncontrollable clashes at great cost to the country and region. Still, another possibility is of course a continuing uneasy state of conflict de-escalation and authoritarian crisis management led by the monarchy. We argue that a crucial component for achieving progress towards the first outcome is attention to the cultural switch gear in exploring all ways of channeling maraboutic tendencies through training, and practical interventions into secular discursive forms shaping resilient institutional platforms to make demands and outline social priorities.

Among other sources, this is to seek identity, redress and counter-power not through the workings of Fate, fall of rain and the “divine controlled economy,” but through a renewed social contract between the state and its subjects on the basis of political legitimacy and accountability. New forms of knowledge have to canalize

maraboutic tendencies, to discipline the subaltern subject in self-reliance so as to change the course of destiny rather than leave it to mystic determinism. The cultural schema of philanthropy as offered by saints has to be modified into political demands for essential services, water, sanitation, food, education, healthcare and housing. The cultural schema of being a weak permeable body traversed by ghosts has to be rendered as a cultural idiom coined in an endeavor to grapple with economic and political forces, which can be re-molded as personal responsibility for conduct. The maraboutic subject has to be startled to a new reality of direct participation in material and social change.

What are the traditional sources of maraboutic resistance whose impetus might be clothed in new institutional forms disciplined by the forces of modernity? In Moroccan tradition, Sultans and saints rank at the top of the hierarchal social structure and are believed to be endowed with hereditary powers transmitted to them by their holy lineage. The authority of sultanic rulers and saints is represented in popular imagination and cultural narrative as a mystic power with non-human attributes. Deep-rooted in popular imagination is the belief that sultans and saints inherit a spiritual force (*baraka*) that can create miracles and save people from distress. The figures of the sultan and saint have been held in wonder and awe, also surrounded with taboos and benedictions, and culturally represented as distributing centers of charity. The philanthropic work of these religio-political authorities is part and parcel of the exercise of political power in Morocco.

Historically, the cultural soil of resistance to political domination was mostly formed from maraboutic components. Moroccan cities and countryside are littered with marabouts, holy shrines made of the burying grounds of local saints. Subalterns imagined saints as saviours with miraculous powers that could steer the course of their destiny. Unable to gain some measure of control over their own lives, they put their faith in the all-powerful saints to grant them some kind of magical emancipation. In popular imagination, those holy protective figures were conjured up in the image of miracle workers who could burst forth water from the underground, evoke food from nowhere, heal incurable diseases, resurrect the dead, talk to them, walk on sea water, talk to animals and inanimate things, travel outside time, foresee the unknown, abstain from food and drink, know the unlikely spots where the treasures of the earth were to be found. They used those powers to protest on behalf of and lead local subalterns.

The most illustrious example from popular culture concerning saints' protection of land and people is their historical saga of triumph over the Black Sultan (*sultan l-khal*). The Black Sultan was a symbol of ruling terror and oppression in the popular mind. Historically, it was a nickname given by the *'amma* (commoners) to Abu l-Hasan l-Marini or Mulay Ismail due perhaps to their black color. Mulay Ismail was reputed for his repressive arbitrary cruelty and promiscuous liturgies of torture and beheadings in public, intended to fill people's hearts with terror (cf. Crapanzano 1973, 35-36). According to the hagiographic tradition, no earthly power could stand his hostility save for the *baraka* of saints. Al-Haj Thami al-Glawi was a *qaid* who was also nicknamed the Black Sultan in the Haouz (Pascon 1984). In 1958, he was the owner of 12000 ha of land, and had shares in cobalt and manganese mines. He also monopolized the distribution of water in the region of Marrakech, imposing taxes on people and controlling the olive and almond crops commerce (Halim 2000, 146). According to the hagiographic tradition, no earthly power could stand against these overwhelming powers, only the *baraka* of saints could serve as a shield.

Until recently, the binary opposition—saints vs. the Black Sultan—structured the cultural worldview of the maraboutic society. Its legends convey stories of the war between the Black sultan and saints. At bottom, the Black Sultan can be considered to be a mythic symbol, an embodiment of people's fearful attitude towards any Sultan or official whose authority was oppressive in the history of Morocco. In cultural narratives, it is stressed that saints can defeat the Black Sultan signifying that the latter's power is profane whereas the *baraka* of saints derives from God's immeasurable sacred power, finally the only source of justice on earth. It is narrated for instance that Sidi Mas'oud Ben Hsin, a saint in Doukkala, aborted an attack by the Sultan *l-Khal* by hurling against him swarms of bees and gadflies. Ben Yeffu, another saint in the same region, forced the Black Sultan to submit to his power by the help of a multi-headed jinni. A popular version of the legend narrated by some *shurfa*<sup>2</sup> from Duwar al-Kudya in al-Gharbiya area goes that Ben Yeffu went out to face the Sultan *l-Khal* accompanied with a black jinni with seven heads. In a challenging confrontation between the two, the sultan commanded his army to catch the saint while the latter ordered his servant jinni to topple the Sultan from his horse and lift him to the sky. The jinni did as he was enjoined, and the Sultan cried *tslim* (an expression of surrender) at which the saint ordered the jinni to set him back upon his horse, upon which the Sultan quickly fled (for a full treatment of the legend see Maarouf 2007). Such legends of saints' triumph over the 'Black Sultan' have multiplied in various historical guises over a very long period. In their hagiographies, saints always emerged as justicers defending the meek.

If the masses have trusted in the power of saints to lead their struggle against oppression be it domestic or colonial, this does not mean that they themselves took no part or action in it. Though they held their saints in veneration and awe, and at times willed some resistance by proxy, the social fact is that Moroccans followed saints<sup>3</sup> in practical as well as spiritual ways and were recruited in their armies to fight liberation wars. Overrating the *baraka* of saints was an incentive to the subalterns to stand their ground against oppression and not to give up the

fight.

