THE FACE OF AL-MAGHREB: HOW MOROCCANS ARE USING SOCIAL NETWORKING

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In recent years, social networking has become a tool of communication that transcends geography. This thesis explores the ways Moroccan college-age youth are using new media. I examine existing ways of conceiving and constructing identity and privacy to see how Moroccans reconcile these influences online. This provokes further questions, such as how do Moroccans conceive of privacy online? Does gender impact the construction of an online persona? Does religiosity impact online interaction? Using both academic and field research, I argue that Moroccans reconcile existing local expectations to their daily personae in the online space. I investigate these questions using field research and a survey of 62 college-age Rabatis. Gendered expectations, communal expectations, and religiosity permeate the networks and shape the rules that Moroccan youth are inventing for this online space. Finally, I turn to the February 20th and examine how the use of social networks during the Arab Spring reflects these broader trends.

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PREFACE

1.0   INTRODUCTION

In 2011, the world took notice when a wave of protests swept across North Africa and the Middle East. Throughout the region, protestors used social networking websites[1] to achieve their goals. For example, Egyptian protesters created a Facebook page after the murder of Khaled Said as a "requiem for the dead blogger" and "on the one year anniversary of Khaled's murder, anti-torture activists stenciled Khaled's image all over Cairo" (Dabashi 2012:100). The social networking revolution, while not the cause of these protests, motivated and facilitated the protests that occurred on the streets. Similarly, in Morocco, protesters used social networking sites like Facebook to alert protestors of the schedules and locations concerning the schedules and locations of protests (Al-Arabiya 2011).

Since the Arab Spring, social networking has not faded across North Africa and the Middle East. Instead, it has attracted more popularity, arguably in part due to the attention placed on the sites during the Arab Spring. Indeed, one report found that Facebook usage doubled in some parts of the region between January and April 2011 (Huang 2011).

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[1] In this thesis, I use "social networking" to mean communication through the new, online media forms, particularly regarding Facebook and Twitter. More formally, social networking websites are, "web –based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system" (Boyd and Ellison [2007]; cited from Elgarah [2009]: 169).

In order to better understand how and why revolutionaries made use of new media, we must first take a step back to understand the origins and development of social networking in the region, who uses social networking websites, and how. Although it is easy to imagine monolithic usage of social networking within the region—and even globally—local culture and tradition likely impact the way each country's youth use new media.

Morocco, in particular, is an interesting place to study the ways social networking intersects with social and political life. Morocco has a rich cultural and historical fabric and has followed a distinct political trajectory in recent years, changing its constitution in response to the Arab Spring. In fact, Morocco has been viewed as the politically responsible answer to the people's complaints. However, political transformations in Morocco have been largely superficial. It is in this unique and complex setting that I explore social networking.

Of course, not all Moroccans are equally likely to make use of social media. Social networking websites are inherently shaped by the mindset of the fairly wealthy, educated Moroccan youth that use these sites. With 80% of its users younger than 30, Morocco is only ranked behind Yemen and Palestine for the youngest, active group of social networkers in the region (North Africa United 2012). Yet, especially in cultures that prioritize familial relations, the young are often subaltern—politically, socially, and culturally excluded from the dominant power structures. In Moroccan culture, generational respect and obedience still feature prominently in daily life. New media offer youth a chance to create their own identities and voices without deferring to their guardians.

Even among young people, cultural influences are likely to shape the ways in which different groups of Moroccans use social media. Culture is a way of allowing a community to live collectively and is shaped by a variety of forces, including economic, political, and social.

The roles and expectations of gender and religion factor into shaping societal values; these factors are poignant in a discussion of social networking because they help elucidate discrepancies in usage across gender and religious intensity.

In this study, I consider how Moroccan culture and the spatial divisions in Moroccan life shape how college-age youth have come to use social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter. I consider how Moroccans present themselves in everyday life and then turn my attention to online personas in recent years as social networking became popular in Morocco only during the last five years. I focus on multiple aspects of social media usage, from the use of personal photographs to language use of social networking sites to preferences about types of sites. I also consider how gender and religiosity influence the ways in which Moroccans use networking in daily life.

My study suggests that local understandings of spatiality and traditional and gendered expectations of daily dress have impacted the ways in which Moroccan youth use—or at least consider—social networking. These cultural influences are most obvious in the images posted online and the privacy settings. In particular, I find that female subjects have been more hesitant in using social networking especially with regards to posting photos. I also suggest that better understanding the way Moroccans use social media in their everyday lives may also inform the ways we think about the political uses of online media in Morocco during and since the Arab Spring.

In the following sections, I will explore the ways in which existing social constructs shape everyday networking. I will begin with a brief overview of the political and economic history of Morocco since the 1970s. Then, I analyze the evolving uses of social networking in Morocco and then consider the cultural influences that can help explain these trends. I will then

assess the construction of an online persona, focusing especially on online images. After introducing my data and methodology, I will present qualitative and quantitative results of my investigation. I conclude by linking my results back to social movements.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 OVERVIEW OF THE MOROCCAN POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC HISTORY SINCE THE 1970'S

Before exploring the nature of Moroccan social networks, the history of the country must first be understood. Only in understanding the current political situation can one comprehend the evolving ways in which Moroccan youth are using these networks.

After the nominal end of the colonial era (1912-1956), Morocco worked to extend its control over industries formerly under French colonial control. Yet, the state did not effectively promote local industry so that it might be globally competitive. Moroccan industry still relied on imports without having developed suitable internal economic infrastructure. Nevertheless, the state saw some success in the 1970's primarily due to the export of phosphates and the mining industry.

With two failed military coups in the 1970's, King Hassan II promoted the rise of a loyal middle class at the expense of the lower classes. Households in the lowest 40% of income "dropped in percentage of the total consumption from 18% in 1959-60 to 12% in 1970-71"

(Cohen 2006:36). The failure to reduce poverty became an external concern, and international organizations suggested structural adjustment and market reform programs in the early 1980's. Morocco complied with most of the prescriptions from external organizations, such as the Club of Paris and the World Bank. For example, during the 1980's, in accordance with the World Bank and IMF requirements, the Moroccan government devalued the currency and generally increased the government control over public expenditures. Even with this external guidance, inconsistent development has fueled high rates of unemployment and an unequal wealth distribution.

In the 1990's, faced with growing social unrest and growing dissatisfaction with the seemingly omnipresent poverty and related social concerns, King Hassan II worked for limited political reforms. These reforms included closing Tazmamart, a prison infamous for human rights abuses, and creating a bicameral legislature. The current king, King Mohammed VI, has been declared the reformer of the modern era, but closer inspection reveals that many of the reforms accredited to him began under the reign of his father, who realized that reforms were necessary to sustain the monarchy.

King Mohammed VI came into the monarchy after what King Hassan called "homeopathic democracy," a series of incremental steps towards a more progressive politics. Although Mohammed VI did not move towards a constitutional monarchy, he did continue—or at least appeared to continue—to move towards political liberalization. He expanded social welfare and encouraged a tolerant form of Islam that has been branded as "Moroccan Islam." This brand of Islam, for many scholars, means, "ordinary life is secular enough to suit the most dedicated rationalist, and religious considerations, for all their intensity, are operative over only a few, fairly well demarcated regions of behavior, so that one gets a ruthlessness in, for example,

commercial and political affairs" (Geertz 1971:112).

Mohammed VI also allowed a degree of Islamist political activity. The Party for Justice and Development was first brought into power by his father in 1997 and was permitted to develop into the leading political party within Morocco. As had his predecessors, Mohammed VI continued limiting political parties' powers. With a fragmented political system, no single party holds more than 15% of the seats in parliament, which leaves them acquiescent to the king's influence. Mohammed VI also worked to balance the conservatives and traditional Islamic powers by focusing on liberal reforms, such as the 2004 Moudawana (the Moroccan Family Code). However, the difficulties of sustaining the monarchy continued as evidenced by the 2011 February 20th movement (Cohen 2006).

On February 20th, protests spread across major cities in response to long-existing political concerns. The brunt of the protests was aimed at the Makhzen, or the governing elite, rather than the king. Protest groups—such as the eponymous February 20th Movement (originally called "Freedom and Democracy Now")—emerged on Facebook before the February 20th protests in Morocco. The initial protests were organized sit-ins in solidarity with the Egyptian protestors. These sit-ins eventually evolved into demonstrations for their own demands. The protests helped motivate a revised constitution, although many critics have claimed the revisions were only nominal.

Still, to acknowledge the role social networking played in this movement is not to assign it causality. There is a distinction between the Internet as a space—which "refers to both the structural aspects of the internet and society"—and the Internet as a tool—or "the tactical aspects and political agency" (Aouragh 2012:526). Social networks facilitated the revolution simply because they were the existing tool for social communication. While these networks were

important in spreading awareness, their actual effectiveness in motivating offline involvement is more uncertain. While the spread of social networking "benefits movement activists, it also enables weakly committed people to opt into social movements at low cost and with little risk—and to drop out just as easily" (Brym 2012:12).

Nevertheless, during the February 20th movement, protest groups followed other North African nations and utilized social networking to motivate their protest demographic. As the majority of protestors in Morocco were the urban, unemployed youth, social networks were a practical and accessible means for them to organize and promote demonstrations. Social networking did not launch the Arab Spring but did facilitate protest activity. However, social networking is more than a tool for protest. I suggest social networking can be understood as a tool for subaltern emancipation. Yet, there is still much to learn about social networking in Morocco. Although recent scholarship has worked to understand social networking through the lens of the Arab Spring, the daily uses of social networking are just as essential to understand.

2.2   MOROCCAN CULTURE, GEOGRAPHIC SPACE, AND SOCIAL NETWORKING

Today, Moroccan culture is neither a monolithic construct of Orientalism nor is it a concession to Westernization. Of the globalizing forces, creolization—which embraces the fluidity of cultures, notes that cultural forces become localized, and imbeds the western with local culture (Hensby 2011)—seems particularly relevant in a discussion of both Moroccan culture and its social networks.

Culture is a set of practices that allows a group to live collectively. Moroccan culture is not a separate entity from the Western influences. To search for the boundary between these cultures is to imagine culture as a static entity; rather, culture is fluid, and so Moroccan culture has been influenced by countless external forces and has assumed them until they become an integral part of the culture. In my decision to analyze the distinct architectural forms, I do not intend to fracture Moroccan culture. Rather, I attempt to understand how these distinct conceptions of spatiality and persona are impacting modern Moroccan culture.

On the one hand, more traditional cultural influences are still alive in Morocco. According to Hofstede (1991), two important cultural distinctions exist between those who are more or less individualistic and between those who have greater or lesser levels of "uncertainty avoidance," an indicator of a society's proclivity for the established and traditional. According to Hofstede's (1991) research, Morocco has only moderate levels of individualism (a value of 46, while the world average is 43 and the United States scored a 91). Additionally, Morocco's "uncertainty avoidance" (68) ranks slightly above the world (64) and far above the United States (46). Together, these measures suggest that Morocco remains in some ways largely community-based and traditional.

Hofstede also notes the Moroccan power distance as 70 (40 for the United States and a world average of 55). The notably high Moroccan score indicates high levels of political, social, and economic inequalities. These inequalities—a legacy of the failed neoliberal policies of Hassan II and the political frustrations that helped motivate the February 20th movement—refer back to the unequal access to social networking. While social networking sites are a useful form of expression and, with regards to the Arab Spring, of mobilization, the reality is that not everyone can access the Internet. This hinders social networks' potential as fully democratic

media. Thus, the demographic of Moroccan social networking members is less diverse, and the simple factor of Internet access speaks to an economic status of the demographic. Social networks are inherently shaped by the mindset of this fairly wealthy, educated youth.

