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Moroccan Women's Resistance to Al-hogra in the Aftermaths of Arab Spring: Patterns and Outcomes



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Abstract

This article aims to investigate Moroccan women's forms and patterns of resistance to Al-hogra in the aftermaths of Arab Spring. It focuses mainly on the nature and forms of this resistance and their impact in the public sphere in Morocco namely after 2011 constitutional reforms. To do this, we look at the development of the new forms of civil resistance after the turmoil of the Arab Spring in Morocco by tracing cases of women's civil resistance to stand against 'Al-hogra' and to demand specific rights in the post Moroccan spring movement. The focus is on cases that attracted a lot media attention and stirred reaction in the public arena. This includes namely cases of self-immolations and suicide protests.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Civil resistance is rooted in the Moroccan and has always taken different forms and shapes. Undeniably, it is "the civil resistance on the part of different social and political forces, which have been important factors in the shaping and reshaping of the political system up to the twenty-first century" (Magharoui, 2016). In other words, the dynamics of civil resistance started with the establishment of the Moroccan state in the 16th century and has ever since been instituted by different actors (ulema (Religious scholars), tribes, towns and civil society groups) and taken different shapes and forms (peaceful and violent protests). In this paper, the focus is on the forms and patterns of Moroccan women's resistance in the aftermaths of the Arab Spring. The objective is to look at Moroccan women's different forms of resistance and trace the echo they have had in the public arena. To do this, we look at the new modes of action that women have adopted to stand against *Al-hogra* and to demand specific rights in the aftermaths of the Arab Spring in Morocco namely from 2011 to 2017. Of interest are the cases of self-immolations and suicide protests that attracted social media attention.

To this effect, this paper is divided into four sections in addition to an introduction and a conclusion. It starts with a discussion of the civil resistance in relation to *Al-hogra* and public sphere. The purpose is to identify the existing link between the concepts and the way they are understood in the paper. The second section defines the research methodology of the paper including the research question, its significance and the method used. The third section summarizes briefly the outcomes of the so-called Arab Spring in Morocco. The aim is to draw a picture on the nature of reforms undertaken after the massive protests led by the February 20 Movement. The fourth section traces cases of women's resistance in post-Arab Spring. The target is to identify the nature and forms of women's resistance in the post Moroccan political upheavals. The focus is mainly on the cases that have drawn a lot of social media attention and resulted in the solidarity of all fractions of Moroccan society. Before concluding the paper, an analysis is provided to elaborate more on the different causes, agenda, and significance of these forms of women's resistance and the impact they have made in the public sphere.

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2 *AL-HOGRA*, CIVIL RESISTANCE, AND PUBLIC SPHERE: DEFINING THE CONCEPTS

The word *Al-hogra* comes from the Arabic *ihitiqaar*, meaning disdain, contempt, humiliation, and deprivation. In Morocco, *Al-hogra* is an overloaded term when used in Moroccan *Darija* (Moroccan colloquial Arabic) as it expresses a number of negative feelings and moods (injustice, outrage inequality, inferiority, disempowerment, frustration, feelings of contempt). In this paper, the word is used mainly to express the feeling associated with exclusion and the feeling of the loss of dignity one experiences after being treated inequitably or unfairly in the provision of public services or in the protection of his/her civil or human rights. This is usually manifested in different situations such as excessive use of force by the police, inability and denial to benefit from a public service, confiscation of ones' goods and the contempt shown by some local government authorities in various administrative institutions because of one's poverty or social background

In Morocco, the word *Al-hogra* gained popularity and "acceptance in framing public discontent and anger which sparked the uprisings of the February 20 Movement (Feb20Mvt)¹ in 2011, and the ongoing protests in the country" (Ilahiane, 2019). Since then, it has become a vehicle for social mobilization to resist abuse of power, corruption, contempt, and humiliation among other social injustices or inequalities. That said, it is the feeling of *Al-hogra* that has made the vulnerable and powerless of society engage in different forms of civil resistance to expose and express refusal to the economic, political and societal status-quo.

