

# Gendering the February 20th Movement: Moroccan Women Redefining: Boundaries, Identities and Resistances

Houda Abadi

## Abstract

*The Arab Spring opened up social and political spaces for women to make demands for gender quality, political and social reform, human rights, and equality. It has produced, changed and reinvigorated contestations around space, citizenship, femininity, religion, and sense of belonging, as women played an increasingly significant role in the revolutionary processes and developments in the region. This article will analyze the online and offline communication strategies that the February 20th Movement employed to answer the following three questions: a) What is the nature of gendered based demands and how are they articulated in February 20th movement?; b) How did the movement's activists discursively construct the gendered subjects and what are the material effects of the discourse; and lastly, c) What forms of expression, tools, and channels were used by Moroccan women activists to ensure the inclusion of gender-related issues and demands in political movement? To answer these questions, this qualitative study will take into account the prevailing political, social and economic contexts of Morocco, in an attempt to interpret Moroccan women activists' experiences, demands, opportunities and constraints and how they contribute to redefining these women's identities, subjectivities and resistances differently. It uses textual and visual analysis of mediated communication materials obtained from the February 20th movement digital campaign videos and website to document not only women's representation within the February 20th movement but also explores the various ways subjects are materially and discursively constituted and circumscribed.*

## Keywords

activism, Muslim women, gender, public sphere, Morocco, Arab Spring

## Introduction

The “Arab Awakening” or the “Arab Spring,” caught many off guard, toppled regimes, mobilized masses, and negated many commonly held stereotypes and misconceptions about the region, in general, and Arab women, in particular.

As vast popular youth demonstrations and protests in Tunisia, one of the smallest countries in the region, in terms of both territory and population, and in Egypt, one of the largest countries in the region, succeeded in toppling autocratic regimes and dictatorial governments, similar mass movements spread throughout the Arab world, in the hopes of breaking the chains of fear and oppression. In this sense, the Arab Spring is a historic moment in MENA's history with a true promise of reform and democracy. The decades-long western policy of containment and backing of Arab autocrats for "stability" proved to be a failure (United Nations Human Rights 2013). The Arab Spring demonstrated the unprecedented show of people power to remove Arab dictators.

One of the most remarkable characteristics of these popular uprisings was the visible and significant role played by Arab women, with hundreds of thousands of women representing different ages, socio-economic profiles, and religious and political orientations. Likewise, young women activists from Arab countries which had a relatively long history of women's involvement in public life and visibility in the public sphere (e.g., Morocco and Tunisia) to more conservative and traditional countries where women have been predominantly confined to the domestic, private sphere (e.g., Libya and Yemen) have also started similar campaigns to call for their rights, demand better positions, and secure more representation in their swiftly changing societies (Radsch 2011; 2012). As Nada Darwazah, from the UN Human Rights Middle East Office said, "The Arab uprising has at long last empowered women to claim a larger presence and role in the public arena, which is something revolutionary, and somehow contrary to decades of gender stereotyping" (United nations Human Rights 2013).

Examining how Arab Spring movements manifest, express, and negotiate gender equality is a necessary step, especially in a post revolutionary context. This is particularly important to examine because beside the political turmoil that is still taking place in many parts of the Arab world, there is an equally pressing, ongoing, *gender-specific* struggle, namely: women's struggle to secure political and social gains. This study contributes to understanding how the Arab Spring revolutionary processes opened up social and political

spaces for women. It will shift the focus to a movement that did not call for a regime change. Through textual and visual analysis of mediated communication materials obtained from the Moroccan February 20th movement official websites, this article will focus exclusively on how Moroccan pro-democracy February 20th activists in the movement mobilized new kinds of 'feminisms.' These new form of feminist activism were artistic, indigenous, authentic and created a space where both female and male activists placed gender equality demands as part of the larger February 20th movement.

## Literature Review

### Gender and the Arab Spring: Redefining Boundaries and Resistance?

The Arab Spring produced, changed and reinvigorated contestations around space, citizenship, femininity, religion, and sense of belonging, as women played an increasingly significant role in the revolutionary processes and developments in the region. Women were not just confining themselves to stereotypical gender roles, such as nurturing or supporting men in their struggle for freedom. Rather, they assumed non-stereotypical gender roles by being in the front lines of resistance, risking their own lives, and exposing themselves to the dangers of arrest or assault (Khamis 2011). Even though they risked their lives, these brave women made their presence a defining feature within these protests. These protest movements opened up social and political spaces for women where demands of gender quality were being made in addition to calls for political and social reforms.