We argue that these emotional bonds and forces can be transferred to new social formations and modern day overt resistance as the symbol of saint declines in power. The *intifada* of Beni Bouayach in the Rif in 2012 evinces how the traditional reservoirs of resistance may somehow coalesce with the new wave turning over the cultural soil in Morocco. The killing of Kamal al-Hassani, one of the graduate unemployed anti-regime activists, turned him into a symbolic hero and ever since the town has been a boiling cauldron of sporadic protests, sit-ins and demonstrations despite citizens' exposure to severe detentions and repressions.

More generally, the maraboutic scene continues today across the countryside in the many holy maraboutic shrines still drenched in saintly chants, dances and perfumes. Maraboutic rituals are intended to fulfil individual needs, especially psychological and emotional ones producing comfort, hope and relief from uncertainty, anomie and unhappiness. They also respond to the immediate needs of society by trying to answer to problems of sickness and economic and social malaise, and maintain social cohesion. Folk music thrives with a plethora of maraboutic spirits and tunes evoked in ecstatic trance dances (*hadras*) and jinn evictions. The epistemic foundations of these practices are bizarre to the schooled who rationalize things in terms of material empirical beliefs and seem to be mystifying rather than mystic, serving finally only social and political obfuscation. However, we argue that the surviving and still-working culture of possession and maraboutism may indeed shed light on what most Moroccans feel towards the current political and economic order and on how they may resist political domination and economic injuries. Deep down in their cultural logics, possession rituals and trance dancing can be understood as forms of cultural resistance against domination.

There are many strands to our argument. Theoretically speaking, spirit possession presupposes the permeability of the body; powerful external forces which could not be assimilated in their abstract forms enter as divinities, ancestors, ghosts, jinns, that have a hold on the body. They are still seen as separate and distinct—certainly detachable—from the body, ethnically alien and foreign to the group. But they are somehow known and capable of some bidding and exist within a daily realm. This is a way of sensing other incomprehensibly large and abstract forces which cannot be named directly in local cultural and concrete terms. We argue that there are challenging forms here suitable for transplant to modern dilemmas in this mystic soil. For instance, the spectral court assembled during jinn eviction is at least a court—more than most Moroccans get in normal social life for the many economic injuries to which they are subject. With possession at least the human hosts stand in some equal capacity with a personalized, scoped in the present body, if still incomprehensible force. This is not the crushing of insects without human color and imagination. If not controlling their fate, at least in an unlikely swallowing, there is a condensation of outlandish and truly frightening structured forces into the more amiable personification of the jinn, mischievous, answering back and at least partly controllable. The ingestion of wider social forces as an internal habitation at least recognizes the importance of a human scaling of impersonal forces. Further, the dual occupation of the body at least opens up, practically if not philosophically, just what the 'autonomous' subject is supposed to be and to whose tune or to what discourse it is supposed to dance, all closed matters in the dominant register of how subalterns are supposed to comport themselves.

The trance dance is a strange spiritual-cum-structural cultural hybrid which in its concrete but simultaneously spectral performances show the forgiven self in mystic jerking communion with the universal powers of Fate rendered in aesthetic human as well as occult ways. Let us not forget the upwards and collective generation of much of the forms: the asymmetrical rhythms of the more violent trance dances come not from the *shurfa* (noble lineage of the Prophet) but from and express the wider feelings of the grass roots maraboutic community (commoners). Trance dances show tension with, rather than annihilation from, the freight of history. This religio-cultural aesthetic grappling with unknown powers shows that Moroccans have never passively capitulated, in practice and imagination, to the grips of political and economic power.

Of course it remains true that maraboutic politics of resistance are trapped in a vicious cycle of power co-opted in advance because the heteronomous constituted subject of maraboutic culture is enabled to enact symbolic re-articulation and displacement of power but without 'inventing' new forms of subjectivity or destabilizing entrenched forms of being and knowledge. In this sense, maraboutic resistance spins in a vortex of authoritarian relations fixed up in a priori ways by the maraboutic establishment. Counter-hegemonic aspects of trance dances and jinn evictions prevail but subalterns cannot through them escape their social position though they can sometimes escape the conventions that go with it. They can somehow be free at a symbolic level, transgress and be outrageous and throw out the norms at least for a while. Of course this can also be seen as a 'ruse of power' to licence a blowing off of steam, but those alternative meanings remain latent all the time and may be raised anew under appropriate socio-political conditions. Ecstatic religion has kept seeds alive that can be sown anew on different cultural soil. So far, authoritarian hegemony in Morocco universalises its needs and interests as the interests of society as a whole and most subalterns subscribe to it. The situation seems perfectly 'natural.' The moral and charitable leadership of the monarch also bind them and incorporate them into the prevailing structure of power. But with the Arab Spring, gossiping about the astronomical wealth of major national power brokers may scandalize the public, and the difficulty of reforming the system with these groups still ensconced in privilege may

awaken the silent majority of Moroccans to the hidden truth of their exploitation and put their loyalty to the current political system at stake.

It is interesting that there are some anti-hegemonic jinns who overtly challenge Islamic morality, political authority and western commoditisation, yet even these jinns are basically reproductive, hyperbolic power seekers who drive their mediums to subaltern loyalty and obedience to their commands, thereby repeating collective local archetypes introjected from incessant daily exposure to hegemonic agents of the Makhzen (traditional form of state) who left an indelible scar in popular imagination through their misuse of power and constant menace to subaltern populations.

Generally, the survival of jinn eviction and trance dance among the subalterns signifies that social emancipation has not occurred yet and cultural resistance can be seen as a displaced and imaginary activity in which the oppressed exorcise the danger of the imaginary without either daring to face or being mindful of the danger of the real oppressor. Any fear-inspiring coercive menace coming from social realities or unidentified powers may be personified and represented to the imagination under the in-visible form of jinn or evil. They are symbolized with a name, shape and social conduct. Jews, for instance, whom Arabs cannot defeat in reality, are culturally represented as unbeatable spirits. There is a clear consensus among curers and patients alike about Jewish jinn's surpassing powers. They are thought to be the most harmful spirits. Just like their human counterparts, they are believed to be mendacious, may torture the body they visit and may delude the healer during their eviction. In brief, the cultural representation of terror in popular imagination in the form of spirits symbolises that subaltern cultural resistance through evictions and trance dances remains a cultural practice which can easily be incorporated back into the system, a symbolic space for subalterns to exert some power.