Social networks are worlds without geographical limits. This new space is devoid of historical rules of spatiality but simultaneously allows for users to shape how it is used in each locality. Within Morocco, traditional concepts of spatiality shape the ways in which these networks are used, and they have been creolized in the media's interaction with locally specific ways of organizing and understanding social space. In adapting these networks to the Moroccan context, Moroccans are reconciling Western concepts of spatiality with particular, local understandings. The tension between these two concepts has encouraged a similar tension online: Moroccans are acutely aware of the public privacy of these networks. The phrase public privacy attempts to capture the privacy users have in creating their profiles that will then be viewed by a public audience; further, these networks were used as an online public space to communicate, especially within the revolutionary context when they were used to coordinate efforts. These conventions of the persona in daily life are influencing the online persona. Moroccans are navigating a new space that is further blurring the boundaries between these culturally distinct views of self-presentation (Velitri and Elgarah 2009).

On the other hand, Morocco has been influenced by its colonial past. The French influence has lingered not only in the architecture but also in the education systems, in the spoken language, and in countless other ways. As culture is not static, there is not an inherent dichotomy between indigenous and colonial influences. Instead, Moroccan culture is an amalgam; nevertheless, some cultural factors have more obvious roots. The colonial influences are simultaneously an integral part of Moroccan culture and a memory of the colonial past. Still,

some also suggest that Morocco's recent history has shown its openness to Western ideas and guidance. Culturally, then, Morocco is a landscape full of varied identities and ways of understanding the world.

The creolization of Moroccan culture is also reflected in the geographic spaces of modern Morocco, even in the cities' architecture. During the French colonial period, French architects were sent to restructure the colonial landscapes (Wright 1987). Within Morocco, the *medina qadeema*, or the "old city," remained more traditional while the French *villes nouvelles*, or "new cities," sprang up, encouraging different consciousness (see Figures 1 and 2 below). Within cities like Fez, Rabat, Casablanca, Meknes, and Marrakech, the French vision was reinforced by greenbelts surrounding the *medina qadeema* walls, marking them as physically distinct ways of conceptualizing social space.

Figure 1: The medina qadeema

The medina qadeema's streets have smaller dimensions than those of the ville nouvelle.

Figure 2: The ville nouvelle

The ville nouvelle's buildings are distinct entities whereas the medina's homes are a more natural part of the street's flow.

Within a modern context, these visible barriers—the green belts and the walls of the *medina*—structure Moroccan social life. Life around the *medina qadeema* is more traditional whereas life around the *villes nouvelles* is more socially liberal (Wright 1987). Economic inequalities—a legacy of the failed neoliberal policies of Hassan II—also are visible spatially as economic disparities between the *medina qadeema* and the *ville nouvelle*. While these two spaces are not inherently antagonistic, there are general trends that distinguish them, and the *ville nouvelle* tends to be the wealthier area.

Distinctions between the public and private are also central to the organization of social spaces in Morocco. The *medina* has an interconnected layout with houses in close proximity to shopping centers; in many ways, it has a more organic layout than the *ville nouvelle*, which is mapped according to architectural guidelines. Although the sectors of the *medina qadeema* are less defined, the familial spaces are branched off from the *hanood*[2]. The fluid layout encourages communal interaction, but there is still domestic privacy in the way the households cluster away from public areas. Further, the overarching walled structure envelops the community and encourages a collective intimacy.

Females most acutely feel the dichotomy between public and private spaces. Movement is defined by one simple rule: "One should remain within the space reserved for one's own gender… The feminine space is directed inwards, toward the courtyard; the masculine space is directed toward the outside, the streets" (Newcomb 2006:294). Women's roles have become more public over time; after independence, women were allowed to move from the domestic space into the workforce, and female employment increased by 75% in the 1960's (Newcomb 2006:295). Further, fertility rates have declined: in 1972, the rate was 7 children per woman; a

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[2] *The term* hanood *translates to "the store," and is different than the* souq*, which tends to sell more clothing, gifts, etc. The* hanood *offers basic foods and drinks.*

1993 rate was 4 children per woman. Also, Moroccan literacy has steadily improved from 1971's rate of 1 out of every 5 Moroccans (15 and over) to 1991's rate of 1 in 2. Female literacy is still behind male literacy, though; in 1991, 38% of females were literate compared to 61% of males (Population Trends 1993). Feminine movement remains subject to rules of environment, social class, and religiosity.

So how does the creolization of Moroccan culture and social spaces translate to social networking, a new world that exists without geographical limits? Tensions between Western and local cultural practice and spatiality are likely to play out online. Yet, social networking may also be a space for adaptation and reconciliation as the media interacts with local ways life. In adapting social networking to the Moroccan context, Moroccans are reconciling Western culture with particular, local understandings.

Although social networking may lack geographic boundaries, the distinctions evident in Moroccan life are likely mirrored online. For example, just as economic boundaries are visible in the geographic spaces of Moroccan cities, social networking in Morocco is also shaped by class status. Indeed, Velitri and Elgarah (2009) suggest that social networking within Morocco might have a more pronounced status association than in the United States. While social networking sites are a useful form of expression and, with regards to the Arab Spring, of mobilization, the reality is that not everyone can access the Internet. In short, the economic makeup of Moroccan social networking members is less diverse.

Tensions between the public and private are also an important consideration for young Moroccans, who are acutely aware of the public privacy of social networking sites. Thus, I expect conventions regarding the presentation of self in Moroccan daily life to influence online persona. At the same time, by navigating a world that lacks geographic boundaries, Moroccans

may blur the boundaries between culturally distinct views of self-presentation. I expect these dynamics may play out online through variation in preferences for different networking websites, in whether and how individuals post images online, and in the use privacy settings.

In addition to class and age divisions, social networking in Morocco is also unevenly divided by gender: only 39% of Moroccan Facebook users are female (Malin 2010). In the United States, by contrast, 60% of Facebook users are female (Report 2012). Overall, then, gender is likely to shape who uses social networking. Yet, I am also interested in considering which women use social networking and how those women choose to present themselves. In particular, my study considers whether women who use social networking sites choose to wear the *hijab*.

2.3   GENDERED EXPECTATIONS OF DRESS: UNDERSTANDING THE *HIJAB*

To understand if, how, and why Moroccan women may choose to display themselves wearing the *hijab* online, I first provide a background of the veil in Islam and throughout the region. It is necessary to explore this issue because it has become conflated with Islam in mainstream media, and so I intend to illuminate its history and illustrate its many dimensions and significances.

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The significance of the *hijab* varies over time and space, and even with the most thorough comprehension, it is impossible to construct a singular definition for a word full of multiple significances and implications. Generally, however, the *hijab* is understood in the West as the veil or the Islamic headscarf. Although the history of the veil is bound to the tapestry of other faiths, the *hijab* today is associated with Muslim women.

Even among practicing Muslims, not all women wear the *hijab*. In part, this is due to the fact that the importance of the *hijab* within Islamic religious texts is ambiguous. In fact, many scholars dispute the justification for the *hijab* within the religious texts. After all,

> The Qur'an does not mention veils or headscarves at all, but speaks of the need to erect a 'curtain' (*hijab*) between women and men, which in specific contexts can mean keeping women separate from men in a house, or wearing concealing garments. But this second use is explicitly introduced only with respect to Muhammad's wives, in a passage where the Qur'an mentions the long flowing garment known as *jilbab*: 'O Prophet, tell thy wives and thy daughters, and the women of the believers to draw their *jilbab* close round them… so that they may be recognized and not molested' (33:59). The use of *jilbab* in this way was closely linked in the minds of believers to Muhammad, such that the phrase *she took the jilbab* was used to mean that someone became a wife of Muhammad. Veiling already was practiced in some parts of the Middle East by higher classes, perhaps to signify the possession of sufficient wealth that the veiled or secluded woman did not have to work in the fields. In any case, it is nowhere prescribed in the Qur'an, Only one verse is directed to all women, and it enjoins women to cover their private parts and throw cloths over their bosoms. (Bowen 2007:68-69)

While some scholars understand the *hijab* as an exclusive demand for the wives of Muhammad, others point to Qur'anic justification. After all, within the *surrah al-baqara* it admonishes women to cover their beauty:

> Allah wants you to guard your beauty, lower your gaze, and protect your chastity. He wants you to cover your beauty, but not in the presence of you *Mahram* males, such as the members of your family. Lastly, Allah (Exalted and Glorified is He) wants you to wear modest clothing, and to behave modestly; this is your path to Paradise.

While some scholars point to the development of this *surrah*—as it goes on to say women must cover their bosoms and private parts—others focus on the ambiguity of "beauty." Further, some scholars point to the protocol of prayer. When a woman prays, she is to uncover her face and her hands, but she is also obliged to cover her hair. Essentially, the necessity of wearing the *hijab* is complicated by the ambiguity of the text. Its appearances in *sunnah* and the Qur'an are detailed but not unequivocal.

The *hijab* is not only complicated within the religious texts but also culturally and historically as the concept of veiling is a trans-religious phenomenon. Renowned Egyptian scholar Nawal El-Saadawi writes that the veil "was a product of Judaism long before Islam came into being. It was drawn from the Old Testament where women were abjured to cover their heads when praying to Jehovah, whereas men could remain bareheaded because they had been created in the image of God" (El-Saadawi 1980:5). In the three major Abrahamic religions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—the concept of feminine head coverings transcends the boundaries and distinctions of the faiths. By the Middle Ages, covering one's hair as a matter of religious obligation was firmly entrenched. Jewish women were expected to cover their hair; it was, in fact, this expectation that eventually evolved into the halakhic practice to wear a wig instead of a headscarf. For Christians, the phrase "taking the veil" is a euphemism for becoming a nun. After all, in the Christian—especially Catholic—tradition, the veil is a vision of womanhood and piety. The Mother of God is depicted in traditional art as a veiled, hallowed woman. As another example, in Roman Catholic services until Vatican II (1962-1965), it was mandatory for women to have a head covering as a sign of respect while they were in the church and for men to remove their head coverings at the same time. In Islam, of course, the *hijab* is a phenomenon made

emblematic of Muslim women through tradition and the Western media, though its necessity is ambiguous within the Islamic texts. Moreover, throughout the three Abrahamic faiths, the *hijab* has evolved and transformed itself into new cultural and religious manifestations.

The veil is not a Qur'anic phenomenon, and its meaning has thus changed in various Islamic states. It first emerged in the Muslim elite in the reign of the Safavids in Iran and the Ottoman Empire. Further, the veil became pervasive only in the nineteenth century. While it has been justified in the name of Islam, colonials were the first to promote it as an Islamic symbol (Moghissi 1999:86). It then became a sign of Islamic devotion in 1967, according to Geraldine Brooks, after the catastrophic defeat of Egyptian forces in the Six Day War. In order to "explain the humiliation, Muslim philosophers pointed to the secularism of Gamal Abdel Nasser's government, and urged Egyptians to return to the Islamic laws they had abandoned," though the veil became more politically significant after Iran's theocratic revolution. In 1935, the shah's father banned the chador in the hopes of presenting a modernized Iran to the world. The ban lasted until 1941, when "draconian enforcement eased, but unveiling continued to be encouraged and women who wished to veil were derided as backward." With this continued, albeit lessened pressure, the 1970s became a time of revolutionary pressure. Wearing the chador became a symbol of protest. For one Iranian woman, Hamideh, "the chador symbolized liberation. She put it on a year before the Iranian revolution of 1978, and when she occupied the U.S. embassy, she wore it like a flag" (Brooks 1995:23-25). During the movement for liberation in Algeria, the veil was a similar symbol of protest. "The veil stood for the dignity and validity of all native customs under fiercest attack, particularly customs pertaining to women, ones the occupier was determined to control" (Heath 2008:220). Other scholars point to external motivation: Haideh Moghissi writes that for Egyptians, "the revived veil is linked to the failure of over a century of

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capitalist modernization to secure palpable improvements in women's lives or change cultural and religious patriarchal values and practices […] it is the crisis of Third World-style modernization that defines women's choices, not the spiritual and ideological attraction of Islam and the veil" (Moghissi 1999:44).