Arab women activists used Internet Communication technologies to bring visibility to their participation within the movements and were determined to take control of their own destinies. Throughout the revolution, instances of creative activism took on different gendered forms and an emerging digital and cultural underground movement flourished. Women blogged, tweeted, uploaded photos, and reported the revolutions through various online social platforms. These online images served as a powerful display to challenge orientalist portrayal of the oppressed and passive Arab women victims who are in need of western saving. Echoing the abovementioned views, Ghannouchi (2012) argued that these online images deconstructed

the perception of the Arab women as powerless, invisible, and voiceless. Through their active online and offline participation, they showed that these orientalist representations of the Arab women are only imagined.

While the Arab Spring marked an upsurge of new activism by women and concrete gain in some political transitional processes, in other cases, it has been described as the “Arab Winter” for women’s rights (CARE 2013). Many serious challenges still face women, such as the prevailing patriarchal mindset in many Arab societies, stagnant traditions, economic and infrastructural constraints, institutionalization of protest movements, militarization and the security state, and the rise of political Islamic groups to power, some of whom adopt a restrictive agenda on women’s issues and women’s place in society. Not surprisingly, female activists faced a different set of challenges from their male counterparts. Some of the women activists were harassed, tortured and raped. For example in Egypt, women activists were terrorized in Tahrir Square demonstrations and had to undergo the security state’s virginity testing (Amar 2011:300). A blind eye was turned to the gravity of sexual assaults and terrorization of women activists.

Although Arab women fought alongside men to overcome dictatorship and autocracy, “unlike men, women face two battles: the first for political change and the second to obtain a real change of their societal status to become fully equal to their male counterparts” (Alamm 2012:14). Due to a lack of security, oppressive practices returned and reproduced marginalization of women. At a 2012 OHCHR (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights) regional meeting, an Egyptian participant reported that the situation of women is worse after the uprising and that harmful practices returned due to lack of security. For example, many families are marrying their young daughters out of concern for their safety (United Nations Human Rights 2013). In Libya, rape is a huge problem and female elected officials face a fierce opposition when they propose laws that address women’s rights (United Nations Human Rights 2013). The World Economic Forum’s Global Gender Gap Report scored the MENA region more poorly in 2012 than in 2011. MENA ranked lowest on economic participation and political empowerment and second lowest on educational attainment

(World Economic Forum 2012). Viewed historically, such results come as no surprise (Al-Ali 2012). Women during post revolutionary transitions are regularly marginalized and loose many of the gains they might have gained during the height of the revolutionary struggle.

## Methods

This qualitative, feminist study relied on a textual and visual analysis of mediated communication materials obtained from the February 20th Movement digital campaign videos<sup>1</sup> (*I am Moroccan I will Protest and Who We Are*) and two films directed by February 20th activist Nadir Bouhmouch (*My Makhzen and Me and 475 When Marriage Becomes a Punishment*). I also used several Internet sources including the main February 20th movement webpage *Mamfakinch*, activists' blogs and YouTube videos that captured street protests.<sup>2</sup> The time frame was limited to the movement's first year

I used visual and textual analysis to document women's representation within the February 20th movement and gendering processes to explore the various ways subjects are materially and discursively constituted and circumscribed. I analyzed the communication strategies employed by the February 20th Movement from to answer the following three questions: a) What is the nature of gendered based demands and how are they articulated in February 20th movement?; b) How are the gendered subjects discursively constructed and what are the material effects of the discourse?; and lastly c) What forms of expression, tools, and channels were used by Moroccan women activists to ensure the inclusion of gender-related issues and demands in political movement? In answering these questions, this study will take into account the prevailing political, social and economic contexts of Morocco, in an attempt to interpret Moroccan women activists' experiences, demands, opportunities and constraints and how they contribute to redefining these women's identities, subjectivities and resistances differently.

## Morocco: The Rise of the February 20th Movement

Morocco, long considered to be one of the most stable Arab countries, has not been immune to the revolutionary waves of protests shaking the Arab

political regimes. Although the Moroccan monarchy has historically enjoyed legitimacy, the political landscape in Morocco shares much in common with its neighboring countries in terms of sociopolitical and economic problems. Inspired by the Tunisian and Egyptian revolutions, young Moroccan activists, known as the February 20th Movement, stood against the so called “Moroccan exceptionality,” created online digital campaign videos explaining dissatisfaction with the monarchy’s top down approach, and called for a national march in all major cities. Unlike their counterparts in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya, the Moroccan activists did not demand a change of regime but instead called for a genuine constitutional monarchy. The social and political protests the February 20th movement sparked in Morocco are not new but the appeal of the movement within the Moroccan streets signaled a major shift in popular attitudes regarding the monarchy and the current sociopolitical situation (Maghroui 2011). Inside the Moroccan kingdom, the February 20th prodemocracy movement mobilized thousands of protestors to the streets to demand greater political reform and social justice.