Accordingly, civil resistance is used here to refer to any act of public protest whose objectives are directed "toward a law or policy of the government, or toward a corporate entity whose policy is the subject of protest" (Cohan, 2007). The purpose is to make "a dramatic appeal to the conscience of the community, affect public awareness of a particular social issue, and motivate citizens to demand change in certain policies" (Cohan, 2007). Civil resistance takes various forms and the involved groups or individuals use 'tactics that are outside the conventional political processes such as voting, interest-group organizing, or lobbying' (Chenoweth and Stephan, 2008). In other words, civil resistance "employs social, psychological, economic and political methods including boycotts (social, economic, and political), strikes, protests, and sit-ins to mobilize the publics to oppose or suppose different policies, to delegitimize adversaries, and to remove or restrict adversaries' sources of power" (Chenoweth and Stephan, 2008). In this paper, civil resistance goes beyond the outlined forms to include other ways that sacrifice the self to attract the attention of Moroccans and motivate them to resist inequality, corruption and injustice. Specifically, the focus is on the cases of self-immolations and protest suicides that women have made

use of in the aftermaths of Arab Spring to stand against *Al-hogra* and which attracted social media attention.

For any civil resistance to take place, the public sphere must be guaranteed as a realm of freedom from the state and by the state itself (Bernhard, 1993 cited in Baker, 2002). In this paper, 'the concept of public sphere refers to the practice of open discussion about matters of common interest' (Ronald, 2000). It is a sphere formed when citizens, of any state, are able to enjoy fundamental freedoms of thought, opinion and expression. In view of that, James Sater (2007) argues that the importance of the public sphere lies in the fact that it 'is an expression of the transformation of private individuals into public issues'. He also argues that the public sphere is "the medium through which horizontal (within civil society) and vertical (between civil society and the state) communications become possible, and through which communicative power can translate into administrative power, providing the state with the legitimacy on which to base its public policies" (Sater, 2007). In Morocco, public sphere as Habermas (1996) envisions it, is still a work in progress. Rights and liberties of expression and opinion are still sometimes criminalised. Moroccan authorities make opinions, assemblies and expressions subject to censure and interdiction; when the king and members of the royal family are insulted, criticized or accused of malfeasance publicly, when the legitimacy of Islam as a state religion with the king as its tutelary head is questioned or undermined; when Morocco's territoriality is defied namely regarding sovereignty over Western Sahara (Smith and Loudiy, 2005). Also, criticizing the surrounding government authorities or security intelligence can result in imprisonment. The best example one could mention in this regard is Nacer Zafzafi –the leader of *Hirak Rif* and one of the most famous Moroccan activists nowadays. Zafzafi was sentenced in 2018 to 20 years for undermining the internal security of the state, and preparing a conspiracy against internal security. This example makes the democratic promises of the 2011 constitutional reforms a mere formality. In fact, the implementation of the reforms such as the press code and the judicial system remain to be seen. On the other hand, the continuous existence of some independent newspapers that indulge in 'ex-taboo issues' and publicly criticize public political figures and enrich the public debates that surround reforms the Moroccan state engages in suggest, though not enough, a positive shift towards the construction of a distinctive Moroccan public sphere. However, this contradiction is taking place very slowly compared with the pace of changes that occur at the international level.

Given these contradictions (limited freedom of speech, lack of democracy, prevalence of corruption and social inequalities not to mention the raise of a culture that distrusts political parties, unions and civil society groups), individuals of different gender and age groups have started to engage in different forms of resistance to

express their refusal of the status-quo and claim the redress of balance between the different fractions of society in terms of political, economic and social rights. In this regard, the bulk concern of this paper is to see whether women's new forms of resistance to *Al-hogra* in the aftermaths of the 2011 constitution have had any impact in the public arena. Before embarking on this task, the subsequent section discusses briefly the nature of reforms undertaken after the massive protests led by the February 20 Movement.

3 METHODOLOGY

As already declared, the objective of the paper is to investigate women's new forms of resistance to *Al-hogra* in the aftermaths of the 2011 constitutional reforms and trace the impact they have made in the public arena. To achieve this, we have relied on the new modes of action that Moroccan women have adopted to stand against *Al-hogra* felt because of being treated inequitably or unfairly in the provision of public services or in the protection of one's civil or human rights. Indeed, since the 2011 upheavals in Morocco, forms of resistance have multiplied, varied in terms of forms and belong to different age, gender and ethnic groups. In this paper, however, the focus is on the forms of resistance adopted by women. This focus is traced to three main reasons. First, women's forms of self-sacrifice are unique and extreme in relation to the history of women's movement struggles in the Moroccan political history. That is to say, unlike the feminist movement which is always described as elitist and whose struggles originate in specific gender issues, most of these women come from the margins, are of different age groups, and targeted dismantling corruption, *Al-horga*, humiliation and poverty. Second, the resistance of these women is spontaneous, voluntary and ideology free. This shows the failure and fragmentation of political parties and civil society groups and their inability neither to adopt nor to defend citizens' causes. Third, though carried out spontaneously and individually, these new subaltern women's forms of resistance have had immediate impacts depending on the echo they had in the public sphere. Women's forms of resistance are many but of interest to this paper are the cases of self-immolations and suicide protests that have taken place from 2011 to 2017 and stirred reaction on media. Following them on media in all its forms, this paper argues that these extreme cases of resistance are but the result of the failure to put into practice the reforms brought by the 2011 constitutional text. The analysis is based on the content of the four stories included and their echo in the public arena. This is backed up by our knowledge of the Moroccan political context and changes namely after so-called Arab Spring. The subsequent section briefly traces the outcomes of the political upheaval in Morocco.