Thus, the meaning of the *hijab* and the motivation to wear it is not so transparent as that mandated by the religion. Identities are shaped by not simply religious expectations but traditional ones as well.

The links between the *hijab* and cultural tradition are also evident in the way spatial boundaries are constructed in Morocco. For example, in public settings expectations of dress are distinct between the *medina qadeema* and the *ville nouvelle*. Women present themselves differently in daily life within the walls of the *medina* compared to those outside the walls.

Cultural expectations for women's behavior are expressed not only through the ways women dress but also through the way clothing is presented to them. In fact, the advertising of clothing perhaps speaks most clearly to the gendered expectations of different spaces in Moroccan cities. Within Rabat, the mannequins changed with the style of clothes presented and locale. Within the medina, mannequins tended to be partial (meaning bodied mannequins without head or parts of bodies). Also, there were stores dedicated to selling *hijab* within the *medina*. Outside the *medina* walls, mannequins tended to have bodies and heads. Some of these mannequins also had wigs put on them. This disparity not only speaks to the expectations of daily persona among women but also to the economic distinction between the *medina* and the *ville nouvelle.*

Figure 3: Inside medina qadeema

Image of mannequin within Rabat's medina qadeema. The medina stores are mostly open air stores in contrast with the closed stores of the *ville nouvelle*.

Figure 4: Outside medina qadeema

Image of mannequins outside the medina walls; this store was still close to the medina. As the distance from the medina increases, the mannequins becomes newer and more in line with what would be found in a Western style mall.

Distinctions between the public and the private also affect where women wear the *hijab*. Women who wear the *hijab* will do so in public. In domestic spaces in the presence of *mahram* (a male blood relative to whom marriage is forbidden) or other females, women can remove the *hijab*. The domestic space allows Moroccans, especially females, to present themselves in a way distinct from the ways women portray themselves in public through their public personas.

Drawing from this background and my observations of gendered spaces in Morocco, I endeavor to better understand the ways in which women present themselves online. Although my research can help clarify major trends in whether women choose to wear the *hijab*, I cannot capture the motivation for the practice. Nevertheless, I believe that, in analyzing the physically visible spatial constructions, we can better comprehend why Moroccans are using social networking in distinct ways.

2.4   SOCIAL NETWORKING PRACTICES IN MOROCCO

In the absence of a country-specific social networking site (as found in countries such as Poland [Grono.net] and Iran [Cloob.com]), Moroccan youth have appropriated American Facebook and Twitter into a Moroccan context, and Facebook has become the most popular social networking site within Morocco. The Arab Social Media Report released a penetration rate of 11.92% for Facebook in Morocco contrasted with only 0.08% for Twitter (North Africa United 2012). Other social networking sites pale in comparison to the supernova that is Facebook. While these percentages may seem low, it is important to remember the large youth populations. Currently, the majority of Moroccan users are under 30, and while there are still low penetration rates, the large youth population portends potential growth. The penetration rate stands to increase, and, consequently, Facebook's popularity stands to rise.

Still, although Facebook has the sheer numbers, Twitter is still an effective force within Morocco. The same Arab Social Media report indicates that Morocco ranks third in the Arab world for the number of tweets with a monthly average of 750,000. However, Twitter carries the connotation of elitism. The demographic of users is markedly different than those on Facebook. The most followed Twitter accounts in Morocco, according to Twitaholic, are Moutaki Jawad, the PJD Officiel, and Hespress. Jawad is a Moroccan musician; the next two are the major political party and a news source respectively.

I suggest the discrepancy in social networking sites in Morocco may relate to spatiality. Twitter is more internal and intellectual while Facebook is more communal. Thus, while politics and businesses cannot ignore Twitter's demographic, they need to access that communal force that has made revolutions in other North African countries so successful. The nature of Facebook

is predominantly one of community, which complements traditional Moroccan values. Therefore, most political and revolutionary groups invest more time into their Facebook pages as their very survival depends upon the foundation of a community. As Twitter remains polarized and virtually exclusive to highly educated, wealthier individuals, Facebook has accessed a broader—albeit still limited— demographic.

2.5   THE ONLINE PERSONA AND THE IMAGE ONLINE

The question of self-representation is inherent to social networking because the very nature of these sites allows their users to construct their own identities. Social networks challenge notions of privacy and publicity in the same way as new, emerging social spaces. Now, modern technologies, such as mobile phones and Internet access, have introduced new forms of socializing across the globe. From cyber cafés to informal music stores, Moroccan youth have access to spaces "unattached to the rules of a national culture and social hierarchy or a formal market," and, through these spaces, assume the agency denied to them within the current social constructs (Cohen 2006:135). Women, especially, gain a new agency through means of these emerging, ambiguous spaces. They are granted more freedom of interaction within these public spaces, such as cyber cafés, and gain even more within the realm of social networking sites.

New parameters are established in social networks through image and text. For example, Bahiyyih Maroon explores the social network of cellular phones and how they change the face of social interaction. She finds that mobile phones are "pathways to anonymity, mobility, and

individualism [and allow] greater opportunity for transgressing moralized social roles" (Maroon 2006:189). Mobile telephones have made social interaction more intentional, and while mobile phones are still more pervasive across economic backgrounds than are social networking sites, these sites still offer similar social benefits. These methods of communication offer their users new possibilities for socializing and more agency—arguably more than do mobile telephones as these sites offer control not only over socializing but also over their own personas. The Internet is still, to a large portion of the population, an event. Cyber cafés are popular meeting places and are functional in the sense that many Moroccans access the Internet there. So, privacy settings, or new parameters of privacy (i.e. never posting a profile picture or using pseudonyms), are commonly created as social networks encounter these public spaces. These new definitions of social interaction have formed a new socialization, mediating the concepts of domestic and public expectations.

These expectations are not only influenced by local culture but also by religiosity. For instance, a strict interpretation of Islamic texts forbids photography as the Arabic word *surah* translates into "image," and Islam prohibits the creation of images because in the creation of animate portraits (beings with soul) lies blasphemous intent. There is a *hadith* that says those who create such images will go to Hell and there they will be told to put the soul into the image. While a liberal interpretation does not forbid photography, a conservative view can interpret the *hadith* as to also ban photography. This stricter interpretation considers photography a sin unless there is a dire need (passport pictures, for example). This interpretation potentially affects Morocco more than other North African nations as Morocco was the only country to ban photography until the reign of Abdul Aziz IV (r. 1908-1912). He was in his mid-teens when he came to power and was invested in the new technologies from England and France.   He

eventually brought in foreign experts and technicians to operate the devices and to train him in photography (Bottomore 2008).

Nevertheless, even Berbers "would have been accustomed to seeing the photograph of the king of Morocco exposed in every public place from shops to street signs" (Vogl 2003:28). While traditional interpretations shape the modern hesitation with photography, Moroccans are still appropriating photography and understanding it in their own way.

3.0   EMERGING QUESTIONS

Based on the literature and discussion above, I have conducted my research with a series of questions. Broadly, these questions were focused on understanding how college-age Moroccan youth were constructing their personas online.

First, I wondered how Moroccans, especially women, were willing to present themselves online. The role that photographs play on social networking sites posed an interesting topic, and I wondered if religiosity or gender would factor into the comfort level and willingness to share images on these sites. In order to have a fuller understanding, I compared it to how women were presenting themselves in daily life.

Next, I questioned the influence familial expectations have on the ways youth are using the sites. I wondered if societal expectations would differ across gender, and I also questioned whether this would impact the ways youth communicated through both word and image online.

Further, I also wondered about linguistic concerns. I wondered if Moroccans would be more likely to navigate these sites in Arabic or French, and I wondered how this would compare with more formal and professional social networking sites.

Finally, in the light of recent events, I looked to the February 20th Movement. In analyzing this event, I looked to see if there were any similarities between this more revolutionary context and the daily usage of social networking.

4.0   DATA AND METHODOLOGY

In order to gather my own results, I worked with the Center for Cross-Cultural Learning in Rabat, Morocco as part of a study abroad with the School for International Training. The very nature of social networking and the forces that guide them are multi-layered and complex; so, this paper has inevitably and regrettably been a simplification. Limitations in scope and cultural and linguistic barriers must be considered in understanding my hypotheses. For instance, all of my field research was conducted in the city of Rabat, Morocco.

My research relied heavily on interviews. The subjects were limited to university students in Rabat and other Rabatis with specific skill sets (i.e. photography, religious scholarship). These interviews lasted between a half hour and an hour. When necessary, follow-up interviews were made. The interviews were recorded with a handheld recording device. Males were much more willing to be interviewed than females; also, I was surprised by the number of interview subjects that asked to not be recorded, which limited the amount of notes recorded during the interview process.

The interview process was conducted almost exclusively in English. When a question was not understood, I would translate it into Arabic or French, but the answers would be given in English. My biggest regret with the data collection is that my population for interviews was limited exclusively to those with a degree of fluency in English. This limited the backgrounds of those I talked to and colored the data. Interviewing in only English affected my results because it

did not allow for the same comfort as speaking in Darija or French would have and it also limited the demographic to those who studied English.

I supplemented these interviews with more quantitative analysis in order to better comprehend the nature of social networks. I distributed surveys regarding uses of social networking to students in Rabat, Morocco whom I had not interviewed. The surveys were available in French and English. Copies of both are viewable in the appendix.

I also viewed a sample of Facebook users in order to gain a new perspective of social networks. The sample was taken from people identifying themselves as living in Rabat, Morocco. The aim of this analysis was to examine their profile pictures in relation to their gender as I have found that the Facebook "names" are often changed and do not necessarily denote gender accurately. Thus, when the sample was analyzed, if their gender was not visible, the data was disregarded. The sample population consisted of Facebook users identifying their current city as Rabat, Morocco and was comprised of 90 females and 90 males.

While in Morocco, I also took note of certain ways of dressing in daily life. I recorded these numbers in a series of tallies whose dates and locations are more clearly explained in the results section. This was done in order to allow readers to understand the significance of the statistics for online usage and presentation in comparison to the ways of presentation in daily life.

Upon my return to the United States, I analyzed the data through SPSS, relying mainly on cross tabulation. The results of this process are the statistics present in the following sections.

5.0   RESULTS

5.1   THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIAL NETWORKING AND ISSUES OF SPACE AND PERSONA

5.1.1   Ways of self-presentation in daily life

Before turning to an analysis of online personas, I first consider how Moroccans present themselves in everyday life. Such an analysis helps put in context my results about social networking since the ways Moroccans construct their daily personas shapes the ways they use social networking. These influences are especially clear in a gendered analysis as expectations and daily personas for women are distinct from those of men. Cultural and religious tradition influences the dress of all Moroccans but especially of women.

My interview subjects had wide-ranging views about the *hijab*. One 20-year-old male university student, said, "as long as they're covered, it doesn't matter if they wear Western clothing or traditional clothing." Another 20-year-old university student has a more stringent view of the proper wearing of the *hijab*. In comparing women wearing the *hijab* with jeans and other Western clothing versus traditional clothing, he said, "The first one… I don't feel that she

wears it because she believes it." He sees the women in a *hijab* and jeans as wearing the headscarf for cultural, social, or familial reasons rather than religious motivation.

