

Moroccan Youth E-activism and Real-life Struggle for Equity: A Critical Discourse Analysis Perspective

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Abstract

Throughout modern history, the involvement of Moroccan youth in the socio-political sphere has gained visible momentum. The youth seem to have been empowered by the emergence and proliferation of electronic media platforms to voice out their claims and concerns. Electronic activism has even given Moroccan young activists the impetus to move out of the virtual space to real-life implementation of their equity-oriented agenda. As a case in point, contractual teachers in Morocco have used online media to raise awareness about the unfairness of their employment conditions, and have eventually taken to the streets of the capital city, Rabat, and other cities nationwide to prove to the decision-makers that they are to be reckoned with as a suggestive power in resolving their poignant predicament. Within this framework, this paper seeks to shed light on the significant role of electronic media in fuelling Moroccan youth's activism, and how these media have enabled Moroccan young teachers to truly hook the attention of a large spectrum of the Moroccan population. For this purpose, the legitimizing discourse purveyed by Moroccan contractual teachers is submitted to analysis and probing. Likewise, the delegitimizing official discourse advocated by the government is examined in an attempt to consider both representations of the issue. In terms of methodology, Critical Discourse Analysis is used as a theoretical reference to delineate the overt and unearth the covert in the antagonistic discursive stances around the issue of contractual teachers in Morocco.

Keywords: Moroccan youth; activism; E-media; discourse; contractual teachers; decision-makers

Date of Submission: 12-02-2023

Date of Acceptance: 24-02-2023

I. Introduction

The significant role of mass media in establishing societal norms and power relationships inside countries is recognized by scholars within and across disciplines. Media outlets have traditionally served as vehicles for sustaining the hegemony of the ruling elite. The radio, the newspaper and television were key instruments in consolidating the supremacy of the ruling few and ensuring the allegiance of the subordinate majority.

In modern times, the rapid growth of digital media platforms has provided the masses with a genuine opportunity to counterbalance power institutions and structures. By virtue of their digital media-friendliness, young people have taken full advantage of this luxury to sensitize public opinion to social change and eventually implement real-life, change-oriented agendas. In an unprecedented way, youth have turned into potential change-bound opinion leaders.

Within this vein, this paper seeks to probe Moroccan youth activism, particularly in the post-2011 era. The year 2011 was a turning point in adopting new, unparalleled constitutional laws and installing a seditious worldview, especially among Moroccan youth. While spotlighting this paradigm shift and its real-life repercussions, this paper takes the case of contractual teachers as the locus of analysis given its utmost visibility in the Moroccan socio-political sphere.

Using a Critical Discourse Analysis approach, this paper zooms on the explicit and unveils the implicit implications in the media-based discourse of contractual teachers, which is geared towards legitimizing their struggle. On another extreme, the delegitimizing discourse of the educational decision-makers is sifted to lay bare the two exclusive standpoints towards the issue in question. In light of this critical scrutiny, some considerations of the aftermaths of Moroccan youth activism, contractual teachers in particular, are put in the limelight.

II. Media and Social Movements

From the beginning of the nineteenth century through the mid-twentieth century, the most prevalent mass media, namely radio, television and newspapers, did not put citizens' education and emancipation at the top of their agenda. Media were rather utilized by "agenda-setters" as tools for ideology-based mass orientation and propaganda (Ball 2005; Chomsky 2002). From this perspective, mass media were used to stimulate the allegiance of the masses and ensure their unquestionable support of totalitarian regimes as it was in the case of Italy, Germany, Spain and The Soviet Union. In The Soviet Union, for instance, media were influenced by "socialist realism". In the same fashion, Hitler, with the support of his propaganda minister Goebbels, oriented the German media to pay lip service to the Nazis' ideology. Similarly, Franco's regime in Spain put media at the service of the "One and Only party".

In The Arab world, particularly in the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) region, media have been exploited for decades as platforms to guarantee the total submissiveness of the citizens. Creating consent without consent, in Chomsky's words, was the objective that underpinned media controllers' action plans. Arab classical media were remotely considered as vehicles for positive social change. They purposefully targeted active citizens, namely youth, by instilling in them either plainly or subtly the belief that any attempt to change the political status quo would be futile and unrewarding. Bishara (2011) maintains that a win/win relationship used to exist between power-holders in the Arab region and media agencies. Thus, media were channeled towards combating transparency and consolidating the dominant socio-political structures. Instead of allotting due consideration to events and stories which pertain to the daily concerns of Arab citizens, they would diffuse impertinent stories like the reception of guests by politicians and parallel worthless content. Concomitantly, media outlets in the Arab world steered clear of newsworthy, pertinent output like civic engagement, healthcare, education, social security and akin youth-bound issues.