4 CONTEXTUALIZING THE OUTCOMES OF THE POLITICAL UPHEAVALS IN MOROCCO

The king is obliged to appoint a prime minister from the party that wins the most seats in the parliamentary elections and he is no longer "sacred" but the "integrity of his person" is "inviolable". The prime minister is both the head of government and president of the government council. The judiciary system is independent from the legislative and executive branch. Women are guaranteed "civic and social" equality with men. In the previous constitution, only "political" equality was guaranteed. All citizens have the freedom of thought, ideas, artistic expression and creation. Previously, only free-speech and the freedom of circulation and association were guaranteed (Ruchti, 2011). Many related issues have addressed by the 2011 constitution but have not been ratified in real everyday life².

In this paper, our argument is that though these constitutional reforms have been revolutionary in terms of content, they have not pushed for clear democratic paths, a fact which resulted in the emergence of new forms of subaltern resistance and activism that are radical and extreme in their forms and legal in their dimension and messages. To discuss this, the subsequent section takes charge of identifying and tracing some of these emerging cases of women's forms of activism and digs into their significance both in content and form.

5 MOROCCO AFTER 2011 CONSTITUTIONAL REFORMS: THE EMERGENCE OF NEW FORMS OF WOMEN'S RESISTANCE

Indeed, though Morocco adopted one of the most advanced constitutions in its political history in 2011, the reforms have not led to real democratic practices and changes. The institution of the monarchy still garners judicial, political and religious powers, still takes all major decisions that concern the nation both nationally or internationally, and still effectively not to mention its tight control on media and non-governmental spheres. For example, Abdelilah Benkirane, the ex-head of the Moroccan government, has repeatedly acknowledged that his government's role is to implement royal orders and instructions. Added to this, he claims that the Feb20Mvt activists and demonstrators have advanced and fought for the end of corruption, equality, freedom, and better education are gone with the wind. The official promises of restructuring and radically changing the socio-economic and political conditions of the citizens have remained ink on paper. In fact, the only gains of Feb20Mvt is the psychological therapy it has provided to all fractions of Moroccan society to get rid of the fear of 'the years of lead'³ that haunted them for decades and therefore re-engage them in their battle for more rights and equality. This may be traced to the emergence of a number of "subaltern forms of resistance" incarnated in suicide protests, self-immolations and other forms of

self-sacrifice. These forms of resistance come from the margins, carried out by the poor of different age and gender groups, and targeted towards the dismantling of corruption, *Al-horga*, humiliation and poverty. Indeed, these subaltern resistances have gone beyond the traditional forms of activism to express a new culture of resistance in the making (Maghraoui, 2016). This culture is ideology-free, distrusts political parties along with unions and civil society groups, celebrates the individual as the main actor in the process of civil resistance and even delegitimizes Feb20Mvt for not being able to achieve its political objectives. This makes these subaltern forms of civil resistance different from any previous forms of resistance in Moroccan political history. Accordingly, the focus of this paper is on the forms of resistance adopted by women from 2011 to 2017. We have included four cases (Fadwa Laroui, the single mother, Amina Filali, the teenager from Larache, *Mmi* Fatiha, the cake seller and *Mmi* Aicha, the old woman). In fact, this choice is based on the media attention they received and the impact they made in the public sphere.

5.1 Case 1. A single mother burns herself in protest

In February 2011 amid the Arab turmoil, Fadwa Laroui, 25 years old, 'set herself on fire in front of the town hall of Souk Sebti' (*Tadla Azilal* Region), in central Morocco after being excluded from a social housing scheme because she was an unmarried mother. Criteria of eligibility set by local authorities do not consider divorced, single women and single mothers as heads of households as they live with their parents. Therefore, they are illegible to benefit from the government development plan of housing scheme for low-income households.