A 48-year-old mother who doesn't use social networking herself said, "You believe in something that's why you want to wear the *hijab*. I feel not… I feel that it's not that I don't want to wear the *hijab*, but I feel that I don't need to. It's something that I don't see in my family. My mother was wearing the Moroccan scarf and the *djellaba* every time she want to go out until now. But me, I grow up with wearing the Western thing, never *hijab*, never the scarf. Maybe I wear the scarf when I want to pray. Then I cover my body. But I feel that I don't need to wear it" [*sic*].

In addition to my interview results, I also collected data on women wearing the *hijab* in Rabat, the administrative capital of Morocco and the location of my research. On April 23, 2012, I analyzed the ways 188 women dressed within the *medina qadeema* contrasted with 244 women outside the *medina* walls. The trends of dress within the *medina* walls are notably different from the norms outside of the *medina* among younger girls (in a range from 20 to 40 years old). Throughout the world, women are often representative of the cultural standards; within Morocco, women tend to dress more traditionally than males, and these cultural conventions are most present in the traditional sectors of the city.

Table 1: The number of women wearing hijab

Inside as compared to outside the *medina walls*				
	Inside *medina*		Outside *medina*	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Hijab	120	63.8%	94	38.5%
No *hijab*	68	36.2%	150	61.5%
Total	188		244	

Within the walls of the *medina*, the communal emphasis simultaneously encourages and allows a traditional form of dress. The majority of women—old and young—wear the *hijab*, and of those wearing the *hijab*, 65.8% also wore the *djellaba*. For those not wearing the *djellaba*, jeans (mostly dark washes) and leggings were popular, and colors tended to be neutral.

While the men inside and out of the *medina* walls dress in a Western fashion, the public personas of women change once one crosses the physical boundary of the *medina qadeema*. Outside of the medina, four blocks away from the medina walls, I observed that a minority wore the *hijab*; of these, 19.1% wore the *djellaba*. More women wore make-up, and 11.3% of women without the *hijab* had lightened their hair. Overall, the younger women tended to dress in the Western style clothing associated with a global middle class while the older generation tended towards locally significant clothing. The younger women wore dark wash jeans, knee-length skirts, or black pants.

Table 2: The number of women wearing hijab

In city streets as compared to western-style mall				
	By Hassan II Mosque		Inside Morocco Mall	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Hijab	52	54.7%	12	26.1%
No *hijab*	43	45.2%	34	73.9%
Total (N)	95		56	

In traveling throughout the country, other tourist cities had similar trends to those of Rabat. In Casablanca, for example, the majority of women wore the *hijab* in daily life, but within the setting of a western-style mall, most went without a head covering. None of the employees of western-style stores, such as American Eagle, wore *hijab*. In the first sample of women in various taxis and cars driving past the Hassan II Mosque, the majority of those wearing *hijab* also wore *djellaba.* In comparison, the majority of the women within Morocco Mall wearing

hijab wore western-style clothing. I only saw one woman wearing *niqab*, and she was in the first sample. In smaller, non-touristic cities, more women wore *hijab* and public spaces were male dominated.

Though these observations must be understood within their proper context, they reveal trends crucial to understanding this research. Women seemed to respond to societal conventions in which it is socially acceptable for young women to wear traditional clothing while I was unable to observe any male under 40 wearing traditional dress. Within major urban areas, the only Moroccans wearing traditional garb in daily life were females, and the concentration of traditional dress is higher in the familial and traditional *medina qadeema*. These gendered expectations further translate into the world of social networks.

The implications of these statistics can impact the persona of social networking in different ways. These implications are shaped by three major factors: gender, age, and presentation in daily life. The ways of self-presentation online can be shaped by gendered expectations, by the age of the user, and by the way they choose to present themselves in daily life. My surveys revealed that women are more hesitant to post their image online. This could be because of gendered pressures or simply because the type of woman that uses social networking would not post her image for personal reasons distinct from gendered expectations. Similarly, few women wore the *hijab*; this can be due to religious expectations or because the type of woman using these networks doesn't wear the *hijab* in daily life.

Again, we must realize that the *hijab* will not have a singular significance. This will further mean that the reasons Moroccan women are presenting themselves in daily life and online in certain ways will be impossible to reduce. It will be a matter of individual interpretation of the *hijab* and not necessarily motivated by religious reasons. As the Islamic scholar I interviewed

mused, "[Women in the past] were all Muslims, but did they wear the veil because they were Muslims or because they were Moroccans? That was the question."

5.2   OVERVIEW OF SOCIAL NETWORKING

In beginning to assess the role of social networking within the Moroccan context, I wanted to first confirm the popularity of specific sites within the country. As earlier academic research has noted, Facebook is the most popular networking site within the North African region, and Morocco is no exception as 64.5% of my survey subjects indicated Facebook as their preferred social network and only 1.6% indicated Twitter.

5.2.1   Ways of self-presentation online

While Moroccan society remains gendered, social networking allows users to define their own boundaries between the domestic and public. Allowing users of both genders control over their profiles creates a new dynamic, but, even online, societal expectations distinguish the ways Moroccan men are using the sites as contrasted with Moroccan women. As Newcomb writes, many within Morocco "still associate women with domestic space, so that women's occupation of public space is often inflected with attempts to redefine such spaces as partly domestic or private" (Newcomb, 296). As noted in the observations of daily dress, women are expected to present themselves in a more conservative, traditional way than males. Consequently, women are more cautious with their personas and the ways they communicate online; they tend to utilize and invent new modes of privacy.

For instance, the willingness to post photos is shaped by a variety of factors, and I analyzed the impacts of gender and religiosity. The results of the surveys I distributed within Rabat revealed 67% of all surveyed were willing to post photographs of themselves online. Moroccan males are generally more willing to post images of themselves on social networks such as Facebook as 82% of men were willing to post images of themselves online as contrasted with 53% of women. Further, in analyzing a sample of profile pictures, 67.8% of males posted images of themselves[3] and not one left the profile on the default setting while 64.4% of females posted images of themselves as their profile picture and 7.2% left the profile picture on default. Overall, women were more likely to post images that were not of themselves; they had a larger range of alternative profile picture options (i.e. images of flowers, images of family members, leaving the image on the default setting) than their male counterparts.[4]

Figure 5: The images Moroccan females post on Facebook

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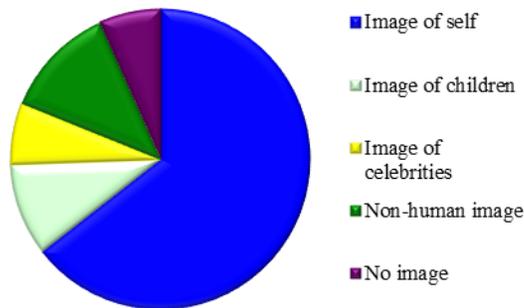
[3] I hypothesized that these images were of the analyzed subjects because it matched gender and, if posted, age. However, I realize that there is a chance I misinterpreted the images. While it is likely these are images of the Facebook owner, it is not definite.

[4] Of the females, 64.4% posted photographs of themselves; 10.0% posted photos of children; 6.7% posted photos of celebrities; 12.2% posted non-human images; 7.2% posted no image. Out of the 90 female profiles surveyed, only 4 wore a head covering. Of the non-human images posted by females, the most popular image was floral (4 of the 11 non-human images centered around flowers). Of the males surveyed, 67.8% posted photographs of themselves; 4.4% posted photos of children; 10.0% posted photographs of celebrities; 16.7% posted non-human images; and 0% of the surveyed subjects left their profile picture on the default. I hypothesized that these images were of the analyzed subjects because it matched gender and, if posted, age. Soccer was the major theme for the images of celebrities and non-human images posted by males.

Figure 6: The images Moroccan males post on Facebook
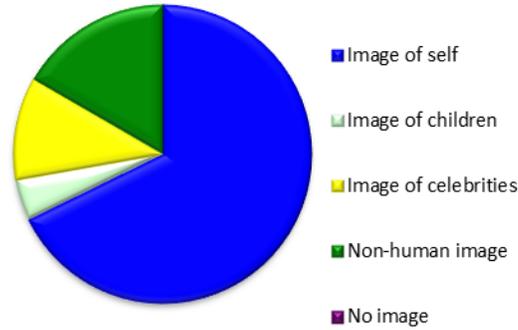
Generally, Moroccans who post pictures of themselves were also more likely to post pictures of their families. Drawing from survey results, I found that 655 of Moroccan Facebook users who were willing to post their own image were also willing to post images of family members. However, sometimes the decision to post images varied by the photograph's subject. Of those who were not willing to post their own image, 17% would still post photographs of their family members. Some interview subjects explained that some Moroccans would post images of their family—especially children—online due to a sense of pride.

Table 3: The Relation between Posting Photographs of Self and Family

	Posts photos of self		Does not post photos of self	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Posts family photos	26	65.0%	3	16.7%
Doesn't post family photos	14	35.0%	15	83.3%
Total (N)	40		18	

Traditional, spatial expectations can explain this discrepancy as gendered expectations still shape social interaction, especially for those with a stricter interpretation of the Quran.

5.2.2   Religiosity and social networking

Religion is a central part of people's daily lives in Morocco. All survey respondents identified as practicing Muslims: most (58%) reported practicing "often," and the remaining respondents (42%) reported practicing 'sometimes.' In addition, because the Moroccan state bases its law on Islamic tradition, religion becomes a force online.

An Islamic scholar I interviewed considered that the hesitation with images online could be rooted in the way photography can be interpreted by conservative Muslims. He said, "You were talking to me about people giving their names or their pseudonyms […], and putting, for example, a tree in place of the picture. […] Maybe some of these people have this strict, narrow interpretation of the text and they wouldn't like their pictures or a picture of any human to be posted on their personal page."

The survey results further suggest that religiosity impacts self-presentation online: of those who identified as regularly practicing, 54% were willing to post images of themselves whereas 87% of those who identified as practicing sometimes were willing to post images. Again, this can be explained by a stricter, Qur'anic interpretation as a strict interpretation can view photography as forbidden.

The tepid support for photography may translate into the lack of photographic schools within Morocco. A 25-year-old self-taught photographer, said, "There are some schools, they teach art and photography is just a part of it. But they don't really *teach* photography. It's just once a week, and it's the basics. So, most Moroccans go to study in Europe, America, or Canada." Most photography students, he said, travel to France to study because of the comfort and familiarity of a shared language. While this statement is not entirely true—look at ESAV Marrakech (l'Ecole Supérieure des Arts Visuels), a private film school founded in 2007—a

cursory Google search is enough to illuminate the dearth of such programs. The most common hits are for photography holidays to Morocco and Spain rather than courses dedicated to training Moroccans themselves in photography; domestic photographic and film training, however, is rarer.

The attention paid to photographs, especially those of females, mirrors the conflict between traditional expectations for women and pressures of globalization—or more accurately Turkization and Americanization. Turkish soap operas and American television shows are broadcast on the Moroccan network 2M; these showcase women dressed less conservatively than those in local programs. While the images and media pressures cannot be simply cast into a dichotomy of "traditional" versus "modern," there remains an interesting conflict between cultural values that Moroccan women are reconciling in their own ways. While some women choose to have the "sexy" profile picture, others post themselves in conservative clothing; some refuse to post any image.

5.3   THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN FACEBOOK AND TWITTER IN TERMS OF SPATIALITY AND PERSONA

As interviews revealed, the presence of the political and business worlds on Twitter is more pressing within the Moroccan context as interviews revealed. In an interview with a 28-year-old female university graduate, she explained that Twitter is not as popular because, "people are more interested in social media that can allow them to keep up with friends and chat at the same time and know about other people's activities and things like that. […] Very few people even grasp the kind of extended things you can do with Twitter. They think, 'Oh well, if I write that

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kind of line and just tweet it, and no one responds or likes or adds a comment, they're just not interested.'"