Still possession shows aspects of resistance and self-hood that may expose and undermine the prevailing power if social circumstances change. So far it has legitimated social hierarchies and asymmetrical relations of power by revitalizing them in rituals. But containment is not defeat. The seeds of rebellion and anti-hegemonic attitudes still lurk beneath the mystic avatars. They are we insist always available for new cultural attachments under new social, political and economic conditions. The resistance and self-hood remain as resources for alternative kinds of expression under new forms and within new conjunctures. As an example, Nas al-Ghiwan (Singing People), a famous musical band who boomed in the seventies and beyond, achieved tremendous success because their tunes identified with maraboutic melodies of trance dance (*hadra*) and Sufi litanies. They were influenced by the cultural schemata of their age, called for saints, extolled their qualities and immersed their followers in a trance dance (*l-hal*) and so attracted millions of Moroccans but they were also railing against moral dishonesty and corruption in Moroccan society and introduced at least seemingly progressive ideas on the scene. Nas al-Ghiwan launched a cultural resistance in which the voice of protest was carried in the winds of spirits and trance dances. Now, it is rap music that leads the challenge and dissolves fear by seeking confrontation and singing about the minutiae of daily living and the nitty-gritty of how subalterns deal with structural oppression in multiple ways. Rap music is daring and cleaves to a degree the barricades of power, which puts the state on the defensive leading to the persecution of some rebel rappers.

Our basic point is that an awareness of the cultural switch gear during these unsettled times for Moroccan society must grasp the continuing importance of maraboutism, popular culture and subaltern identities in order to have a chance of channeling their cultural orientations towards societal projects that inspire real and not simply symbolic change. But instead of organizing musical festivals like Mawazine to entertain the masses, we need to materially empower popular cultural objects with systems of production and distribution to enable subalterns to have a source of income thus giving new meanings to cultural products. If marabouts were famous for alms-giving and represented umbrellas of protection to the poor in the past, cultural schemata of this sort should now be secularized and transferred to civic society, solidarity organizations and state welfare institutions but with new cultural meanings. Baraka and mystic powers should be channeled into personal initiative and self dependence. Instead of receiving occasional alms, people should be given opportunities to raise their own capital and start their own trade or business. Cultural meanings should be formulated in terms of action as well as symbols and representations. We think of the metaphor of the 'waterman' drawn from Maarouf's field notes. The waterman is not a boatman but someone who can fill the empty saucepan of the poor with food. The metaphor of the waterman (*mul ma*) comes from the story of a prostitute who sells sex in her house. Early in the morning, she fills the saucepan with water and puts it on fire. When her children ask her why she is boiling water, she says that this is a favorable augury that may bring a waterman (sex client) to the house to fill in the sauce pan with meat and vegetables. New societal institutions must be the new material watermen filling the symbolic vessels still held forth not with alms but with self-enabling possibilities.

### 3. Islamist Cultural Forms

Islamism finds its social bed with significant sources of recruits in marginalized and economically deprived social settings although the direct link between poverty and Islamism is always questioned (Chekroun 2005; Dialmy 2005, Lamchichi 1994; Pargeter 2009). Islamism grows in areas that have been structurally marginalized over

generations, resulting in huge disparities in development with other parts of the country. The case of the Rif in Morocco cursed by the former King is a good case in point. He subdued its earliest uprising in 1958 and 1959. Ennadhour, Al-Hoceima and Tetouan were punished in 1984 after food riots and Hassan II called them savages. Al-Youssufiya, a poor stop-off for rural migrant workers, was also a cradle of Islamism. It was the social bedrock for Ttakfir wa l-Hijra (Excommunication and Exodus) led by Youssef Fikri (see Dialmy 2005), or according to Pargeter, a key centre for the Assirate al-Moustaqim (Straight Path) also said to be founded by Yousef Fikri, Justice and Spirituality and Renewal and Reform. One of the Casablanca bombers in May 2003, Youssef Addad, and Abdel Fettah Raydi, who blew himself in an Internet Café in Casablanca 2007, were also from al-Youssufiya. Casablanca, the Economic Capital city, has been a melting pot of radical ideas with cramped rural migrants on its margins providing a fertile ground for radical Islam which seems to provide certainty and promise. Most recruits are sons of migrant peasants who firmly believe in the strong Muslim moral code. Islamism has been flourishing in *al-ahya' shsha'biya* (popular neighborhoods) either in old *medina-s* or in the outskirts of the city in the form of shantytowns.<sup>4</sup> Shantytowns revive the tribal structures and old values in new social relations which offer many possibilities for furthering the Islamist desire to uphold conservative Islamic morality against foreign cultural invasion and westernization of the elites symbolized so richly in, ways of life and value systems in the rich enclaves of Casablanca far secluded from the masses (cf. Khosrokhavar 2005—he also speaks of how young Muslims of the megalopolis violently defend their conservative beliefs against what they perceive as Western liquidities making an all-out assault on their Islamic faith). Such slums haunting the margins of society are becoming the new lands of dissidence (*ssiba*) to the government.

In actual fact, economic deprivation alone does not explain radicalization. There are many roots for cultural radicalism which is anyway multifaceted. The cultural heritage of political resistance, poverty, marginalization, anomie, social conservatism, flagrant monopoly of rent-based polity and economy by prominent families, mass education and mass urbanization, rural migration, capitalism, globalization, and international grievances all combine in a potent mix to produce cultural extremism. People at the bottom of social space may pick up on any relevant set of symbols to deal with their social problems. Islamism answers to the contradictions faced by social conservatism as it collides with modernization in the expanding city. While the regime establishes modern institutions, creates modern concepts and laws to promote modernity and secularism, it is often unable to create the social forces and mental structures that sustain them.