'On the day Laroui set herself on fire, she had visited a local official one final time after having registered six complaints', none of which was taken into consideration. Added to this, Laroui had discovered that part of the land reserved to the low-income households would go directly to businessmen with connections. Laroui felt *Al-hogra* and humiliation especially that her family's makeshift housing had already been destroyed and she and her family had nowhere to live. When in flames, Laroui's last plea, as recorded on camera phone, was to make people "take a stand against injustice, corruption, and tyranny."

5.2 Case 2. Amina Filali

A year later, in March 2012, a 16-year old girl named Amina Filali killed herself in outskirts of 'the northern town of Larache by taking rat poison after she was forced to marry her rapist', who used to beat and torture her. After six months in this horrifying marriage, Amina put an end to her life as she saw no bright future in the horizon (Yachoulti, 2015). Her death provoked several demonstrations to demand the repeal of Article 475 of

the Moroccan penal code which states 'that a man who rapes a minor can escape punishment for rape if he marries the victim. This clause is usually interpreted as a way to compromise between the victim and the perpetrator to make the victim girls "corrupted" by rape to avoid public shame and get ostracized from society' (Yachoulti, 2015). Amina's suicide is a revolt against the social injustice and the dominant means of social control. If the suicide of Amina has not brought any real political or social change, it has on the other hand drawn attention to existence discriminatory laws that characterise the Moroccan judicial law.

5.3 Case 3. *Mmi* Fatiha, the cake seller

In April 2016, a 60 year-old street vendor, named *Mmi*⁴ Fatiha selling *Baghrir* (Moroccan pancakes) committed self-immolation 'after a Kenitra police officer confiscated her stall because she refused to move it'. *Mmi* Fatiha set herself on fire because of *Al-hogra*; the *Qaid* (sheriff) of the district 'scolded the woman, using verbal abuse and physical harassment against her to force her to leave the place' (Albawaba News, 2016) where she was selling her pancakes. After she refused his orders to leave the place, the *Qaid* violently shoved her, publically threatening her in front of all. The video disseminated on social media shows *Mmi* Fatiha setting in front of the *Qaid*'s district building, in front of the *Qaid*'s assistants who ignored the incident. *Mmi* Fatiha's self-immolation is but a clear message to the rest of society to stand against the tyranny, oppression and *Al-hogra* of some local government authorities.

5.4 Case 4. *Mmi* Aicha's Suicide Jump

In April 2017, an elderly woman named *Mmi* Aicha attempted to commit suicide by climbing up an electricity pole in the neighborhood of Hassan in Rabat. The old woman, who lives in Sidi Taibi, was able to climb the pole with a bottle of gasoline and a national flag to protest the humiliation she experienced after her land was seized. While on the top of the electricity pole, the old woman, threatening to jump, was heard crying "Long live the King...live long Mohammed VI...I want my rights...I want my own property back." She said that someone sold land in her ownership by fraud. Staying on the pole for two hours, the woman eventually climbed down after being promised of immediate response to her file. After the video and the photos of *Mmi* Aicha went viral, many took to social media, expressing their outrage over the circumstances that may have led to the woman's suicide attempt.

6 ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

A thorough reading and analysis of these new subaltern women's forms and patterns of activism and resistance show that they have distinguishing characteristics that make them different from any other previous struggles and resistances in the political history of Morocco. First,

they are the product of social and political change engendered by the 2011 turmoil in both North Africa and the Middle East. Second, they are instigated and directed by the same cause and agenda. Third, they are extreme and radical in their form. Finally, their impact varied depending on the echo they had in the public sphere.

First, these new forms of women's resistance are the product of an area characterized by the appropriation of the public space and street that resulted out of "more tolerance for different forms of protest and civil resistance as long as they were directed against veneer institutions such as the government or the parliament" (Maghraoui, 2016). In other words, if the Feb20Mvt has left any legacy, it has resulted in a radical shift in the relationship between the governments and the governed and paved the ground for the appropriation of the public space and street. The pro-democracy calls that swept Morocco since 2011 allowed groups of activists of different genders and ages to get rid of the fear of the 'years of lead' that has haunted the old generations for years (Skalli, 2011) and therefore appropriate the street to voice their demands and claim their rights.