Still, many organizations and political parties find the benefits in Twitter. The Party for Justice and Development (PJD) employee I talked with said, "Bloggers, most opinion makers, are on Twitter." She said, "The quality of the users are in a high intellectual level. They are opinion leaders." Due to the popularity of Facebook within Morocco, the PJD has twenty employees working on the official Facebook page; a single employee, however, manages Twitter. She mentioned that the party is now turning its focus to building a Twitter community. She said she wants to use Twitter in a similar manner to Facebook and have more people managing the Twitter account. However, she realized, "I cannot do that without a community." Still, she said the PJD realizes the importance of using all the social networks as they complement each other in function and in terms of their target audience. "You must reach the opinion makers," she said with a smile. The potential of Twitter can be summarized with one simple statistic: 5% of the users create 75% of the content (Bruck). If PJD and other Moroccan political parties can successfully navigate the transition from Facebook to Twitter, the possibilities are endless.

5.3.1   The global nature of social networks within Morocco

Especially for those who define globalization as an increase in worldwide connectivity, the global quality of social networking—a non-geographic location with a very geographic origin— impacts social networking users and the ways they use these sites. These sites are new, intangible spaces but impacted by existing, external ideas. The way these sites are used is shaped not only by local forces but also by tensions of westernization and creolization. Westernization believes

the world is a neo-empire, a "transnational and hybrid" empire (Hensby 2011:81), in which Western nations shape global economy, politics, and culture. In contrast, creolization embraces the fluidity of cultures, notes that cultural forces become localized, and imbeds the western with local culture (Hensby 2011:127).

In an immediate sense, the simple act of using these sites is an act of westernization, most clearly in the language and structure of social networks. While the language of these sites is adaptable, the default on Facebook—and most sites—is English. Further, as a consequence of colonization and the structure of these networks, a large number of Moroccans use Facebook in French because it facilitates online communication and because most use a French (or Western character) keyboard. A 25-year-old male government translator said, "If we grew up writing Arabic [on our computers], we would write in Arabic now. There are new programs, but we are used to [writing in French]." He explained that the majority of the upper and middle classes write in French while the lower class writes in either French or Arabic. This class distinction can correlate with access to education, as French is considered the language of education. He claimed French was the most common and, of those Moroccans I surveyed, most preferred French, with Arabic as a distant second.

Table 4: Which language do you set your social networking site to?

Dans quelle langue est-ce que votre réseautage est écrit?		
	Number	**Percentage**
French	28	45%
Arabic	15	24%
English	3	5%
Arabic & French	1	2%
Other*	14	23%
Total (N)	61	

those who selected two languages or wrote in Tamazight

While informal communications between youth are usually in French or Darija, official communication necessitates an increased focus on linguistics. For instance, groups like the

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Justice and Development Party tweet in Arabic, French, and English. Darija is less commonly used as it is not yet standardized. Regional dialects like Darija are spoken languages and not readily standardized. Still, there is a new project aimed at standardizing Darija: KtbDarija ("WriteDarija") is attempting to codify the phonetic approximation of Darija. Currently, without any standardization, the spelling of various words varies from one person to the next. Moroccan Arabic is rarely written and even more rarely seen in an Arabic script. Nevertheless, many Moroccans say there are no issues with comprehension as the transliteration system is generally coherent and cohesive enough. Numbers represent the letters that do not translate into the sounds found on a Latin keyboard; and while some spelling varies from person to person, issues of comprehension are not often born of the current, non-standardized phonetic transliteration system.

The PJD employee said that in communication—especially online communication—the choice of language depends on the target audience. "The people on Facebook are using it in Arabic or French," she said. While their Twitter posts in Arabic, French, and English, their Facebook posts almost exclusively in Arabic and French. Other groups similarly structure their language choices towards their audiences. The preponderance of Western languages and the social networking defaults speak to the Westernizing force of these social networks.

Further, the layout of Facebook prioritizes imagistic representation. Conversely, throughout Moroccan history, more traditional interpretations of the Quran question photography's morality. A site designed with an American clientele in mind inevitably shapes how Moroccans approach the site. While Facebook allows for adaptations, its structure inherently encourages a certain self-presentation. However, Morocco has historically had Western influence and incorporated aspects into their culture and politics. Morocco, for example,

consistently engages with European Union initiatives first, which helped lead to its advanced member status in 2008 (Willis 2009). Thus, their appropriation of a non-Western site is not so foreign.

While the format of the site implies Westernization, the Moroccan cultural values that permeate the networks act as creolizing forces. Although forces of westernization and polarization (in regards to the economic limitations of their user demographic) influence social networks, these sites have a democratic potential. Due to this democratic potential, they are a transnational space disposed to creolization as Moroccans invent their own norms on Facebook. These include privacy measures that transcend the provided settings, a different understanding of images, and adaptive communication channels.

Within Morocco, channels of online communication revolve around privacy because of traditional concerns about family reputation. This privacy is constructed outside the provided security measures prescribed by the networks, notably on Facebook. On Facebook, Moroccans often change their user names (which on Facebook are the names visible and searchable to both friends and strangers) and communicate through the inbox rather than posting on walls. Whereas American youth tend to change their names to avoid being found by college admissions officers or employers, my interviews indicated that Moroccan youth fear their families finding their account.

While westernization impacts social networking in Morocco, creolization has greater influence. Moroccans' use and understanding of social networks and privacy is shaped by cultural understandings of space and persona, and the discrepancies between female and male online persona mimic the gendered personas of daily life. Further, Moroccans tend to understand

and even criticize these networks through their own local lens. Traditional values shape their usage and concept of social networking.

5.3.2   The creolizing forces on Facebook

A 28-year-old female university graduate said, "Some take it just for the fun and do not want to run into somebody they do know. Especially if you're considering that Facebook page as a way for you to just have fun and meet random people, random guys, and just talk to them. Some actually, either women or men are either married or engaged and sometimes have a webpage not with their real name. Or sometimes they have two Facebook accounts with almost the same name. One of them will be the one known to the family, with the bride, or the wife, the husband, or the family members. The other one just for, you know, maybe college friends, or something like that, or like girls or guys you met through chat rooms."

Changing the names is one of the ways that Moroccan youth strive to maintain a sort of privacy. This manifests itself in other ways, such as the style of communication. While American youth seem to feel comfortable writing on their friends' walls, most Moroccans communicate with their friends through Facebook chat or through the inbox. As a 24-year-old female university student explained, "It's private. You cannot see some stuff that everyone will see." She said that she posted on the wall for vague niceties, such as birthday wishes or telling someone she misses them. However, if she had something to truly communicate, she said she would send a message.

Both males and females believed relationships were to be initiated by the male. While a few males like the male 18-year-old university student said that a female could begin the Facebook flirtation, he described it as "rare." Facebook offers the youth a space to interact

without the cultural and traditional pressures and restrictions surrounding visible dating culture. The inbox offers a privacy and intimacy that cannot happen on the street, where most interactions are brief and fleeting catcalls and other varied harassments.

While the cyber-dating scene has created a more immediate agency—as females noted they often had the power to respond or ignore a male suitor—gendered expectations impact not only how personas are created but also how they are perceived. Both women and men have the power to define their relationship status. When asked if Moroccan females would update their relationship status, a 28-year-old female university student said, "If you're using it as that page to sort of like meet guys, you definitely do not want to put on your status that you already have a guy, if you know what I mean." She continued to explain that she believes most men would only update their relationship status once they were married. However, she clarified, "They never mention the name. They just say 'married.' It wouldn't say 'married with,' and give you the link to the woman's webpage. […] Sometimes they're preventing friends from checking out their wives' pictures, or how the wife looks like, or her webpage, or something like that." A 24-year-old female university student confirmed that relationships are more routinely updated only for serious commitments. When I asked if she updated her status, she replied, "When I was engaged, yes; when I was in a relationship, yes. But I was in a serious way, you know?" A 21-year-old female university student explained that the control over relationship status was used as most people "don't want for other people to know it. Like I'm in a relationship, and I don't want to put it in Facebook. I think it's something personal. And this is really a chance for you to publish the things that you want to publish, so you have a certain privacy in it."

There is also control over the images social networking users can make visible. For instance, the *hijab* is a rarity on Facebook. Most girls who choose to post profile pictures of

themselves do not wear the *hijab*. I was able to interview one woman who wears the *hijab*, and she said she would never post an image of herself. She said Facebook was simply to communicate with family and friends; so, there was no reason for her images to be online. She said that to post an image was to look for a boyfriend or husband. While most interview subjects felt that it was not unnatural for a woman to post a photograph of herself in the *hijab*, a few did find the notion odd. An 18-year-old university student who chooses to not wear the *hijab*, said, "Most of the girls with *hijab* do not make their photos there. With the *real hijab*" [emphasis is hers]. She said that these women were very cognizant of their religion; so, they would not then post images of themselves online. The Islamic scholar I talked with further elucidated this phenomenon and viewpoint when he said, "When you use the *hijab* to attract, then it is no longer the *hijab*." Most subjects, especially female interviewees, believed that profile pictures were the space for a 'sexy' photograph. Thus, for girls with the "*real hijab*," to post an image would run counter to cultural expectations for what both the *hijab* and what the profile picture should mean.

When asked why people were compelled to choose non-human images as their profile picture, two 20-year-old male university students had responses of a similar vein. The first said that these people, male and female, feared they would not be accepted for themselves. "Photos," he said, "are a means of communication." So, not having an identifiable profile picture makes it more difficult to communicate with these persons in his opinion. The other said, "He's not confident in himself, of his looks." When prompted to consider why females would select non-human images, he said, "It can be that she's Muslim... When she has the *hijab*, it's not good to show your photo like that." He believes that it is not good for any Muslim woman, veiled or unveiled, to post pictures of herself so liberally. When asked if his friends posted photographs of themselves as their profile picture, he said emphatically, "Yes, all of them." I then asked if any

of his female Facebook friends wear the *hijab* in their profile pictures. After considering for a moment, he said, "I saw accounts of girls who wear the *hijab*, but in my friends there is not" [*sic*].

However, most males did not associate the lack of a profile picture with a more conservatively religious girl. In fact, most contended in the interview process that this happened when a girl was unattractive. Even the female interviewees seemed to have reached a consensus similar to the male interviewees. A 20-year-old female university student, said, "Some girls, because they are ugly, so they don't post their photo." The 20-year-old male university student said, "Most girls post photos of like… Justin Bieber." When asked why he thought this was the trend, he replied that the girl was "not cute" or her face was not photogenic.

Even knowing that some Facebook users refused to post photographs because their family had access to their sites, the trend was for the subjects to believe people—namely females—would not post their photographs because of their attractiveness level. The stereotype and bias often focused on feminine beauty with both male and female interview subjects using the feminine pronoun "she," even when the question was phrased as: "What do you think about *people* who do not post their picture in Facebook?" The interview subjects mostly agreed that a girl would not post her photographs because she was not beautiful enough; many subjects also pointed out that a girl would not post her pictures if she had skin problems (i.e. acne).

5.3.3   The public nature of social networks and the local, communal values

These networks are understood differently within the society: the youth tend to embrace the networks while the older generation is more cautious about the new community that has formed. While the communal forces of daily life tend to encourage or at least permit traditional personas

(i.e. how women in the *medina qadeema* are more likely to wear *hijab*), the online community encourages a reinvention of space and thus a reinterpretation of traditional personas. Social networking via the new media is creating new social dynamics, and some members of the older generation see this as a threat to the existing social system. Yet, Moroccan youth, while willing to use the sites, still either observe traditional expectations in the ways they use the networks or obscure their deviations through the privacy channels.