In this respect, Bourdieu (1991) upholds that ideology is an integral aspect of discourse by demonstrating tangibly how discourse, regardless of its genre, serves as a tool to legitimize power relationships within society. He spotlights the ideology-bound trait of media discourse by vouching for the fact that the ultimate goal of discourse is the recognition of legitimacy through discrediting potential political actions. Several scholars, namely Rogers and James (2007), disparage the prevalence of such kinds of media accentuating that valuable minutes in audio-visual media are exploited to put through ludicrous content, which does not serve common interest. Agenda-setters and news-makers are, thus, held responsible for complying with the dominant groups by purveying a discourse that hides reality at times and sculpts it some other times to sustain the life-long subsistence of the dominant groups constituting thereby a stumbling block against genuine social change.

Academically, there seems to be an unequivocal consensus among scholars on the belief that ideology plays a central role in all kinds of media discourse. This is a distinguishing ethos of prominent researchers such as Van Dijk (1997, 2008), Fairclough (1992, 2001), Fairclough and Kress (1993), and Fowler (1991). Accordingly, I stipulate that media have invariably imparted messages which do not respond to the heartbeats of the masses by striving to curb and neutralize social movements that aim at rethinking power relationships within and across countries, Morocco being no exception.

I. Media and Social Movements in Morocco

The importance of media lies in the fact that they provide the widest spectrum of the population with information, news and knowledge which determine their daily lifestyles and political behaviors. For sure, there are other institutions which can serve the same end, but media institutions have always captured the interest of information-seekers. Traditionally, media outlets in Morocco were basically state-controlled. Be they audio, print or audio-visual, Moroccan media outlets used to abide by strict, pro-governmental agendas which targeted the sustenance of socio-political, power-related, hegemonic parameters.

The "State" (the governing body) in Morocco used to mould media content and install hegemony-bound worldviews, in Fairclough's sense, by reinforcing the status quo and keeping at bay all kinds of social change. Media controllers in the Arab world, including Morocco, have always been inclined towards cajoling power-holders and serving their interests while shunning the mediation of issues that are liable to arouse public consciousness. These practices have led to the construction of a bond of distrust between what is commonly referred to as "political media" and a wide range of the Moroccan population.

To regain the hearts and minds of Moroccan media-consumers, there were media policy-specific attempts to implement new policies whereby the State would subtly pass out of the media scene. In September 2002, the first endeavor to liberalize the audio-visual sector took place by issuing the decree law (No. 2-202-663). Accordingly, The Société Nationale de Radio Diffusion et de La Télévision (SNRT), harboring The 'Radio Télévision Marocaine (RTM) and The Service Autonome de Publicité (SAP), was not directly run by the State but remained State-sponsored with the covert intent to conserve its position as a potential shareholder in the sector.

Within the perspective of bringing together governance and performance in the Moroccan media landscape, The Haute Autorité de la Communication Audio-visuelle (HACA), which saw light in 2002, got amended in the aftermath of the 2011 innovative constitution to rhyme with a new socio-political proclivity to sustain freedom of expression and media emancipation. The HACA's mission consisted of regulating the audio-visual sector in Morocco without any directive imposition. In spite of all the measures taken in this respect, it seems that the State in Morocco is unwilling to loosen its tight grip on the sector. El-Issawi (2016, 17) contends that "the audio-visual sector in Morocco is heavily dominated by the State. It is a symbol of the regime's sovereignty."

What applies to audio-visual media in Morocco is not necessarily applicable to print media. Being partisan, print media in Morocco tends to serve the political parties they are affiliated to. *Al-Alam* newspaper, for example, is the voice of *Al-Istiqlal* party (Translated into English as The Independence party), and it is, therefore, a platform for mediating the party's agenda and political stances. Likewise, *Al-Itihad Al-Ichtiraki* newspaper is the media outlet of the Socialist Union of Popular Forces political party, and it was customary for this newspaper, particularly while in opposition and before stepping into the power realm, to issue out editorials whereby it would stand away from governmental and State-advanced socio-political undertakings. Nevertheless, there were always red lines that partisan print media could never trespass. In addition to partisan print media, there exists also private print media, such as the magazine *Tel Quel*, which has an anti-conformist editorial line that grants its journalists the freedom to tap into taboos and sensitive topics, be they social, religious or political—a freedom which has not been without consequences and prices to be paid.