The conservative propensity is also evident in public moderate Islamist discourse on the Moroccan cultural scene. The questions that the Justice and Development Party [PJD] raised in parliament were usually moral in nature. Moroccan newspapers observed in 2008 that the PJD mobilized 4,000 protestors against what was rumored to be a gay wedding in l-Qsarl-Kebir. Justice and Spirituality (JS), Abdessalam Yassine's followers, set up informal morality tribunals at universities in the 1990's to punish inappropriate student conduct. They also divided the sexes on some beach camps such as Bou Naim near Casablanca and l-Harshan near El Jadida where females scarfed and attired, swam in seclusion, a form of leisure known as *halal entertainment*. In its early campaigns, *Shshabiba al-Islamiya* (Islamic Youth) aimed to bring about a moral community promoting bans on alcohol and prostitution, and demanding the institutionalization of *Shari'a* law. This reformist Islam typically attracts the rural boy who comes from a rural conservative social background. For this usually uprooted itinerant population, the local marabout is of limited use; he can cure minor sicknesses or mediate some personal wish. But collective purist Islam seems to provide the best trust for its adherents to improve their material conditions and bring the hope of emancipation. Those who move to the city to study or work may be fascinated by this traditional reformist discourse and may in turn act as propagandists in shantytowns.

In the conventional sense of the word and in the past, *derbs* (neighborhoods) were castles inaccessible to strangers. They signified imagined communities founded on spatial closeness that entailed, assumed and produced social and emotional closeness. It is still the driving force that cements shantytowns and popular neighborhoods together and stands as some kind of resource against the hardships subalterns daily endure. The codified space of *derb* trains its inmates on group feeling and neighborhood altruism, thus activating the cultural schema of tribal '*asabiyya*. In popular neighborhoods, the *derb* is not a physical space alone but a pattern of meanings; the pressures of life are difficult to manage without the support of neighbors and relatives. Therefore, living in the same social space into close contact evolves among the neighbors a sense of belonging to the same "tribe"/*derb*. Like in a tribe, to quote Kayapinar, their "daily social intercourse, friendly association, long familiarity, and the companionship that results from growing up together, having the same wet nurse, and sharing the other circumstances of death and life," (2008, 385) all generate their '*asabiyya* and endow them with a monolithic identity of being *wlad derb* (the children of the same neighborhood).

Within the moral spirit and solidarity of the *derb*, there emerge 'prophets' of what-to-be and what-to-do, i.e., informal sometimes violent justicers who attempt to combat delinquency and moral depravity. Islamist ideologies may inform such action helping to organize youths into intolerant morality defenders but also directing abhorrence towards those at the top of society, who keep the riches for themselves. It has to be emphasized that the Islamic impetus is only one element in the complex and steamy cultural atmosphere of the shantytown. The

tumult and emotional effervescence that blaze inside are the result of the collective congestion of hate, social despair and state of paralysis in which subalterns live. As well as being attracted by Islamist ideologies, youths can expend their energies when they come across a little cash on cigarettes, *shisha*, hashish, alcohol, prostitution and other sorts of toxicomania. To deal with their frustrations, adults in their turn may resort to jinn eviction in ritual dances, and ceremonial acts of magical emancipation.

It is interesting that via the internet revolution, there appear new *derbs* online creating new cultural spaces enabling radical Islamist ideas to migrate trans-nationally and help form up groups of militants from different nationalities; ideas may circulate via CDs, satellite channels, websites and e-mails beyond the state's control. From perusing media accounts and state reports it can be ascertained that the organizational structure of the new Islamists' groups seems to be based not on a conventional organization of cells and agents. It is now more a force field of potential rather than tangible structure. When tangible organizations are needed, they are imported or constructed or suddenly appear. Those who would seek to direct the jihadist operations do not need to organize themselves in a conventional manner to maintain their struggle. They do not need furtive gatherings and secret armies. Instead, there are people who appear and disappear, actions that mutate. No leader is required to coordinate all the efforts. One may capture rebels but not necessarily the rebellion, not if the ideals are still rampant, the grievances experienced, and the duty of jihad calling. This Jihad may be blessed by al-Qaeda leaders but the latter has no command or control centre. This is the latest generation of the Islamist commando that may be termed *leaderless jihad* (cf. Sageman 2008).

According to Bell (2002), the great advantage of the force field is that it does not rely on skills and competence. This may come as a bonus to the movement. What is important is the conviction of the recruits. The faithful do not learn their terror trade. They rely on their faith and God's help. The Qur'an substitutes for marksmanship. No one wants to pursue the vocation of a terrorist; they just need to win once. So, there are no professional terrorists who want to improve their skills, but faithful jihadists who rebel against the status-quo and, unlike their parents who have chosen magical emancipation and escapist solutions, they decide, as they see it, to bear arms to change history. Jihad becomes a duty especially in Arab lands occupied by the secular West under the guidance of the 'Great Satan Israel and its ally USA'. Many young Islamists are caught in the dream.

Traditional maraboutic practices of self-flagellation, cultural rituals, violent exorcisms and trance dances performed by subalterns seem to be forsaken by the new generation of young radical Islamists who are saturated by the spirit of Jihad. Emancipation for them comes through a new regime of truth based on the myth of martyrdom. They 'choose' to hold guns to attain their targets. These rebellious youths do not blame it on spirits and jinn but on rulers and their Western guardians. They perceive the alliance of the West with local tyrants as a camouflage to eliminate internal opposition in the name of the "war on terror." They refuse to wear western binoculars to see their own world because the West for them is an expansionist, imperialist capitalistic exploitative power. This does not mean that there has been a cataclysmic and total switch from cultural escapism to radicalism.<sup>5</sup> There has also been an organized post-maraboutic civic movement, a modern, philanthropic, welfarist model. This can be found in modern civic activism, conventional Islamist organizations, and wealthy altruists. The new generation is not all constitutive of *mujahids*; there are pacifiers, consensus-builders, silent bystanders and risk avoiders who withdraw from the political public sphere to watch the political game from afar. There are those who are recruited in the present political game for booties but there exists a minority of awakened activists and players who fight for peaceful democratic change though their modus operandi remains multi-form and unclear.