These networks redefine the meaning of social relationships. "Maybe I'm an old version or the old generation, but I find it uncomfortable to be in front of a machine like this. I think [the youth] need more human contact," said a 48-year-old mother, who herself does not have a Facebook account. She expressed also concern for her eight-year-old son to begin using these networks: "[I am worried for him] to have influence from […] bad people […]. People who want to have good sexual relationships. But I try to protect my son by giving an education. […] This I think will help to make the distinction between the good and the not good things. And I think it's very important that he understand that" [*sic*]. Online relationships are less public and consequently less regulated. While in daily interactions the community can intervene for safety and moral reasons, most Moroccans use the most private channels of communication available online. So, they create a private public space that, while influenced by traditional values and morals, cannot be governed by them.

While my survey results showed that 71% of the parents are aware of their child's social networking sites, the interviews clarified that most parents seem to be absent from monitoring their children's Facebook. A 28-year-old female university student said, "My dad just hears, 'Facebook, Facebook.' He doesn't know what Facebook is. I just showed him the page once. He was like, 'What is this?' I was like, 'It's just like a page I have all my friends from college on so

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I could keep up with and a few pictures.' I didn't show him, of course, all the pictures because he'd think I'd be crazy to post that many pictures. I know he'd say, 'Why did you post all those pictures for people to see?'" Similarly, a 24-year-old female student said, "My dad, he always thinks things about Facebook. 'Ah, pictures! Careful! There's like Photoshop and blah, blah, blah. They post things on Facebook.' But he does not have a Facebook." Whether a consequence of their disinterest or their children's fear of showing them, it appears that few monitor these sites.

Some of the interview subjects justified their pseudonyms online by saying they did not want their family to find them. When, however, they interacted with their family members on their accounts, there was even more hesitation in posting photographs. An 18-year-old female university student, who has posted photographs on her Facebook page, explained her rationale in considering which photographs to post: "[My parents…] would not be… okay with this." She expressed the fear of her parents—especially her father—finding out that she has posted photographs of herself online. This, she said, was the main motivation for not using her real name on her Facebook account.

Even though the 48-year-old mother showed concern about her son using Facebook in the future, she realized he would be likely to create an account. She said, "I know he will have a page in the Facebook and it's normal because it's this generation… if you would not have this, I would think maybe there is a problem. It is something that, now, this generation, they need this and they need to have this. But maybe I will see or I will watch [his Facebook page]."

However, a 39-year-old unmarried uncle, said, "They should not have [a Facebook account]. This is dangerous to them. There are people who forget Allah in Facebook." As a man who identifies strongly as a Muslim, he is very aware of the dangers of Facebook. He himself

used his page for his automobile business and explained that Facebook should be used "for something useful, not anything funny." While some parents and guardians have reconciled themselves to the idea of Facebook, they are generally more wary of the inherent dangers to the social networking system. His concept of usefulness—which he translated as use for commercial marketing—is also emerging among entrepreneurial youth. Interview subjects who engaged in independent work—such as music or photographic careers—explained that they used these social networking sites predominantly to advertise their work; the social aspect became secondary for their purposes.

Along with the increasingly widespread usage of social networking is coming a more cautious view of the online world. Most people mentioned that their parents—especially the fathers of females—were wary of sites like Facebook. Further, even the youth themselves were beginning to become more cautious; the older the interviewee was, the more cautious and aware they were. Females were more cautious than males and were less likely to interact with a stranger online. Unlike the male interview subjects, most of the females said they would never accept a request from someone they did not know. However, a number of them admitted that they knew plenty of girls who would have no such qualms. There are three major possibilities motivating this response: 1) they really do know a number of other young women willing to accept requests from strangers and are unwilling to do so themselves, 2) they were uncomfortable admitting to an interviewer that they have accepted requests from strangers, and 3) their response points to a trend of women being more apt to judge other women more harshly than is accurate. Nevertheless, throughout my interviews, the female subjects were unwilling to accept a friend request from a stranger.

For most Moroccan youth, the social aspect is the most important and beneficial aspect of these sites. The new dynamics of space have reinvented the face of romantic relationships as well as social relationships in general. The male subjects approached a consensus in saying Facebook was an ideal dating site. While some males and females interviewees denied using Facebook to start their own romantic relationships, the majority said they had many friends who used Facebook as a dating site. The new dynamics of space are changing the way women and men are interacting with each other and grant each a new form of agency. With attention to the public nature of these profiles, youth are presenting themselves in new ways that address local expectations while also considering new, global influences and expectations.

6.0   DISCUSSION

6.1   BACKGROUND ON THE FEBRUARY 20TH MOVEMENT

Huntington wrote in 1968 that: "The higher the level of education of the unemployed… the more extreme the destabilizing behavior which results." A research study conducted by Filipe R. Campante and Davin Chor investigates this claim within the context of the Arab Spring. Their basic conclusion is that the improvement in education progression and completion among various Arab societies is a crucial developing factor in the Arab Spring. Expanding education explains the high presence of students in the protests throughout North Africa and other Middle Eastern nations. Within Morocco during the February 20th movement, students were a main subaltern class of the protests and were able to embody the social unrest and to reclaim their culture. Campante and Chor note the Tunisian street vendor, Mohamed Bouazizi, "whose act of protest marked the start of the Arab Spring, was himself rumored to be a university graduate. Although this detail about his schooling was apocryphal, the fact that the rumor gained such traction is revealing of the strong current of job-related discontent amongst university graduates in Tunisia" (Campante, 174).

Campante and Chor explain why education and protest are linked. For one, because students have the opportunity to achieve higher levels of education, they often possess higher political motivation and investment. Further, the higher levels of unemployment mean that this

generation of educated, unemployed youth has the time to devote to the demanding process of protest. The unemployment fuels their personal involvement; the education fuels their belief in a right to employment and encourages their political awareness and involvement. Further, the high societal levels of unemployment and other social inequalities subjugate various subpopulations, including these unemployed graduates, and thus allow them the time in which to develop a collective protest voice. The frustration with the neoliberal policies and their apparent incapacity to ameliorate the poverty and unemployment issues historically and currently has intensified into the most recent wave of Moroccan protests.

As explored by Campante and Chor, the rate of unemployment is a motivating factor in the emergence of revolutions. The Economist Intelligence Unit released a study in 2011, which was the year of the February protests, noting the economy "lost 84,000 jobs over the previous 12 months […with the unemployment rates higher] among the young (particularly the urban young) and the educated" ("Morocco economy," 1). They continued, writing that 19.5% of urban youth aged 25 to 34 suffered from unemployment, and 33% of those aged 15 to 24. The rate for graduates was also high, at 18.2% ("Morocco economy").

Across North Africa, main protest groups varied. In Tunisia, the demonstrations surged towards the capital from the neglected rural areas, strengthened by the once powerful but since repressed labor movement; the demonstrations in Libya were fueled by an amalgamation of rebel groups, which spoke to the tribal and regional fractures that have been endemic to the country for years (Anderson, 2). Although urban youth were present in revolutions throughout North Africa, they played especially prominent roles in the Egyptian and Moroccan protests.

Regarding protest demographics, the high population of unemployed, urban youth did not bode well for the Moroccan government, especially when they compared this high percentage

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with similar rates across their politically unstable neighbors. Maddy-Weitzman writes, "…the February protests raised the specter of Morocco going down the same road as so many other Arab states and unnerved the authorities." With this specter immediate and tangible in their minds, government officials responded in three distinct ways: first, they initiated proactive measures, such as increasing subsidies on basic goods and promising government jobs for recent graduates); second, they permitted peaceful protests to continue while slandering the name of the protesters in a simultaneous effort; and finally, they employed occasional police violence (Maddy-Weitzman, 3).

In the countries where the urban youth were more active in protests, social networks were much more often utilized. One reason is the issue of access. There are current efforts to extend mobile phone coverage into the nation's rural regions; currently, coverage is most reliable in urban centers (Maroon 190). The coverage for Internet is less prevalent in Morocco than that of mobile phones; so, social networking users are even more concentrated in urban centers. Still, this lone factor of polarization of access cannot be read as poverty. While it does point to an unequal development and an unequal investment throughout the country, it is important to distinguish between this inequality and the concept of poverty. After all, "Culturally perceived poverty need not be real material poverty: sustenance economies, which satisfy basic needs through self-provisioning, are not poor in the sense of being deprived" (Shiva). Nevertheless, this aspect of development is an important factor to consider when examining the protests and social networking in general within Morocco.

Within Morocco, initial protests were in solidarity with the Egyptian rebels; inspired by this success, the date of February 20th was advertised on social networking sites as the day of Moroccan protest. The protesters would decry the current political, social, and economic

situation in their call for constitutional reform. One of their demands was for the king's role "in a future constitution to be of a natural size," but their real target was the *makhzen* (المخزن), which is the elite, wealthy power structure surrounding the monarch (Tremlett). While similarly "untouchable," the *makhzen* were doubtlessly more tangible than the monarch himself. In essence, the ruling elite became an easier target as the kingship contained more symbolism. The monarch was shielded by a certain level of prestige and religious legitimacy as the line claimed to be descended from the prophet Muhammad. There is a worldwide tradition of challenging the government while the monarch remains unscathed: often by both the monarch, who is apt to blame the ministers for the problems, and the populous, who direct their protests at the ruling elite surrounding the king. This is a key difference from the revolutions of their neighbors, who similarly found fault with the figureheads (who were not kings) and made them the symbols embodying the corruption and inequalities within the nations.

Nevertheless, when the preventative measures proved ineffective, the government embarked on a series of reforms that many critics believe stayed the violence that could have erupted. The constitutional reforms, while beneficial to a degree, were often nominal changes. One such change was that the king relinquished his "sacredness" and divine right; instead, he deserves his people's respect as he now is *tauqeer* (توقير), which translates roughly to something deserving of reverence and adoration. However, this change must be qualified. Article 46, which defines the king's "sacredness," had read, "The person of the King is inviolable and sacred." Now, the translation depends upon the language of the constitution as it is written in both French and Arabic. The French version says "La personne du Roi est inviolable, et respect Lui es dú. (The King's person is inviolable, and respect is owed to Him)," while the Arabic version reads, "The King's person is inviolable, and *ihtiram* [respect] and *tauqeer* are owed to

him." The phrase *ihtiram wa tawqeer* is a familiar, ancient one that has been associated with those who claim descent from Mohammed himself. While *tauqeer* can translate as "respect," if it is meant as a synonym for *ihtiram*, "one wonders what they are doing in the same sentence" (Benchemsi 2012:62).

While these were some of the major issues raised by the movement, the February 20th Movement attracted protesters of varied backgrounds. Thus, social networking became a crucial tool for mobilizing protests and creating a coherent—if less complex and nuanced—voice. Nevertheless, the protest movements needed to focus on overarching themes to facilitate the protests, and social networking provided the space not only to organize but also for individuals to have a platform to voice their own opinions.

6.2   HOW MODERN POLITICAL PROTESTS SUPPORT THE FINDINGS

Through the lens of the Arab Spring, social networking can also be understood as a tool for subaltern emancipation. These spaces became popularized further through their use in other North African countries, and this enhanced their potential for evolutionary *and* revolutionary emancipation. As a 28-year-old female university graduate said, "Very few people actually knew what Twitter is until the February 20th movement started happening like everywhere else. And then you started reading articles or seeing videos about how Twitter and Facebook helped rise with the protest. And everyone was like, 'Oh, what is this Twitter thing?' And then they started looking into it, along with the Facebook, and they started seeing pages of like… young activists from Tunisia or Egypt, mostly like Tunisia, people started getting interested in it with Tunisia. They started seeing a different way of using social media that's always been thought of as… kind

of the cyber-dating scene. That's when the kind of way of dealing with social media started switching in Morocco as well." Within Morocco, initial political protests were in solidarity with the Egyptian rebels; inspired by this success, the date of February 20th was advertised on social networking sites as the day of Moroccan protest.