Thus, conventional media in the Arab world, regardless of genre, has not captured the reasoning of change-oriented citizens. They have not been vehicles for instigating wake-up calls for emancipation, freedom, equity and similar socio-political claims. This status quo has favored the mushrooming of virtual, internet-based platforms which have figured out in astute ways how to escape censorship and diffuse anti-conformist, seditious content, which has played havoc with political systems considered for a long time to be enduring and uprooting-resistant.

2. *The Internet and Change Mindset Cultivation*

In stark contrast to the classical media scene in which the Arab citizen was merely a passive recipient of media output with no chance of imposing her/his worldviews, the appearance of social media has given this citizen a genuine opportunity to establish a power-equal relationship not only with media agents and agencies but also with the elite figures of decision-making. Virtual media has eased the previously unreachable luxury of debating sensitive socio-political issues on the widest scale possible, which has led to the shrinkage of conventional media monopoly of the information and communication sector. Web-based spaces have turned into viable platforms for downloading and sharing audio, audio-visual, print, pictorial or video content of all kinds, which has contributed in enhancing public consciousness for social change. As early as 2004, a web-bound trend of political activism became apparent, specifically in Egypt, heralding the 25 January 2011 revolution.

The culture of web-linked political mobilization spread from Egypt to neighboring countries, including Morocco. The same web-specific change mindset nurtured the idea of political change in Tunisia in 2010, the corollary of which was the "Jasmine Revolution" against Ben Ali's deep-rooted regime. The unexpected changes in Tunisia and Egypt triggered virtual social activism to reach out to Morocco. Hence, "The 20 February Movement for Change" won the support of an unexpected number of web-users who made up their mind to step out of the virtual world to the real-world on Saturday 20 February, 2011 raising claims germane to the political sphere in Morocco, specifically constitutional changes. The Moroccan public opinion came to grips with how the 20 February Movement gained the upper hand in the Moroccan political scene displaying an untold capability to bring together Moroccans from different walks of life around the same socio-political claims. The leaders of the 20 February movement, let us emphasize, were young Moroccans who sought authentic change for a sustainable future.

III. Youth and Social Activism in MENA

There seems to be a definite dearth of scholarly information about youth activism in the MENA region. That is because young people were for long eclipsed being taken for politics' dummies. The insignificant involvement of youth in the instigation and implementation of youth-led change is discernible within and across MENA countries. The tendency to underestimate the role of young people as catalysts of change is presumably education-related. The young Arab is invariably raised as an entertainment-oriented, immature, short-sighted, reckless "subject" whose opinions are not to be reckoned with within the household, let alone other levels. This simplistic perception of the Arab young citizen is extended to social and political realms wherein the youth are marginalized, and the political-elderly are holding the torch and keeping society rolling in tune with their styles and views.

The advent of social media has substantially empowered Arab young citizens. They have slowly, but surely, cropped up on the socio-political landscape as potential shareholders. In this respect, it is worthy of notice that the young activist Khalid Saeed who got killed in Egypt, and whose death moved lots of still waters, was the core of the online movement installed by Wael Ghnim, which adopted the Facebook motto “WE ARE All Khalid SAEED” – a motto which underpinned the call made for the historic “Day of Wrath” on 25 January 2011. In the same mode, Moroccan youth gained widespread recognition as potential political actors through intensive online activism whose corollary was the 20February Movement.

1. Youth and Social Activism in Morocco

The social activism of Moroccan youth was for long framed by political parties. Although they were not in the front row, youth were relied on to diffuse their political parties’ ideological stances and agendas. All the political parties, namely “*Al Istiqlal*” (The Independence), “*Al AdalaWaTanmiya*” (Justice and Development), “*Al Ittihad Al-Ichdiraki*” (The Socialist Union of Popular Forces) and many others, targeted the engagement of youth through the creation of youth political party-faithful organizations known as “*Shabiba*” in Arabic. These organizations failed short of engaging large proportions of the Moroccan young population. This is presumably due to the inefficiency and ineffectiveness of conventional political parties as driving forces for the aspired-for socio-political change- a goal that all the parties espouse before elections and step away from once in positions of responsibility.