The February 20th activists voiced their counter narratives in digitalized formats and complemented them with offline aesthetical forms of resistance due to media censorship and political repression in Morocco. They called for major demonstrations to denounce lack of citizen power in relation to the state and to encourage the reformulation of these power relations. The movement brought to the surface the hidden layers of unreported patterns of subjugation and silencing. To make its messages audible, meaningful, and unifying, the February 20th movement used music, reappropriation of national and state symbols, promo videos, films, protest signs, and different social media platforms. Their videos called for universal values of diversity based on ethnicity, language, gender, and class, while simultaneously making claims to Moroccan identity and ‘Moroccan values,’ such as freedom, education, economic social justice, and gender equality. The February 20th movement’s use of different media platforms enable us to examine how discourses are organized and address the processes that allow or disallow access.

## The February 20th Movement and its Visual Strategies

The visual expression of the February 20th movement within campaign videos and protests played an important role in interpolating their subjects and shaping political identities. The visual functions from a universe of culturally shared meaning and serves as resources for the movement. This visual narrative focused its attention away from the prescribed official narrative and the existing social structures and offered a critical counter narrative. For example, the February 20th movement used heavily Fatma's hand symbol in its campaign videos and during its protest marches. After the 2003 Casablanca terrorist attacks, a national symbol emerged that united the Moroccan people as one people willing to stand together and fight against any transgression to protect their brothers, sisters and their country. The red and green (colors of the Moroccan flag symbolizing nationalism) Fatma hand included two messages: one written in French *Ne touche pas à mon pote* that translates to “don’t touch my buddy” and the other one in Arabic that translates to “Don’t touch my Country.” During these difficult times, the highly circulated Fatma hand state symbol represented a message of unity and oneness of Morocco. The movement and its supporters re-appropriated this same symbol and inserted a new message: “Don’t suffocate our nation’s Children” and “Don’t steal from my Country.” The February 20th movement’s re-appropriation of the state symbol was a direct response to the regime’s accusation that these young activists were terrorists. At the same time, it also served as an indirect critique to the King Mohammed VI title of ‘King of the Poor.’ It highlighted the severity of poverty and corruption within the nation. By altering the old message, young February 20th movement activists redefined nationalism and patriotism to dignity, economic social justice and freedom.

### A Gendered Collective Identity as a Communicative Strategy

Because of Morocco’s vast class and educational divisions, the public is heavily divided on issues of reform and thus the creation of a collective identity becomes empirically important for mobilization and raising political consciousness. Political identity in social movements has three analytical

levels: identity for empowerment, identity deployment, and identity as a goal (Bernstein 2008:277). A sense of we-ness or connection to the movement is essential in order to achieve social change. As such, collective identity plays an important role in meaning making, shaping movement participants' actions and building cohesions within actors over time (Polletta and Jasper 2001). It can be used as a protest strategy and deployed to transform culture, its categories, values, and practices.

The February 20th movement deployed a gendered collective identity as a communicative strategy to push for change. The activists questioned the top-down state-imposed desired citizen and state co-optation of institutions and equated Moroccan citizenry with values of freedom, economic social justice, and ethnic and gender equality. Gender equality became part of the larger discussion of Moroccan citizenry and constitutional reforms. As such, women's issues were not marginalized to the periphery and instead women and men partnered as a team to fight the battle for social and economic justice.

The February 20th movement grounded its political legitimacy in cultural beliefs, values, and local public cultures. It strategically employed identity as a strategy to influence public discourse and achieve cultural resonance. As such, the February 20th activists embedded themselves in popular culture, social media, adoption of local languages (Amazigh and Daarija), and moving images in demonstrations to negotiate and navigate between the different Moroccan public(s). The cultural media practice of the movement fueled a "Moroccan Collective Identity" that deconstructed state myths and challenged nationalist and monolithic narratives. For example, the first campaign video opened with a young woman, Amina Boulghabi, a founding member of the February 20th movement. Speaking in the first person, she states "I am Moroccan; I am going out on February 20th because I want a Morocco that belongs to all of us. No to Hate and Yes to Equality" (I am Moroccan Video Protests 2011). A young man follows Boulghabi and states: "I am Moroccan. I am marching February 20th because I want all Moroccans to be equal" (I am Moroccan Video Protests 2011). The faces of young women and men keep changing, each one speaking in first

person while beginning by claiming their Moroccanness and following by stating their reasons for marching. Gender equality is among their many demands.