Our general argument here is that Islamism is not born a monster which can only be exorcised through a civil war. It is a culture that gives birth to radical thought under particular social, economic, and political circumstances and constraints. Not all groups are violent; many are participating in the democratization process of their countries. PJD, for instance, abides by the rules of the political game and legitimates the monarchic rule. Even the now seemingly violent Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), first participated in Algerian politics till its expulsion from the democratic game in 1992 after it won the first round of elections in 1991 when it resorted to arms. Justice and Spirituality (JS), a Moroccan radical group semi-banned by the state, does not accept the rules of the political game but now its discourse is aligned with constitutional reforms (see Arroub 2009; Darif 1995; Tozy 1999). For western politics, the Islamist field is really a "grey zone" (see Brown et al. 2006); westerners feel threatened by Islamist bullies; they think if the monster wins, he may implement policies detrimental to the US and European interests though in the long run local Islamists seem to learn and also participate in their country's stability.

What is crucial for all parties to realize is that reform, political transition and some kind of arrival into Moroccan modernity will only be achieved by matching new social practices with changed quotidian cultural forms, especially religious ones, so changing and developing them. The dual problem Arab revolutions face is not only unseating authoritarian regimes but also the development of adaptive popular cultural forms which are the only long term guarantees of political change. At this stage, they face a looming threat. It lies in a silent majority who may jeopardize the revolution by betraying it in the Gramscian sense of the word.

Islam must adapt itself to the political revolution and modernize itself without resort to extremism. Taking

our cue from Arkoun (1992, 1994), we argue that there is an urgent need to approach mainstream Islamic culture and tradition from a critical interdisciplinary perspective. The main objective is to dismantle the 'unthought' and/or the 'unthinkable' in classical and modern Islamic thought. The 'rethinking of tradition' or even 'rethinking of the Quran' needs to be expanded into a new 'rethinking of Islam in general. By promoting the analysis of the historical, cultural, social, psychological and linguistic contexts, it must be possible to emancipate the 'unthought' and/or the 'unthinkable'—such as the rule of law and civil society—to initiate “a radical re-construction of mind and society in the contemporary Muslim world” (Arkoun 1994, 1). Issues such as the nature of revelation and the holy book, secularism, and individualism are all 'unthought' and 'unthinkable' due to the dominant position of orthodoxy in the history of Islamic culture. The building block in this project is the critique of Islamic reason (Arkoun 1992, 17), the withdrawal from classical *ijtihad* that is restricted by the epistemological constraints established by jurists in the 8th to 9th centuries, and the effectuation of a modern critical analysis of the structure of Islamic reason.

#### 4. New Secular Media-Inspired Cultural Forms

The Moroccan national media which might have played a developmental role promoting national language and culture and carrying out tasks of social and educational development instead devote their efforts to entertainment. Moroccan Radio and Television (RTM) and 2M Maroc frequently schedule football games, music shows, and Turkish and Mexican films dubbed in dialect with very few social and political programs. Print journalism retains only a small presence in Morocco. Circulation does not exceed 650,000 copies per day (al-Yahyaoui as quoted in al-Hilali 2012). The national market of print journalism is made up mainly of political parties' press and a few independent journals; all remain more or less unprofitable. Illiteracy rates are high. Lots of schooled youths spend their free time in internet shops and Cafés where they access chat rooms and websites to download music and films, the price of which exceeds the price of a newspaper but do not read written press. Many professionals such as engineers, doctors, educators, businessmen do not have the cultural habit of reading daily newspapers. Mokhtar al-Harras, a Moroccan sociologist, explained in a press interview that the results of his fieldwork research on print journalism demonstrate that only 9% of youths aged between 15-29 read newspapers, 37% occasionally and 47% not at all. 60% watch foreign satellite channels and the rest watch national ones (cit. in *Liman*, n.d.). The rich are Francophone; yet most newspapers are in Arabic. Newspapers in Arabic constitute about 75% of the market but advertizing goes to newspapers in French. Newspapers are distributed on a small scale concentrated in the urban centers of Casablanca and Rabat which account for 50% of sales. The lack of rapid means of transport makes many regions in Morocco difficult for paper distribution.

As liquid modernity is producing liquid information, the written press in Morocco is ceding its hardly substantial terrain to digital communication. Facebook and Twitter show thousands of messages and videos every minute and citizens exchange information, comments, opinions and advice. Many young people chat on the internet for various reasons. They exchange opinions or information, pursue fun or friendship, sexual relations, explore possibilities for immigration or for intercultural marriages. In an extraordinary development and not one which could have occurred before this popular movement to digitalization, after the Facebook mediated revolution in Tunisia and Egypt, Moroccan Facebookers launched a campaign for political reform which led to collective protests at street level nation-wide on 20 February 2011. It was a spontaneous movement and gradually pushed forward the borders of protest both online and on the ground. This young movement started among young students on Facebook both domestically and overseas. It developed a program of action that helped to unify its very broad and heterodox composition. Text-messages, emails and cell-phone calls coordinated the activities of the movement. It expanded its protests to the countryside and held general assemblies among its activists in different social settings to debate the political demands and reach a consensus. Al Jazeera also played an incentive role across the Arab world fueling protests by using its advanced technology to propagate the Arab Spring discourse of resistance in a totally professional but ideologically biased coverage towards destabilizing authoritarian regimes in the Arab World and reshaping its geopolitical map.