Second, because the 2011 reforms did not lead to any concert democratic changes, the new forms of women's resistance have emerged to fight against corruption and against the expropriation of resources for the benefits of a few. That said, the new forms of resistance are not necessarily the result of a coherent and comprehensible ideology, but they are the result of the emergence of deep social inequalities, the growth of corruption, shortage in social and health services, difficulties in finding housing (Thierry, 2012). They are the result of the widely spread feeling of *Al-hogra* and struggle for dignity. The contempt of women that is frequently shown by local government authorities in various social, political and administrative institutions or through, for example, the excessive use of force, verbal humiliation and the confiscation of their goods in public have led to these self-sacrifices. Added to this, the fact that these women are of different age groups (Fadwa Laaroui is 25, Amina Filali is 16, Mmi Fatiha is 60 whereas Mi Aicha is in her late 70s), belong to different regions of Morocco (Central, North and South of Morocco) and come from both rural (Souk Sebt and Sidi Taibi) and urban areas (Larache and Kenitra) shows the omnipresent of *Al-hagra* in all corners of the country.

Third, in terms of form, these new forms of women's resistance are endowed with a number of distinguishing characteristics. They are spontaneous and voluntary and "the individual has become a player who maintains a central importance within the collective action" (Thierry, 2012). This shows that citizens in general and women in particular sacrifice themselves to stand up as guardians of the constitutional principles, democratic values and accountability. Citizens from the margins, particularly women have started to look for other forms of mobilization outside formal institutional groups such as civil society, unions and political parties.

That is to say, the weakness of civil society groups and the fragmentation of political parties and their inability neither to adopt nor to defend citizens' causes "gradually channeled social activism into a new public sphere", where different subaltern individuals sacrificed themselves "to contest both the political and the economic status quo" (Maghraoui, 2016). Another aspect is that they all come from the margins, carried out by poor women of different age groups, and targeted dismantling corruption, *Al-horga*, humiliation and poverty. This is totally different from the resistance led by women's movement organizations which flourished during the liberalization process and whose activism and ability to mobilize remained rooted in specific and separate issues such as human rights, gender rights, or cultural rights (Maghraoui, 2016).

Fourth, these forms of women's resistance have had different impacts depending on their echo in the public sphere and the tactics the state used to contain them. Some have pushed the parliament to adopt the demands of public opinion and therefore change laws, while others have had a political influence on the political public sphere through making women coming from the margins able create the event/momentum and contribute to the shaping of public discussion. Others still reflect in clear terms the gap between the reality and principles of the new constitution.

The case of Amina Filali launched a strong debate in the public sphere and social media. The debate was also paralleled by demonstrations and sit-ins in front of the Moroccan parliament in Rabat. Added to this, because the amendment of Article 475 of the penal code has always been on the top of its agenda, the feminist movement adopted the case to put more pressure on the administrative power (parliament and government) to reform the penal code in general and that Article in particular. In 2014, Article 475 was finally amended⁵. Five years later, in September 2018, a new law criminalizing all forms of violence against women came into effect after the bill had been approved in the parliament seven months before. The new law offers a variety of protections for women who report harassment or violence in Morocco, bans forced marriage, and imposes tougher penalties on perpetrators. According to the law, perpetrators will face prison terms ranging from one month to five years and fines from 2000 to 1000 Moroccan dirhams. However, worth noticing in this regard is that state response and thus amendment of the article was done without hesitation because it was not very costly in its political implications and dimensions. In other words, the amendment of the article in particular and the penal code in general have neither short nor long term genuine implications for the state's political system and culture.

In relation to self-immolations especially –Fadwa Laroui and Mmi Fatiha, though they have sparked demonstrations and strong solidarity in the social media, they have led to no reaction on the part of the government. The reason may be traced to the idea that

the Moroccan government avoided giving the impression to the Moroccans that Fadwa Laroui and *Mmi* Fatiha are symbols of sacrifice. Actually, Tarek el-Tayeb Mohamed Bouaziz's self-immolation in Tunisia was the first flame of the Tunisian revolution, but the Moroccan state managed to avoid the duplication of his case in Morocco at the beginning. As a matter of fact, the cases of Fadwa Laroui and *Mmi* Fatiha were not the first ones in Morocco⁶. Added to this, in the absence of an official support of civil society organizations, the state has worked on normalizing this kind of protests and used religion to delegitimize them. More interestingly, the Moroccan state used the Friday sermons in the mosques to prohibit and even condemn the act of self-immolations, a fact which led only to sympathy behind the screens of the computer. In other words, these isolated cases of self-immolations resulted in reaction instead of action.