While Morocco treats its media more liberally than other countries, there are still issues of freedom of the press. Ali Anouzla was taken to court for writing an article on the king's health, and his newspaper was closed down. He said, "There are no independent newspapers left now" (Tremlet 2011). Similar cases occurred in 2011 and 2012. In July 2011, an issue of the French newspaper *Le Courrier* was banned for a cartoon of the King. He is known for jet skiing, and the cartoon by Khalid Kadar caricatured his hobby, placing him on a sea of money (CRNI 2012). Then, in February 2012, 18-year-old Walid Bahomane was brought before court for posting caricatures of King Mohammed VI on Facebook; he was accused of "defaming Morocco's sacred values." This charge has recent precedence from a 2008 case when Fouad Mourtada was sentenced to three years for impersonating King Mohammed VI's brother on Facebook (Almiraat 2012). However, Walid Bahomane's case and the ban of *Le Courrier* were censorship cases that came after the constitutional reforms.

Still, the issue of censorship is not simply a matter of the governments. It is crucial to remember that Facebook is a business and its focus is not the political potential of the site but rather the potential income. A recent case happened in October 2012 when Facebook removed two photos of Dana Bakdounes from the Facebook group "The Uprising of Women in the Arab World." The images were part of the group's move to show women who had chosen to remove their *hijab*. Group administrators received notifications of misconduct and were suspended; while the official reason for the removal of the photos is unclear, a Facebook spokesperson

released a statement saying "a user was mistakenly suspended for posting an image showing personal identification, since users aren't allowed to post others' personal documents. It was later determined that the person in the photo uploaded it to Facebook" (Facebook Censors Arab Women 2012).

While Facebook is also a site of censorship, Moroccans continue to use social networking as a form and source of more liberal media. A 21-year-old female university student said, "There is not a big freedom of speak in the press, in the magazines; so, we can talk about [political issues and social movements] in Facebook. It's like a little anonymous. But in the press, we cannot talk about the political problems." The social networks do not simply create an arena for Moroccan youth to discuss political ideas and frustrations, but they also allow them to coordinate their efforts. "[The protestors] do a lot of stuff: monitoring and coordinating demonstrations (go to this place, go that place) they have sites even for some of the officers and soldiers who participated in beating the demonstrators, photos, and names. It breaks the fear culture," said Professor Saad Sariq, who monitors online activism (Amos 2011). As in other North African countries, the social networks became an ideal space to organize people from disparate cities and backgrounds to coordinate real-life protests. A 28-year-old female university graduate said, "They're using Facebook to comment about political event, or have forums and discuss about issues. They do use it to inform about protests that are going to be taking places, events, or post videos of political individual—like a guy or a person from a political party or somebody with political connotations saying something about the movement—it's mostly to just inform but also create, again, that space where everyone can talk freely about stuff." Political groups realized and utilized social networking sites as a tool to increase awareness and motivate solidarity. It is

important to realize that the networks relied on the success of these physical protests; social networks may not have "caused" the Arab Spring, but they certainly did facilitate it.

Even through an evolutionary lens, emancipation happens on various levels; women, for instance, have a more immediate power through the romantic relationships born and sustained through social networking sites. Further, the political use of social networks evokes the social use in its attention to community. While the social use focuses on the local community, the political attends more to the regional community. Facebook groups like "SlutWalk Morocco" (which also organized a protest in Rabat in March 2012) and the group for Amina Filali are gaining popularity. Amina Filali was a young, sixteen-year old girl who killed herself with rat poison after being married to her rapist. The Moroccan law allows victims of kidnapping to be married to their kidnapper. However, because of the social stigma attached to the loss of virginity, a misinterpretation of this law often marries rape victims to their rapists. Amina's death motivated young women to vocalize their resentment and frustration with the legal situation that allowed this to happen. One Facebook group created in protest is called "We Are All Amina Filali," a name exceptionally parallel to the Egyptian Facebook group "We Are All Khaled Said," a page designed to honor the man whose death is hailed as the catalyst of the Egyptian revolution. He was killed after a brutal beating because he recorded Egyptian police sharing drugs from a drug bust.

Though the Facebook groups for Amina Filali have a relatively broad support base in comparison to other political pages, the images of the girl herself are few. Unlike the "We Are All Khaled Said" page, which posts a number of images and videos and uses Khaled in most of its profile pictures, the "We Are All Amina Filali" page places more emphasis on the text posts. Even a simple Google search reveals the difference: the Amina Filali search returned 4 out of 15

photos of her; 2 of those 4 were different sizes of the same image; all 4 were images of other people holding a photograph of Amina. From a search for Khaled Said, however, out of 16 images, 9 were images of Khaled. There were 2 main images that were circulated: the autopsy photograph and a studio portrait of him. 3 out of 9 images juxtaposed the autopsy photograph with the studio portrait; 3 out of the 9 were images of protesters holding his image. There was 1 image out of the 16 that was a tribute to him on the Berlin Wall; 3 political cartoons featuring Khaled; and 2 images were of his mother. This discrepancy in the number of images could either reflect the historically tenuous relationship between Moroccans and photography or the different gendered expectations regarding self-presentation.

However, these sites are successful examples of women becoming more politically vocal on social networks. A 21-year-old female university student said she believes women are involved in the political pages on Facebook. "Yeah, this was really happening in Morocco because we have so much with the women's situation in Morocco. […] I think girls were really affected by [the Amina Filali case]," she said. "We talk about it a lot on Facebook. We try to find a solution for that, to do something to create an association, to help the girls who were raped to talk to their family, to convince them to not choose the easy way, to help their daughter. We try. It's really hard in Morocco to defend a political vision, but we try. Just the fact that we're talking about it on Facebook… let people react about it and change a little bit of the moralities."

The protests since 2011 have structured their use of social networks off Egyptian success. However, the adaptations to the local context have made the use of social networking unique to the Moroccan context. It is difficult to ascertain whether the social networks were not used as effectively within Morocco or if political concessions made by the king after the initial protests were enough to dissuade protestors. As the 21-year-old female university student explained, "I

have a lot of Tunisian friends, and I was talking with them on Facebook and we study together. We just are studying, and they tell me, 'Ah, look what happened in that city. It's near where I live. Look what happened, what is happening.' So they see this in real time; in the minute that happened, they see the video. In Tunisia, if there were not YouTube or Facebook, I don't think that people would react that harshly, and go out in the streets and protest." She believed that other North African nations had "more problems than [Morocco]" because the king was able to stave off revolution. While some protest groups in Morocco are more critical of the king's involvement, most turn their criticism to the Makhzen. While the protest groups use these networks to promote local interests, the way the protestors are evoking a communal solidarity shows they recognize these networks as a way to access a broader, regional and global support.

Recent events have shaped how Moroccan individuals and organizations are shaping usage. Not only has the regional event of the Arab Spring influenced social networking usage, but political events across the globe have also influenced Moroccan social networking. For instance, the Party for Justice and Development Party employee explained that she was structuring her candidate's campaign in a way similar to the successful 2008 Obama campaign. She continued in explaining how social networking was changing, saying, "We were using social networking individually. We were using a strategy of bombarding Facebook and being present. Now, we want presence, but we want to work to have interaction. That is different." She said that there were now interns working on analyzing the social networks to better appeal to their target audiences. She said that it didn't take an intern, however, to realize that they have received more interaction with their posts when photographs accompany them, "especially on Facebook." The images attract the audience to read the text accompanying the image. "The more we have images, the more we have comments or likes," she said.

The 28-year-old university graduate said that the way North African countries began using social networking politically seemed unnatural to her. She said, "I think they're following the Western… or even Middle Eastern way of doing it. It feels like… it definitely was kind of a copy-paste, that's what I feel. Because before, Moroccans were involved in like Facebook or Twitter only as a social means, or a way to meet people." As Fauad explains, "Although the interest in sex might be the initial reason one segment of young Arab users joins Facebook, its importance diminishes quickly, giving way to a more complicated and serious interest departing from social relations founded on sexual desire" (Fauad 2009:91).

As was seen in the example of the Amina Filali page, it does seem that the political movements find their inspiration from other successful models and simply try to transplant them into Morocco. Similarly, like in other Arab countries, the political organizations use multiple social sites in slightly different ways. Twitter in Morocco has a more intellectual demographic as well as the international audience, meaning that Arabic posts are often accompanied by French and English translations.

Facebook has given women a chance to become more vocal. In an evolutionary manner, that has accelerated its pace during this period of revolution, women are becoming more active on social networking sites. They are creating pages like "SlutWalk Morocco," which aims to end street harassment. Through Facebook, women have also become more political, albeit in a more evolutionary manner.

The Arab Spring that radically changed the layout of many other countries has inspired Moroccans to become more politically active in their daily lives as well as their online lives. As the PJD employee said, "Young people in Morocco are using it as a way of release. They are saying we believe in freedom." Social networking sites have created a newer political youth and

a new generation of politically active females. It has changed the shape of political protests forever.

7.0   CONCLUSIONS

In many ways, social networking users within Morocco approximate the global middle class in the ways they dress, their acceptance of Western languages, and their preference of an American-made social network. Yet, although the influence of the global middle class is undeniable, current usage is largely influenced by creolizing forces. The cultural values of Moroccans and Americans are disparate, and thus, the American sites cannot homogenize Moroccan society. Instead, local concepts of spatiality, gender, and community permeate the networks. While internet usage remains a global phenomenon, the increased pressure of presentation placed on Moroccan women will likely continue. Although expectations may evolve with time and social networks may impact this change, I still believe that these networks are incapable of transcending gendered expectations. As Moroccan society has a familial orientation, I do not see the communal concern disappearing as a consequence of these Western networks. The most they can do is modify them. Moroccans will likely still utilize privacy settings with concern for familial reputation and will adapt their pages based on whether or not they use them to interact with their families.

Nevertheless, though the main concern now appears to be familial concerns, I hypothesize that, if the population of urban unemployed youth decreases, there will be increased attention to the potential professional capacity of these networks, which is already evident in independently entrepreneurial youth. I believe that Moroccan youth will again adapt the ways in

which they use these networks and use official and unofficial privacy settings to address these concerns.

Throughout North Africa, youth have been interacting on these networks and adapting them to their own local context. While there are similarities across the region, each nation has its own adaptation. For instance, despite comparable circumstances, the revolutions within Morocco never reached the violence or achieved the persistence that occurred in other countries during the Arab Spring. While social networks were utilized as part of Moroccan political protests, they were not utilized in the same way as in other countries. Instead, the Moroccan use of social networking in a social and political context enacted gradual change.

Taking the example of the Amina Filali page, the evocation of a communal region in the structure, while asserting the Moroccan agenda, is the political translation of social networks' evolution. Just as Moroccans use the site for individual purposes—be it social, dating, or business—they still attend to the communal, especially regarding privacy settings. Morocco's protest movement addresses specifically domestic concerns while structuring their arguments in communal rhetoric. Spatiality has always impacted Moroccan social interaction and continues to shape not only daily use but also political use. Forces familial and communal, traditional and modern, national and transnational impact social networking.