The call within these videos reconfigures national identity through a culture of contestations and protests—allowing for the diversification of identifications and gender equality. Identity was redefined through replacing the ‘I am,’ with its defensive closure and insistence of fixity of position, with a more nuanced collective gendered understanding of Moroccanness. Loyalty to the nation was communicated through cultivating the expression “I am Moroccan” and calling on Moroccans to give up old imaginary, remold national narratives, and build local histories that break away from hegemonic state narratives of nationhood. In their *I am Moroccan and I will Protest* campaign video, activists specifically list their motives behind marching which include: freedom, gender equality, better living standards and education, labor rights, a lift on the restrictions on the media and minority rights. These campaign videos clearly illustrate how the February 20th movement activists strategically articulated women’s demands and gender specific needs within their respective wider struggle.

These digitalized narratives enable us to take a discursive approach on how the movement used identity frames to invite *all* people to participate. The first campaign video ends with an older woman who spoke in *Daarija* (Moroccan dialect) and called for the right to protest. Her personal story took the longest in terms to narrate and is most striking. She inhabited the persona of a Moroccan grandmother who is suffering the abuse of the corrupt system. Her narrative was affect-driven as one does not expect an older woman to be beaten and abused by the police for her right to protest. She states:

“I am Moroccan and I am going out on the February 20th. I am going to protest... The high food prices are killing me. Every time I tried to protest against the high prices, the authorities abused me. I don’t understand why I am afraid and abused in my country. I was in a peaceful protest, and was beaten and harassed by the police.” (*I am Moroccan Video Protest 2011*)

Unlike others in the video who called for concrete material changes, she called for the right and freedom to peacefully protest and assemble.

The shift to an older woman appeals for support, action, and instills in the audience a sense of confidence to mobilize and engage in political contention. On the one hand, she represents an image of a nurturing mother, and on the other, an image of a militant for freedom. In a way her image is halting, as one does not automatically associate an elderly soft-spoken Moroccan woman with activism and mobilization. Yet, the woman's voice portrays a strong sense of involvement, commitment, and strength. This image confounds existing cultural codes and becomes a powerful mode to challenge the system, solidify commitment, and challenge the cultural state of fear and inaction. She appealed directly to the Moroccan people and calls on them to join the protest. To inspire others to join the protests, identity is invoked to express a new massive adherence of the Moroccan people with a notion of citizenship and collective will to endorse a new more inclusive type of social contract and opposes token nationalism devoid of full citizenship rights. These videos propose a discussion of the evolving sense of citizenship and political subjectivities that is based on extensive forms of inclusion inspired by a sense of *intersectionality* (youth and older generation that cut across class, gender and ideological divides).

### Performing a new form of Gendered Citizenship

The framing of the February 20th movement's goals in terms of equality places women's demands and needs at the forefront. The movement's activists call on the Moroccan public to practice critical citizenship wherein women are equal partners with men in their fight for socioeconomic justice. This type of feminism seems to emerge from outside of the traditional spaces of feminist organizations and is carried out by women and men as partners in the struggle of social and economic justice (Salime, 2012:105).

There is a stark difference between the older Moroccan liberal feminist movements that pushed for Family Law Code changes (Moudawana) and the February Movement feminist understanding. The Moroccan liberal

feminist movement sees change through state institutions and working within the government framework where as the February 20th movement has the desire to overthrow those same institutions (Salime 2012:108). Having no constraints, the February 20th movement is not shy to critique the regime for corruption, poverty and social woes. It holds the government at large accountable for political and social repression and refuses to be coopted by the state. As a consequence, this poses a true challenge for feminist movements in Morocco that work within state frameworks; especially when the King made announcement for a new constitution. They view the Moroccan king as an arbitrator and as such are limited with their critiques and agenda for social change.