The existing bond of distrust between youth, political parties and labor unions has led to the appearance of “Coordinations”, labeled “*Tansikiya*” in Arabic, through which young people who feel victims of the rules and regulations in place set a militant action plan starting usually in online media platforms, chatrooms, blogs, Facebook, twitter, and extending to real-life arenas. This online/real-life protest culture finds its roots in the 20 February movement, which instilled the philosophy of socio-political activism among a wide gamut of the Moroccan young population.

2. Moroccan Youth Activism: The Post-2011 Period

A hallmark of the post-2011 youth-led social activism in Morocco is the persistence of the confrontational spirit of “The 20 February Movement for Social Change” in spite of its matter-of-fact disappearance from the Moroccan political sphere. This resistance mindset has been on the move ever since 2011 within and across sectors and regions. Some of these protests have followed the “snowball effect” mode of growth i.e. starting small and gaining prominence day-in-day-out. A case in this point is “the Candles Protests” in Tangier which came as a reaction to the soaring prices of everyday life commodities. Similar, but largely observable, movements took place in the cities of AlHoceima and Jrada.

The protest movements in the post-2011 period gained nationwide visibility to the extent that they were keenly reckoned with by State-representing agencies, such as The Parliament and The Chamber of Counselors. In an unprecedented way, the current Prime Minister dwelt on the protest movements in Morocco during his monthly visit to the Chamber of Counselors. He provided “the citizens’ representatives” with the average estimate of protest acts which took place between 1 January 2017 and 31 October 2019 i.e. 30 protest acts per day involving around 5 million 160 thousand activists (Elbouhssini 2020).

In a study day organized by The Chamber of Counselors on the theme “The Freedom of Associations and Gatherings” (Trans. Mine), The State Minister in Charge of Human Rights and Relations with the parliament since October 2019, revealed that the year 2017 witnessed the occurrence of 17511 acts, and that the aggregate number of participants neared 853,900 i.e. 2337 citizens taking to the streets on a daily basis (Elbouhssini 2020).

Human rights activists and organizations have time and again voiced their deep concern over the escalating rate of the protest culture nationwide. The General Secretary of the National Council of Human Rights gave the alarm ring in the afore-mentioned study day about the huge invasion of public streets by protesters some of whom went for clashes with law-enforcement agents. On a different tone, some outstanding political figures, notably the current Interior Minister, expressed in a parliamentary hearing in 2017 his full awareness of the protest acts and viewed them as epitomes of the expanding realm of personal freedom that the kingdom had been enjoying (Elbouhssini 2020).

It is crystal clear, then, that the post-2011 era in Morocco has been replete with social events and movements that seek equal opportunities, fair wealth distribution and political transparency. Moroccan youth, taking full advantage of their virtual media-friendliness, have taken the lead through the elaboration of “Coordinations”, which are non-partisan organizations installed to claim various kinds of rights, namely professional equity as it is the case with contractual teachers.

IV. The Contractual Teachers' Struggle in Morocco

Commonly referred to as the "Crisis" of contractual teachers in Morocco, this intricate file is the outcome of governmental policies oriented towards making up for the blatant insufficiency in the teaching staff, reinforcing the hiring autonomy of Regional Education Academies and presumably minimizing the national payroll, "Masse Salariale" in French, in response to international financial regulators' recommendations. The launching of the contractual teachers' project initially took place on 7 October 2016 when the Minister of Education back then in collaboration with the Minister of Finance issued a joint official statement (No 7219) allowing regional academies to hire teachers by a Limited Duration Contract (LDC). The first access exam was held on 25 and 26 November 2016, and the final contract was signed on 14 December 2016. After an initial training period, the contractual teachers became fully-fledged education practitioners submitted to intermittent and occasional pedagogical orientation by the hiring academies.

As a reaction to their vulnerable employment conditions, the teachers in question created a national coordination labeled "The National Coordination of Contractual Teachers Staff of Academies". This movement, led mostly by young B.A. holders teaching staff, was initially online-established. These young professionals gradually invaded the virtual space to initiate real-life demonstrations calling for immediate reconsideration of their employment conditions. To ward off the thwarting bureaucracy of conventional political parties and labor unions, these young activists got together in one coordination that was assigned the task of devising an action plan according to which they stepped out into the real-life arena to sensitize those in charge of the education sector as well as public opinion to the fairness and righteousness of their struggle. Up to now, Various Moroccan cities keep witnessing street protests led by who are commonly referred to as contractual teachers.