While social networks can never be the sole motivating agents of social change, they do seem to be an increasingly relevant factor. Social networks have been a subaltern emergence, giving the youth a platform to express themselves socially and politically. Youth have molded these sites based on their cultural values and have shown that these networks are subject to creolizing forces. Regionally, Moroccans are one of the most active countries on these networks. While they have not attracted the Western media attention other nations have, Moroccans have

been using these networks in emancipatory ways. Even though their protests never reached the same violent climax as their neighboring countries, Moroccans have used these networks to adapt local ways of organizing space. They have—in a revolutionary way—imbibed these sites with their own reconciliation of the distinctions between the public and private. The subaltern youth have assumed a unique form of agency through these sites and have created and will continue to create a new force of spatial awareness that will undoubtedly have its own impact on Morocco and its place in global society.

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APPENDIX A

NOTES ON LIMITATIONS AND METHODOLOGY

The very nature of social networking and the forces that guide them are multi-layered and complex; so, this paper has inevitably been a simplification. Further limitations in scope and cultural and linguistic barriers must be considered in understanding my hypotheses. For instance, all of my field research was conducted in the city of Rabat, Morocco.

Furthermore, due to the qualitative nature of this research, I relied heavily on interviews. The subjects were limited to university students in Rabat and other Rabatis with specific skill sets (i.e. photography, religious scholarship). These interviews lasted approximately anywhere between a half hour and an hour. When necessary, follow-up interviews were made.

In an analysis of Moroccan Facebook photos, a basic trend emerged. The sample was taken from people identifying themselves as living in Rabat, Morocco. The aim of this analysis was to examine their profile pictures in relation to their gender as I have found that the Facebook "names" are often changed and do not necessarily denote gender accurately. Thus, when the sample was analyzed, if their gender was not visible, the data was disregarded. The sample population consisted of Facebook users identifying their current city as Rabat, Morocco and was comprised of 90 females and 90 males.

The interview process was conducted almost exclusively in English. When a question was not understood, I would translate it into Arabic or French, but the answers would be given in English. My biggest regret with the data collection is that my population for interviews was limited exclusively to those with a degree of fluency in English. This limited the backgrounds of those I talked to and colored the data.

Further, males were much more willing to be interviewed than females; also, I was surprised by the number of interview subjects that asked to not be recorded, which limited the amount of notes recorded during the interview process.

APPENDIX B

SURVEYS

Study on Views of Social Networking

This is a voluntary survey designed to gain an understanding of how females in North Africa utilize social networking. I am looking for data collection that will get the opinions of both males and females regarding this issue. The completion of this survey is voluntary and the data collected from it is anonymous and confidential. If you are under the age of 18, please do not complete this survey. Please do not write your name anywhere on this survey.

<u>Here are terms important to understanding the survey:</u>

Social networking: an online service that is used to create a group of people with similar interests. It often includes a profile or some way for its users to identify themselves.

Profile Picture: on Facebook, it is the main photo of you that appears as a thumbnail next to your comments and other activity around Facebook.

These are a series of 21 questions designed to better grasp the usefulness and usage of social networking in Northern Africa. Please remember you can abstain from answering any question that you do not desire to answer. Only one answer is needed for each question.

---

1. What is your gender?

☐ Male

☐ Female

2. What is your age? _____

3. What is your preferred form of social networking?

☐ Twitter

☐ Facebook

☐ YouTube

☐ Myspace

☐ Blogs (in general)

☐ Dating site, matchmaking site

☐ Other:

4. What is your relationship status?

☐ Single

☐ In a relationship

☐ Married

☐ Divorced

☐ Other:

5. Are you a practicing Muslim?

☐ Yes, often

☐ Yes, sometimes

☐ No

☐ Other:

6. What is your primary language?

      Spoken: _____

      Written: _____

7. What is your major (specialization) in university?

_____

8. How often did you actively use social networking in the last week, meaning posting or commenting?

      ☐ 0

      ☐ 1-2

      ☐ 3-5

      ☐ 6-10

      ☐ 11-15

☐ 16-20

☐ 21-25

☐ 25+

☐ Other:

9. How often did you non-actively use social networking in the last week, meaning simply logging on?

☐ 0

☐ 1-2

☐ 3-5

☐ 6-10

☐ 11-15

☐ 16-20

☐ 21-25

☐ 25+

☐ Other:

10. Do you post pictures of yourself on your social networking site?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Other:

11. If yes, how important is the clothing you are wearing in the photographs of yourself?

☐ Very important

☐ Somewhat important

☐ Not at all important

☐ Other:

12. Are you willing to be seen in clothing that is more revealing than you would in daily interactions?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Other:

13. How much do you judge others based on the clothing they wear in their photographs?

☐ Very much

☐ Somewhat yes

☐ Somewhat no

☐ Not at all

☐ Other:

14. Do you feel comfortable showing the skin of your arms and/or legs in the photographs posted on the social networking sites?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Other:

15. Do you feel comfortable showing your hair in the photographs posted on the social networking sites?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Other:

16. What is your view of a female your age that has her hair uncovered in the photographs posted on the social networking sites?

☐ Positive view

☐ Negative view

☐ Neither negative nor positive

☐ Other:

17. What is your view of a female your age who does shows the skin of her arms and/or legs in the photographs posted on the social networking sites?

☐ Positive view

☐ Negative view

☐ Neither negative nor positive

☐ Other:

18. Is it better to wear traditional or religious clothing in profile pictures?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Not important

☐ Other:

19. Do you post pictures of family and friends on your social networking site?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Other:

20. How many social networking sites are you currently a member of?

☐ 1

☐ 2-5

☐ 6-10

☐ 11+

21. How many social networking sites do you frequently use?

☐ 1

☐ 2-5

☐ 6-10

☐ 11+

22. Have you used social networking to find a boyfriend/girlfriend?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Other:

23. Do you believe social networking is beneficial?

☐ Very beneficial

☐ Somewhat beneficial

☐ Neither beneficial nor harmful (neutral)

☐ Somewhat not beneficial

☐ Not at all beneficial

☐ Other:

24. Are your parents or guardians aware of your social networking sites?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Other:

25. Which language do you set your social networking sites to?

☐ Arabic (al-fusha)

☐ French

☐ English

☐ Other

26. Which age group do you believe uses social networking the most regularly?

☐ 10-14

☐ 15-19

☐ 20-29

☐ 30-39

☐ 40+

Thank you for your participation. If you have any additional comments or thoughts, please use the space provided to respond.

L'enquête de la Vue de Réseautage Personnel

C'est l'enquête volontaire est pour comprendre comment les femmes en la Maghreb utilisent la réseautage personnel. Je cherche pour des hommes et des femme que concernant ce problème. Le achèvement de cette enquête c'est volontaire et les données accumule de cette c'est anonyme et confidentiel. Si vous étés les mineurs (moins que 18 ans), sil vous plait, ne remplissez pas cette enquête. Sil vous plait, ne écrivez pas votre nom en cette enquête.

C'est les termes important pou la compréhension de cette sondage. :

Réseautage Personnel : un site sur l'Internet qu'on utilise pour la création de un groupe de peuple aux intérêts similaire; souvent, inclut profil ou une méthode pour les peuple intéressée se identifier.

Photo du profil: en Facebook, est la principale photo de vous affichee sur votre profil qui apparaît sous forme de miniature à côté de vos commentaires et de toute autre activité dans Facebook.

Ci-dessousune sérié de 26 la questions va essayer pour la compréhension de la réseautage personnel en

la Maghreb. S'il vous plait, vous souvenez que vous pouvez ne répondrez pas de question que vous ne désirez pas

répondre. S'il vous plait, notez quelques questions autorisent case multiples être marqué.

1. Quel est votre sexe?

☐ Homme

☐ Femme

2. Quel est votre âge? _____

3. Quel est votre forme de l'enquête préfère?

☐ Twitter

☐ Facebook

☐ YouTube

☐ Myspace

☐ Les blogs (en general)

☐ Site de rencontres

☐ Autre:

4. Quel est votre statut relation?

☐ Unique

☐ Dans une relation

☐ Marié

☐ Divorcé

☐ Autre:

5. Vous un musulman pratiquant?

☐ Oui, souvent

☐ Oui, parfois

☐ Non

☐ Autre:

6. Qu'est-ce que votre langue principale?

Parle: _____

Ecrit: _____

7. Quel est votre majeur dans l'université?

_____

8. Dans la semaine passée, combien de fois avez vous utilisé activement la réseautage personnel (c'est-a-dire écriture ou commentaire)?

☐ 0

☐ 1-2

☐ 3-5

☐ 6-10

☐ 11-15

☐ 16-20

☐ 21-25

☐ 25+

☐ Autre:

9. Dans la semaine passée, combien de fois avez vous utilisé pas activement la réseautage personnel (c'est-a-dire seulment se connecter) ?

☐ 0

☐ 1-2

☐ 3-5

☐ 6-10

☐ 11-15

☐ 16-20

☐ 21-25

☐ 25+

☐ Autre:

10. Est-ce que vous publiez des photos de vous-même sur votre réseautage personnel?

☐ Oui

☐ Non

☐ Autre:

11. Si oui, de quel niveau de l'importance ont les vêtements ont?

☐ Très important

☐ Plutôt important

☐ Ne important du tout

☐ Autre:

12. Etes-vous prêt a être vu dans l'habillement qui est plus révélateur que vous le feriez dans les interactions quotidiennes?

☐ Oui

☐ Non

☐ Autre:

13. Comment est-ce que vous jugez les autres au sujet des vêtements qu'ils portent dans leurs photos ?

☐ Beaucoup

☐ Plutôt oui

☐ Plutôt non

☐ Vraiment pas

☐ Autre:

14. Comment sentez-vous sur montrant la peau de vos bras ou des jambes dans les photos postées sur les sites de réseautage social?

☐ Oui

☐ Non

☐ Autre:

15. Comment sentez-vous sur montrant vos cheveux dans les photos postées sur les sites de réseautage social?

☐ Oui

☐ Non

☐ Autre:

16. Quel est votre point de vue d'une femme de votre âge qui a les cheveux découverts dans les photographies publiées sur les sites de réseautage social?

☐ Point de vue positif

☐ Point de vue négatif

☐ Ni positif ni négatif

☐ Autre:

17. Quel est votre point de vue d'une femme de votre âge qui ne montre la peau de ses bras ou des jambes dans les photos postées sur les sites de réseautage social?

☐ Point de vue positif

☐ Point de vue négatif

☐ Ni positif ni négatif

☐ Autre:

18. Est-il préférable de porter des vêtements traditionnels ou religieux dans les photos de profil?

☐ Oui

☐ Non

☐ Pas important

☐ Autre:

19. Est-ce que vous publiez des photos de votre famille et vos amis en votre réseautage personnel ?

☐ Oui

☐ Non

☐ Autre:

20. Combien de réseautages personnels est-ce que vous en êtes un membre ?

☐ 1

☐ 2-5

☐ 6-10

☐ 11+

21. Combien de réseautages personnels est-ce que vous en utilisez souvent?

☐ 1

☐ 2-5

☐ 6-10

☐ 11+

22. Est-ce que vous utilisez les réseaux sociaux pour trouver un petit ami/petite amie?

☐ Oui

☐ Non

☐ Autre:

23. Vous croyez que le réseautage est bénéficial?

☐ Très bénéfique

☐ Plutôt bénéfique

☐ Plutôt non bénéfique

☐ Ne bénéfique de tout

☐ Autre:

24. Est-ce que vos parents sont conscients de vos réseautages personnels?

☐ Oui

☐ Non

☐ Autre:

25. Dans quelle langue est-ce que votre réseautage est écrit?

☐ Arabe

☐ Français

☐ Anglais

☐ Autre :

26. À votre avis, quel groupe de l'âge utilise le réseautage le moins fréquemment ?

☐ 10-14

☐ 15-19

☐ 20-29

☐ 30-39

☐ 40+

Je vous remercie pour votre participation. Si vous avez des commentaires supplémentaires ou des pensées, s'il vous plaît utiliser l'espace prévu pour répondre.