Women's activism in the February 20th movement differentiates itself from the older feminist movement not only in its understanding of state power and it conscious effort to not be coopted but also in its generational dynamic and negotiation of identities, ideologies, use of social media, and their artistic expression of protests. In a sense, it can be characterized as a departure from the older Moroccan women movement that focused solely on law changes and institutions. Young men and women within the movement acknowledge the struggles and successes of the liberal women's movement but they also distance themselves (Skalli 2013:7). They question the power structure and position themselves within the broader struggles for democracy. The younger generational activists are particularly sensitive to the issues of exclusion that might be produced on the basis of age, religion, gender, race, language and class. For example, February 20th activists ask men and women why they will be participating in protests. Interviewees in this video (Call to Protest in Sahat Hamam Casablanca 2012) all speak in *Daarija* and are equally divided in number between male and female and their grievances range from corruption, unemployment, human rights, illegal use of antiterrorism laws to police brutality, freedom, and equal representation. One woman states I am participating in the protest so I can fight about my rights because no one will bring my rights to my home.<sup>3</sup>

With this type of feminism, women in the February 20th movement were not isolated in their struggle for gender equality; they carved an impor-

tant space for themselves within the movement where they play an equally important role. They participated within all of the aspects of the movement: representation, decision-making, mobilizations, and debate. In most of the their digital campaigns, there was an equal number of male and female. The images from the protests and videos represented women from a wide spectrum: young, old, unveiled, veiled, poor, rich, Arab, and Amazigh. They deconstructed racial, class, and gender identities that reproduce the same old power structures of historical, social, and cultural hegemonies.

These gendered online performances spilled to offline as well where the art of presence of women in the streets was visible at all levels of mobilization, creativity, organization and decision-making. The February 20th movement's artistic modes of engagement involved high visibility for women that challenged traditional feminist representations. Young female activists channeled their demands and expressed political consciousness through different forms of aesthetic resistance such as street theater, flag embodiment, spoken word, graffiti, and street theater. Through these forms of aesthetic resistance, they questioned the construction of 'truth' and relate it to systems of power that is readily consumed and diffused. For example, as a response to the government's allegations of the movement's creation of disunity and violence, the movement organized a performative act in front of the Rabat parliament entitled: "*Freeze for Democracy*" (Freeze For Freedom 2011). The young female and male activists used their bodies to 'perform' their message with utter silence-something that was never seen before in the Maghreb region. They called it 'freeze for democracy' because their bodies were frozen in time and space. As they occupied public space, pedestrians and bystanders walking by had to interact with the protestors as they walked or crossed the streets; making even the ones that were just curious unknowingly participate in the demonstration. As such, the streets were transformed to a performative stage that invited participation in collectivities and construction of self via the protestors and reality they constructed around them. The self and the public became intertwined and interconnected. These simple, but meaningful acts diminish state's govermentality and become a stepping-stone for a further claim that demands legitimacy, socio-economic justice, and human rights.

Similarly, many of the male activists within the February 20th movement label themselves as feminists too. For example, the young male filmmaker and the February 20th activist, Nadir Bouhmouch, sees himself as an activist, artist, and feminist (McManus 2013). In an interview about his two movies on the February 20th movement and women in Morocco, he states:

“Women are half of society, so the struggle for women is half of the greater struggle for political and socioeconomic equity. As Khadija Riyadi told us in her interview for the film, women’s rights and democracy come hand in hand. Women should not just fight for women’s rights, but they must involve themselves in all aspects of society and especially in the fight for democracy. But we should not fall into the trap of fighting for democracy alone, because we also have to fight for women’s rights...” (McManus 2013).

Interestingly, he concludes by critiquing the February 20th movement lack of emphasis on women and states it might be due to their collaboration with *Adl wal Ihsan* (an Islamist movement demanding change as well and working outside the state framework). According to a female Moroccan February 20th activist confirms that *Adl wal Ihsan* (Justice and Charity) negatively influenced the gender equality agenda and gender rights slogans were no longer raised in the protests (El Idrissi 2012). To her, this was a big transformation for a movement that saw women at its forefront. Interestingly, this is no longer the case as the February 20th movement and *Adl wal Ihsan* parted ways and many say that gender dynamics and understanding of women’s role within the movement caused friction and made them part ways. This withdrawal is bitter sweet because it has brought a dramatic drop of numbers.