The 20<sup>th</sup> February movement insists on a bottom-up reform based on the sovereignty of the people with a constitutional monarch and a government which outlaws corruption and promotes economic and educational investment as well as the provision of public health care and social security. Ever since that date, each Sunday young protestors in different Moroccan cities and villages take part in street demonstrations to call for political and economic reform. Though the King delivered a speech on 9 March launching a constitutional reform, the movement saw in the King's initiative only a symbolic gesture that did not meet their expectations. The Movement demands radical political reform in which the king reigns but does not rule and requires the exclusion from politics of the old guards of the monarchy. Though the movement was born in virtual space its members and sympathizers also gained experience in street protests, especially with the participation of Justice and Spirituality (JS) and some civil society organizations. The 20<sup>th</sup> February movement protests persist in the face of detentions, suppressions and Makhzen penetration of militants' lines. As an activist respondent puts it: “The Makhzen bets on winning the game like a team who enters the competition not to display its style of football but to block the other team (*y-khasser lla'b*).” In fact, the 20<sup>th</sup> February movement is stumbling since its emergence because it hosts incongruous trends



and groups which include: students, Islamists, Marxists, secularists, human-rights militants, unemployed graduates, common people, opportunists and a variety of other factions. In addition, the bloody and gridlocked events in Syria, the return of the old military regime in Egypt, and the violent confrontations in South Libya and Tunisia to say nothing of the Makhzen's continuing iron grip in Morocco [chasing away wandering vendors from public spaces and demolishing illegal suburban housing], all emphasize the potential human wastage and uncertain future of revolutions. The 20<sup>th</sup> February movement itself is in need of a cultural switch gear understanding and strategy as called for in this article.

It is obvious from the movements' messages, slogans<sup>6</sup> and public speeches that there is no intent to overthrow the political system but instead to create a paradigm shift in the relationship between the monarch and his subjects. The protestors want to move from being King's subjects to modern citizens. They want a Monarch to referee and a state leader to be elected in openness and transparency by the population and be accountable to the representative institutions. Not all those who take to Moroccan streets are aware of these political demands; poor working classes, and the rank and file of subalterns are mainly focused on their economic rights. Also, organizations of the unemployed graduates, for instance, are active participants in Sunday protests; sometimes they take to the streets on Saturday to highlight their own specific sectional employment demands within the 20<sup>th</sup> February movement as a whole.

The 20<sup>th</sup> February movement is nevertheless visibly developing its own deep culture of resistance sustained with slogans, ritual behavior, uniform and chants. Rap music proliferates in the movement's activities both on the internet and in the streets. This type of music is becoming the angry voice of youth protesters. One of the leaders of this musical movement, Mouad Belghawat nicknamed "Resenter" (al-Haqid), has been imprisoned twice and is now back in jail for his stinging musical attacks on the monarchy and the apparatus of the Makhzen.<sup>7</sup>

Examples of some of the challenging subaltern discourses that appeared through the mediation of the 20<sup>th</sup> February movement are reproduced in the following section. These individuals are increasingly confronting their economic dilemmas not through mysticism, though strong traces of the latter remain. They do tear off the mask of fear and there is some intrepidity here in speaking the subaltern mind more directly. Below are three young subalterns breaking the ice and speaking in front of camera for the 20<sup>th</sup> February movement, expressing their anger at being duped by local authorities. Here is the summary of their video shared on the movement's Facebook page on 28 December 2011 at 22:44:<sup>8</sup>

*First Speaker: I first thank the king and long live the king and long live the Alawite family. We love the Alawite family to death but we live in alarming conditions...On the day of elections [it was a referendum], the authorities asked us to work with them; they gave us election dress, brochures, and we knocked on doors to sensitize citizens to go to vote. The mqaddeem (caid's agent) was with us and we executed their orders to the letter but they exploited our poverty. I who is talking to you was prisoner for 16 years, six times I was unfairly taken to jail, but we say that we leave everything to God, and we are now without work and this is the café where we sit and people know that Abdelkader sits here. And the Makhzen always comes to arrest me from here. And when we wanted to be reasonable and worked with them, now this is a month and a half and they have not yet paid us. Why should not they pay us? What is 400 dh? A whole government and a parliament overwhelmed with parliamentarians and 400 dh of ours they do not give it to us. This morning they came and switched off the water mains. Am I not a citizen? Do I not have the right to drink water? If they had given me 400 dh, I would still have water. We have no work. My father is retired and earns a pension of 500 dh per three months, what is he going to do with it? Eat with it, pay bills or buy medicine or spend it on his unemployed children?*

*Second Speaker: [....] We did the national duty of informing the citizen in order to make elections successful but they exploited us because we sit in the café and have nothing to do.*

*Third Speaker: [....] Give me work and see if I will carry on asleep. I am still young. Shall I ask for charity but it is beneath my dignity. The 'dixilun' (industrial zone) is all closed; they can open four or six factories and call people to work. You do not have anything and another one whose father god knows who he is, very rich, drives an expensive car passing through and you...Well, may Allah give him more; they just give us where to work, we do not envy anyone, if you get sick, Allah is the curer; you stay home, you cannot go to a doctor; you need 100 dh, where can you find it? You keep home-bound till God sends his cure to you and you stand up. Do they want us to remain like this? We go to the café in the morning and at lunch we go back home because the old parents provide the food. Then back to the street again. We do not know who is responsible but God will take revenge from them for what they are doing to us. Long live the king and long live the Alawite family.*

*First Speaker adds: "You know, I went for three suicide attempts in prison. Once I screwed a barbecue stick down my throat, another time I jumped out of the third floor in 2001 in prison Zlleilig and broke my chest ribs. I spent my life afflicted by prison sentences and I lost to know what to do, maybe a suicide attempt in a place no one can foresee, I am taking medicine and I have my papers of insanity, and nobody cares about me. And this is even my voting card; we vote like them and long live the king! Long live the king....finished!*

Though challenging, subaltern discourse is still caught up in authoritarian assumptions and conventions. All actors formulate the political problem in immediate economic terms and insist on their allegiance to the King.

The boys do not evince any volition to act through their own agency. They rather express themselves through idioms of luck and God's intervention, and look at themselves as victims in need of a savior. The explicit and short term economic aspect of subaltern demands, whilst capable of further development under the right conditions of culture and organization may also give the state a strong short-term foothold to purchase subaltern loyalties within a traditional cultural gift-exchange model built on rewarding loyal and discrete allies and collaborators with state-subsidized benefits and services. By means of exercising a cultural schema of charity and alms distribution, perhaps the Makhzen can still mollify subaltern anger and win their support. The task of the 20<sup>th</sup> February movement must be to educate subaltern masses on how to address their economic problems awakening them from fatalism to political struggle though some of the forms of that may be continuous with traditional cultural ones. This project of awakening may last for years if not for generations depending on how the movement grapples with the suppression of the Makhzen. The latter so far succeeds in its containment policy but revolutions in communication erode state control of media institutions everywhere and the Makhzen's stratagems are more than usually obsolete with few new digital tactics of communication and social control.