1. From E-activism to Real-life Protests

Slowly but surely, the movement of contractual teachers became a reality. Through an intensive protest agenda, ranging from sit-ins in different squares through centralized, Rabat-based sit-ins to class boycotting, the movement of contractual teachers turned into an administrative nightmare to be handled urgently and efficiently. Of course, implementing such a rigorous protest agenda was not without consequences on the learners and their parents who suffered from the continuous absenteeism of the teachers.

Faithful to their militant vision, the coordination of contractual teachers held the decision-makers accountable for their predicament. In this regard, they addressed official statements to the national media to keep them updated about their unswerving protest agenda. This strategy of putting pressure by organizing outdoor protests, which ended up in occasional confrontations with the law-enforcement agents, is reminiscent of the protests enacted by MA and PhD holders who proved with tangible evidence that the workability of snatching one's rights is a factual, realizable target. Echoing the iconic motto "Together We Can", the contractual teachers have been able to sit around a negotiation-table with the elite decision-makers and impose their get-together intent by the law of collective pressure proving thereby that the benefits of non-conventional protest channels far outweigh those of conventional ones.

2. Government's Discourse vs. Protesters' Discourse

The struggle between the contractual teachers and the Moroccan Ministry of Education is reflective of Van Dijk's us vs them discourse structure. The discourse markers of each "party" are idiosyncratic in terms of both style and tone. While the ministry adopts a delegitimizing discursive stance, the coordination of teachers goes for a legitimizing discourse. Online and conventional media became platforms for diffusing one discourse and its counterpart. Journalists, be they web-bound or conventional, started jumping at every opportunity to get in touch with the opinion leaders on both sides to keep public opinion in the know of the latest news related to this hooking file.

The online newspaper *Hespress* published a recent account of the status quo. What transpires from this coverage is the emphasis put on the discursive load of the new appellation "The Coordination of Teachers Forced into Contracts". The meticulous choice of words in the new appellation shows the categorical rejection of all the contract clauses even if the signature of the employment contract is legally binding for contractual teachers. In sheer disregard of all the hiring contract clauses, contractual teachers ask for getting fully integrated in the system of public employment and enjoying the same rights as the teachers who took entrance exams to Teacher Training Institutes, received one-year theoretical/practical training, passed the graduation exam and eventually joined their working places.

In a recent interview with Erraji (2020), journalist at the widely followed online Moroccan newspaper *Hespress*, the spokesperson of contractual teachers in Casablanca-Settat region comments on the unfairness of their situation stating that "there are employee teachers framed by the basic regulations of the public profession whereas we are framed by the regulations of Regional Academies of Education and Training. This means that we do not enjoy the same rights as our colleagues who are fully integrated in the public profession while we are obliged to fulfill the same obligations" (Henceforth Translation is Mine). This dichotomous, "us vs. them"

narrative is a legitimizing account of the bottom-line claim of contractual teachers, which is to be treated on equal footing with the category of mainstream teachers.

In the same interview, the representative of contractual teachers uses language as a discourse-specific parameter to lay bare the injustice they are subject to, to incite public opinion to support their worldviews and eventually to put more pressure on the decision-makers with the view to reconsider their situation. The spokesperson illustrates: “We, by way of example, do not have the right to benefit from the national mobility movement, and we were sentenced to imprisonment inside regions, which has caused families to fall apart.” Within this framework, the spokesperson recalls a situation of a husband who works in Casablanca and his spouse who works in Fez, and who cannot unite in one single region because their employment regulations do not grant them this right.

The contractual teachers’ representative goes on to say that this category of teachers suffers from a lot of discriminatory practices. Within this vein, he alludes to the promotion through diploma, which is a full right of mainstream teachers. Besides, they are not allowed, the spokesperson underlines, to benefit from transformation positions whereby teachers holding a PhD access higher education after passing an entrance exam. Unlike mainstream teachers who are legally eligible to sit for these exams, contractual teachers have to resign from their position before taking the same exam. These practices, the spokesperson emphasizes, contradict article 29 of the 2011 constitution which calls for the eradication of discriminatory practices.