Bouhmouch’s acclaimed film 475, *When Marriage Becomes Punishment* (2013) underlines the influence and role of patriarchy and how Moroccan women articulate their subjectivity in face of social exclusions and rural poverty. The video traced the life of Amina Filali, a 15-year-old young woman who swallowed rat poison as a way to escape marriage from her rapist. The film sheds light to how patriarchy becomes a force influencing attitudes and laws. The

February 20th activists linked the case of Amina Filali to the self-immolation of the single mother Fadoua Laroui (February 2011). As a mother of two children, Fadoua Laroui could not bear the injustice of being denied the right to social housing in what was believed to be due to her marital status. Laroui is the first Arab woman known to have set herself on fire in protest against socioeconomic inequality (Skalli 2012). To some, Laroui became the “Moroccan Mohammed Bouazzizi” (Lalami 2011). The case of Amina and Fadoua show us the consequences of a patriarchic defined gendered dignity where honor and shame become the main preoccupation. Women and their bodies become sites of contestation and gatekeepers of human passages and a symbolic-cultural site upon which societies inscribe their moral order (Benhabib 84). Dignity becomes “inscribed in women’s bodies, sexuality, mobility, and the practices of their everyday lives” (Skalli 2012). The February 20th movement brought national and international visibility to cases such as Amina Filali and Fadoua Laroui by mobilizing online and offline to raise political and social consciousness. Thousands of protestors poured the streets of Morocco and demanded gender equality and challenged the patriarchic understanding of gender dignity.

### Discussion and Conclusion: 3acha al Shab! Long live the People

The February 20th movement tailored its communicative messages with local languages (Daarija and Amazigh) and summoned indigenous symbols and narratives to mobilize the Moroccan public. As previously examined, the movement’s heavy repetition and dependency of “I am Moroccan” in both of its campaigns served to establish a political identity and a claim to ‘real’ citizenship. Their overemphasis of “Moroccanness” is to first and foremost ground their grievances and narratives locally to generate a new understanding of politics and women’s status within the Moroccan public.

The February 20th ushered a wide range of repertoires that included the use of various national languages, appropriation of national symbols, pop culture, and ideology to invoke a politicized meaning of citizenship. Language and social imaginaries are as important as institutional changes since they become constitutive tropes for mobilization. Pluralism expressed within

their communication strategies through its manifestations of cultural diversity is mobilized to rebuild a common cultural identity that is enriched by traditional customs, rituals, and symbols. They situated their actions locally as a frame for collective action and for political consciousness.

Through its aesthetic forms of protests, the February 20th movement brought human rights, politics and social issues back to the field of public discourse. Discussions about women's rights have not wavered and are taking place across various borders, from remote southern villages to the streets of Casablanca. The movement has extended the space for contesting state power within the Moroccan Kingdom; smaller towns such as Seffrou, Guelmim, Safi, Larache, Sidi Ifni and Tetouan experiences protests as well and participated in the national debate about reforms (Al Idrissi 2012).

However, the February 20th movement is able to transform Moroccan women's lives in a meaningful way only if they enable a fundamental epistemic shift in how Moroccans interpret citizenship and its relationship to the state, challenge entrenched patriarchic customs, and pressure for political changes. Even though the February 20th movement used a bottom up approach in changing cultural and social mindsets, it continues to face serious challenges. For furthering women's rights in Morocco, we need to examine the obstacles the February 20th movement faces and think of the present as an outcome of continuous struggles. As such, in-depth interviews with not only the February 20th activists but also members of the Moroccan public is necessary to examine whether there is any real epistemic shift in challenging patriarchic customs.<sup>4</sup> Further work is needed to assess whether the message strategies worked within the Moroccan audiences.

In general, the February 20th movement was successful in breaking the chains of fear within the Moroccan streets and called for a national debate on political and social reform. It highlighted the tragic stories of Amina Filali's suicide and Fadoua Laroui's self-immolation to highlight the misogynist and patriarchic laws. It was the February 20th movement and not the older Moroccan women's movements that rallied and protested against mysoginist laws and pressured for political change. These two victims

showcase the intersectionality of gender, poverty and oppression. Women's demands were at the core of the February 20th movement's visions and ideas of a new Morocco. As the February 20th movement demonstrates, women's rights and issues are part of the larger debate on the critical understanding of citizenship and rights.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> All of the video campaigns are available online, see Call to Protest in Sahat Hamam Casablanca 2012, Morocco campaign #feb20 #morocco 2011 and Second Moroccan February 20th Campaign Video 2011.

<sup>2</sup> This study is only a small part of the larger dissertation project where in-depth face to face interviews will be conducted with February 20th activists.

<sup>3</sup> See Call to Protest in Sahat Hamam Casablanca 2012.

<sup>4</sup> This article is part of a larger project I am currently working on. I will be conducting dissertation fieldwork in Morocco and will interview February 20th activists, politicians as well as people from the subaltern publics.