### 5. Morocco at the Crossroads

Dominant groups sweat clumsily in their way over the cultural switch gear trying to keep the old times' tracks open to ensure the continuing popular acceptance of authoritarian rule and the successful exercise of power through structures of charity and fear. Meanwhile many of our respondents say that they are not ready to sacrifice death or injuries to bring about political change. When interviewed, most say that they do not queue up for bread or chicken like the Egyptians. A recurrent statement we hear is that "in Morocco, thanks to God, there is prosperity (*hamdu Allah al-khair mujud*).” Even the unemployed can tinker and get a day's income of 100 dirhams to get by on. For them the examples of Libya, Syria and Yemen are rather frightening. It deters people from being recruited into a violent protest against the regime. There is also always hope for a charitable gesture from the monarchy to make economic compensation and relieve subaltern poverty.

Up to now, there are no clear ethnographic signs that display whether Moroccans are likely to risk going for a real, perhaps bloody, confrontation with the regime, especially given that the monarchy is now 'inside the equation' and insists on leading political change. The king enjoys a tremendous religious, social, economic, and symbolic capital. He is supported by a powerful propaganda machine that polishes his image in the public sphere. Symbolic rituals that he parades also legitimize his political status of leadership. The constant broadcast of his activities and projects of development on TV boost his status. To the great mass of subalterns, if not to all Moroccans, the monarch is the unifying symbol of the nation. Despite his traditional trappings, the young king emerges as a modern reformist. He remained calm and shrewdly responded to the popular demand for redress of grievances by offering a peaceful vision of change. To deescalate the anger of young protestors in Moroccan streets, the king announced major political reforms including a new constitution with 'less powers' for royalty, and evinced a willingness to allow moderate Islamists, the PJD political party, to be in power during the subsequent elections in November 2011. His government did not resort to slander or harsh repression like other despots in the Arab countries. Though the police from time to time quietly and selectively beat up on some demonstrations and meetings, there was no significant state violence save for some scattered killings of some militants in different parts of the kingdom in mysterious circumstances. The terrorist bomb attack on the main square of Marrakech was rumored to have involved elements of the DST secret police. But the king pardoned a large number of jailed Islamists following their renunciation of violence and pledge to participate in society peacefully.

Despite Morocco's apparently smooth progress and step-by-step reform, there is still much doubt that Morocco is on the path to a legitimate democracy with strong institutions in which the masses may trust instead of incessantly addressing their grievances to the King. So far, the average Moroccan holds the King responsible for building a small road, school or hospital in his city or village, so evincing the King as the only reliable and working institution in the country. Morocco's future progress and stability heavily depends on the construction of transparent, representative and effective institutions, allied to cultural development and the creation of real job opportunities for its teeming millions.

For the moment, the de facto Makhzanian strategy of containment and policy of daily patching and assuagement may win time but with potential disastrous consequences in the long run, especially if the process of awakening—no matter how it is communicated—reaches deep to the bottom regions of social space. Political regimes founded on security forces alone are bound to be overthrown. Those founded on ideologies internalized by the masses may last till overthrown by counter-hegemonic ideologies. The uncertain building of the latter may now be in progress. The political demands are clear: political inclusion, building democracy and civil society on the ground, building transparent accountable security and justice systems, securing fast steady production-based economic growth, establishing public confidence by creating strong legitimate institutions that guarantee real freedom of speech; meaningful participation in institutional process and decision making; real moves towards social protection and social security; respect for the rule of law. No one denies that economic reforms have been recently undertaken by the monarch and the Islamist government but this appears to be a limited, risk-averse

incrementalism that has not yet reached to the core issues.

Moroccans are still demanding deep reforms but no major structural reform will succeed without a collective will to build the bricks of a culturally sensitive mode of politics and mobilization foregrounding the importance of culture for citizenship and building on cultural traditions for depth and meaning. To maintain and strengthen currents of change, discourses on citizenship, democracy and human rights must be formed in, and linked to, sensuous cultural practices and local cultural meaning—making so that citizenship learnt in the informal context of everyday life becomes lucid in the subaltern mind as a familiar thing, as a recognizable *cultural* citizenship, which empowers bottom-up cultural forms and draws subalterns into self-critique and self-development of their own cultural models. Understanding the cultural switch gear, and developing switches and switchmen for a micro cultural switch gear is an essential ingredient for the counter-hegemonic struggle in Morocco today.

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### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> This research draws mainly on ethnography and retro ethnography carried out in various projects and research sites in 2008, 2009 and 2011. Other data sources utilized included public documents, interviews and participatory observations. Public documents scrutinized include the following: Islamist books, leaflets, booklets, CDs, local newspapers, and Internet sites such as *the 20<sup>th</sup> February movement's Facebook pages, Lakome, Mamfakinch, Hespess, Scoop, goud, Febrayer and klamkom.*

<sup>2</sup> Descendants from the noble lineage of the Prophet.

<sup>3</sup> Laroui (2001) looks at the historical independence and resistance of saints with suspicion and maintains that ever since the nineteenth century, all maraboutic institutions (*zawiyas*) with political expectations have been offered the power to exercise influence with the will of the Sultan (cf. Benomar 1988, 545). *Zawiyas* could not grow into politically powerful institutions unless they were “Makhzenied”—converted into Makhzen apparatuses. So, they organized the masses of peasants into an unpaid workforce for the Makhzen by proxy—maraboutic followers offered their free labor with zeal to the saint who in turn was empowered by the sultan.