Also, one can argue that the cases of Fadwa Laroui and *Mmi* Fatiha have resulted in two contradictory results. On the one hand, there has been no punishment of the government authorities responsible for their cases, a fact which reflects the yawning gap between the reality and principles of the new constitution which affirms in the first article the importance of "the principles of good governance and of the correlation between the responsibility for and the rendering of accounts" (Ruchti, 2011). As a matter of fact, this non-implementation of this principle encourages many authorities in different sectors to go on violating the basic rights of the ordinary people. On the other hand, their resistances have led to the re-appropriation of the street and the public space after decades of indifference and political apathy to contest both the political and the economic status quo. This reflects the emergence of a new political culture which has legal and democratic dimensions. That is to say, the sacrifice of the above mentioned victim subaltern women has managed to give a voice to the marginalized (disfranchised groups) and made the weak able to revolt against and resist *Al-hogra*, humiliation and voice their rights

Concerning *Mmi* Aicha's case, it has led to 'virtual' reaction instead of real/concert action. After her video and the photos went viral on social media, Facebook activists and users have expressed solidarity behind their screens. However, the fact of addressing the king in person while on the electricity pole shows the growing culture of distrusts in political parties, unions and elected officials because of their inability to defend and lead real economic, social and political changes in the country.

Amid this discussion, one should not deny the role of social media in communicating these forms of civil resistance to the rest of the world. In Morocco, the decreasing cost of the mobile phones and their dimension from the point of sharing materials such as video and photograph in addition to the rapid proliferation of the internet and social networking sites such as Twitter, Facebook and YouTube has not only

facilitated communicating these forms of resistance but has also, compared to other mass communication tools, helped the resisters produce the content of the media themselves and make others, including the government, aware of their grievances. Despite its limited impact on the ground, social media served as a megaphone of these forms of resistance and helped in inspiring others from all over the world to join in virtually (Ennaji, 2016). Specifically, they have become the mirror of women's issues in Morocco. They have successfully helped in rapidly displaying their stories, news and updates both nationally and internationally. Further, their influential power helped in boosting the debate and constructing a new way of viewing and dealing with women's issues beyond stereotypes and stigmatization.

7 CONCLUSION

All the new forms of women's resistance have not only all resulted in unprecedented solidarity among Moroccans but had different political impacts depending on the echo they had in the public sphere. Indeed, it was shown that post Moroccan spring forms of women's resistance stem from disenchanting women, and are spontaneous and voluntary in their forms. They are based on no ideology. Besides, the use and development of new media has facilitated its spread both nationally and internationally, and has equally led to general enthusiasm for mobilization, solidarity and aspiration for political change.

As far as the analytical part is concerned, it can be concluded that despite the fact these women's new forms of resistance resulted in unprecedented solidarity among Moroccans, and they contributed in the process of the re-appropriation of the street and the public sphere, they have led to no noticeable or significant political changes that may affect the nature and structure of the Moroccan political system. The only benefit is the fact that there is more tolerance for different forms of protests and civil resistance as long as they were directed against veneer institutions such as the government or the parliament and the emergence of a new political culture which gives a voice to the marginalized (disfranchised groups) and makes the weak able to revolt against and resist *Al-hogra*, humiliation and simultaneously allow them to demand and ask for change.

NOTES

1. Morocco's version of the "Arab Spring"
2. Moroccan 2011 constitution part I Article 13,14 and 15, part II Article 27 and part IX Article 139.
3. The Years of Lead is the term used by opponents to the rule of the former King Hassan the second to describe a period of his rule (from 1960s to the beginning of 1980s). This period of Moroccan history was marked by state violence against dissidents and activists.
4. The word *Mmi* in Moroccan Arabic means Mother. It is also used to address any other old woman to show respect (Yachoulti, 2015).

5. The amendment of Article 475 provides for a prison term of one to five years for anyone who 'abducts or deceives' a Minor "without violence, threat or fraud, or attempts to do so". However, the second clause of the article specifies that when the victim marries the perpetrator, "he can no longer be prosecuted except by persons empowered to demand the annulment of the marriage and then only after the annulment has been proclaimed" (Ludovica, 2014).
6. This concerns five unemployed graduates who set themselves on fire in the capital Rabat as part of their demonstrations over the lack of jobs. The unemployed graduates were part of around 160 members occupying an administrative building of the Ministry of Higher Education for almost two weeks in Rabat as part of their protest. Supporters would bring them food until the security forces stopped them. Because of this, five people went outside to get food and threatened to set themselves on fire if they were stopped. Of the three who were hospitalized, two passed away, while the other two just had their clothing singed (Daily News, 2012).

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors confirm that the content in this article has no conflicts of interest.

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