<sup>4</sup> In shantytowns, not unlike Sidi Moumen l-Qdim the suburb of Casablanca from whence came the 16<sup>th</sup> May bombers, it is easy to find the social bed of radical ideas. Those quarries often sprawl out on top of rubbish mounds. Cattle live in the same miserable conditions next to their human neighbors cramped in leaking wobbly tin-roofed shacks grazing on garbage and eating organic refuse. In some regions, electricity is streamed in to them or it is pirated from nearby power lines; usually there is no underground sewage system, and no running water except occasionally for one central public fountain.

<sup>5</sup> The Moroccan case is of course a special one because it has a sacred monarchy thought to be legitimated by divine law (see Arroub 2004; Hammoudi 1997, 1999; Tozy 1999). The king is the commander of the faithful, unlike the presidential state—the case of Algeria and Egypt—in which the political contest may go to the presidential office. Hassan II was clear to state: “I will never accept to be put inside the equation” (Zartman 1986, 64). In Morocco, the political players’ contest is contained within parliamentary boundaries at least for the moment which may help to explain the relative social stability and subscription of subordinate social groups in Morocco to the cultural and political meanings of the prevailing structures of power.

<sup>6</sup> The slogans of the 20<sup>th</sup> February Movement, large in number, proliferate with the changing sequence of social and political events. There are two main websites bearing the most common slogans raised by the movement: See [www.mamfakinch.com/fev20-les-slogans-des-manifestations-du-20-fevrier/http://www.larbi.org/post/2011/07/Les-slogans-20%C3%A9vrier](http://www.mamfakinch.com/fev20-les-slogans-des-manifestations-du-20-fevrier/http://www.larbi.org/post/2011/07/Les-slogans-20%C3%A9vrier)

The main slogans we collected during fieldwork depict corruption, clientelism, favoritism, lack of freedom, and other social political and economic issues. Even the monarch sometimes is targeted in their slogans. Some of these read as follows:

1. Allah/ al-Watan/ a-Shsha'b (Allah, the nation and the peoples)
2. ana bitali/ nadel/khuya bitali/ nadel/ khali bitali/ nadel/ sabhi bitali/ nadel/ jari bitali/ nadel/nsibi bitali/ nadel/sha'b l-bitala/ nadel/ sha'b l-atala/ nadel (I am idle/ Stand up/ my brother is idle/ Stand up/ my uncle is idle/ stand up/ my friend is idle/ stand up/ my neighbor is idle/ stand up/ my in-law is idle/ stand up/the peoples of idleness/ stand up/ the peoples of redundancy/ stand up)
3. A-shsha'b/yurid/ isqat al-fasad (the peoples want to overthrow corruption)
4. Allah yblik bi hub shsha'b/ hetta takul zerwata/ u zerwata l-mu'attal/ may yakulha men wala (May God make you love your peoples/ till you are beaten like the unemployed/ And not anyone receive the beats like the unemployed)
5. Allah yblik bi hub shsha'b/ hetta tdkhul zenzana/ u zenzanat l-munadel/ may dkhulha men wala (May God make you love your peoples/ till you are jailed like a militant/ And not anyone reside in the dungeon of the militant)
6. Kulshi jay bi rashwa / kulshi ghadi bi rashwa/l-barlaman bi rashwa/ l-hukuma bi rashwa/l-baladiya bi rashwa / l-'amala bi rashwa/baraka men rashwa/ baghi t-khdem bi rashwa/ baghi dawa bi rashwa (everything comes with bribery/ everything goes with bribery/ the parliament with bribery/ the government with bribery/ the city council with bribery/ the municipality with bribery/ enough with bribery/ you want to work/ it is with bribery/ you want cure/ it is with bribery)
7. *flus shsha'b fin mshat/ fi lmawasem u thafalat* (where does public money go/ in festival occasions and ceremonies)
8. *ysud ysud may hkem/ l-jamaher kat-kellem* (He reigns, he reigns but does not rule/ Peoples say)
9. *bni l-villa bni l-'imara / ulad l-fuqara ghir lma u l-bisara* (build the villa, build the apartment house/ the children of the poor live on water and *bisara* (crushed dried beans recipe, treasured by the subalterns on cold days)
10. *shi 'alla u bgha y-tir / u shi kay bayed taht l-qasdir* (some build and tower as if to fly/ and some are hatching under tin-roofs)
11. *Allah 'lik ya Maghreb/ l-hala mahi hala/ sukna fi l-marahid u l-muta fi l-qawareb* (May Allah be with you Morocco/ the state is not a state of being/housing is in toilets and death is in boats)

<sup>7</sup> Mouad’s rap songs have grown to be street slogans for the 20<sup>th</sup> February militants. One of his famous lyrics about freedom recasts the Tunisian poet Abu al-Qasim al-Shabbi’s poem in a more provocative form. In his masterpiece “*If People Wanted Life One Day*,” al-Shabbi writes: “If, one day, peoples desire to live/ then fate will answer their call/ and night is destined to fold/ and the chains are certain to be broken.” Mouad



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### Photo Gallery



Figure1. The association of the unemployed participating in the 20th February movement's demonstrations with the slogan "look at graduate degrees in plastic bags"



Figure II. the 20th February movement during a sit-in in El Jadida on a Sunday



Figure III. The 20th February demonstrators holding signs that declare their condemnation of all forms of terrorism.



Figure IV. Notable participation of children, also conning the slogans of the movement and rehearsing them in their games, thus may be drilled in new cultural schemata of resistance.



Figure V. During demonstrations, most signs held forth basically express social and economic demands of the movement to attract subaltern support.



Figure VI. A sign insisting on the peaceful nature of the movement's protests.



Figure VII. Young and adult females are active participants in street demonstrations



Figure VIII. Justice and Spirituality women are also conspicuous participants in outdoor demonstrations



Figure IX. A female collegian activist leading many of the demonstrations of the 20<sup>th</sup> February movement in El Jadida.



Figure X. A male collegian activist leading many of the demonstrations of the 20<sup>th</sup> February movement in El Jadida



Figure XI. Sometimes groups or participants may not agree on the agenda and skirmish during demonstrations: here the skirmish was between the 20<sup>th</sup> February members and members of the Association of the Unemployed over which slogans to give priority.