Language is used as a discursive parameter to spotlight the precariousness of the contractual teachers’ present and future living conditions. In a rhetorical tone, the spokesperson wonders, “Why not have the right, in compatibility with our colleagues mainstream teachers, for a decent pension. 3000 dirhams is an indecent monthly retirement pension given that the needs of all people increase as they approach retirement age, especially for teachers who suffer from all kinds of diseases because of their tough working conditions.”

In terms of tone, it obviously follows that the prevalent discursive aspect is the pessimistic tone. This pessimism is evident through the choice of negative vocabulary items which are recurrent in all the speeches and discourses issued by the teachers who are entitled to speak on behalf of this category of education practitioners. Words like “discriminatory”, “unfair”, “tough”, and akin vocabulary items, are utilized to have maximum impact on the individual citizen’s opinion as well as on the people behind the implementation of such policies. In terms of style, the contractual teachers’ spokesperson uses a legitimizing style destined towards putting on view their collective, confrontational action plan, which shows through the pronoun system through the recurrence of the pronoun “we” to designate the contractual teachers and “they” to refer to the decision-makers.

On a different tone, the Ministry of National Education, via its spokesperson, adopts an antithetic, delegitimizing discourse which expounds the unreliability of contractual teachers who have not abided by the clauses by which they agreed to be hired, their irresponsibility towards future generations and their uncalculated recourse to public spaces to sort out a situation that can be resolved indoors. The current Minister of National Education refused to acknowledge the existence of an entity called “The Coordination of Teachers Forced into Contracts”, but at the same time expressed his willingness to sit for negotiations with “teachers as teachers”. The Minister of Education even vowed to take punitive measures against all contractual teachers who do not perform their professional obligations duly, which he did. In words and deeds, the Moroccan Ministry of Education sticks to its delegitimizing stance of the contractual teachers’ protest endeavors. Importantly, the Ministry of Education maintains the absolute necessity to involve the most representative Labor Unions in figuring out an outlet for this thorny issue.

In an attempt to unclog this file, the decision-makers have suggested a set of reforms, such as reconsidering the clause relevant to ending the contract without preliminary notification or severance while keeping the contract-based employment. The ministry has also agreed to allow contractual teachers to take exams/tests to change their professional status as well as to rethink the retirement conditions. Using discursive parameters to praise the amendments the ministry has put forth, the minister of education has capitalized on these “goodwill” steps to resolve this sensitive issue- a discourse that was pigeonholed by contractual teachers as “outrageous” for it does not match their main claim of full integration in the educational system. The struggle between contractual teachers and the ministerial decision-makers is, thus, conducted on the ground as well as on a discursive level. While the minister plays down the appellation of the teachers’ coordination, he welcomes the antithetic appellation “Teaching Staff of Academies”.

Likewise, the minister uses various linguistic devices to impose his agenda on the scene by giving tribute to the measures suggested by the ministry. The minister proclaimed that hiring by contract is a strategic choice dictated by the 2015/2030 vision expressing his determination not to give up on contracts and threatening protesters of being made redundant. The delegitimizing discourse of the teachers’ protests is equally endorsed by the ex- spokesperson of the government, who states that, “the protests are unjustifiable and seek to achieve political objectives” (*Hespress*). As conspicuous as it is, the issue of Teachers’ Limited Contract-based hiring is far from being irrevocably resolved.

V. Contractual Teachers' Activism: The Road Ahead

Apparently, the negotiations between the teachers and the education administration have been inconclusive. The road ahead is tainted with haziness given that each group is faithful to its line of reasoning. The ministry is unwilling to swerve from the contract-based hiring strategy. Right now, new recruits are doing training in the Regional Centers of the Teaching Professions (CRMEF), which shows that the ministry is determined to involve academies in the human resources and financial management of this file. On another extreme, the contractual teachers are on a standstill mode in the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Does this mean that there are undercover negotiations underway? Is it a warrior's break? Or is it an indication that contractual teachers have ended up accepting the status quo? Regardless of what the point is, it is obvious that the contractual teachers' protest movement has challenged the power of classical labor unions and political parties in a manner inconceivable in the past.

1. Classical Labor Unions at Stake

Protest movements in post-2011 Morocco in general, the protest movement of contractual teachers in particular, were organized out of the umbrellas of the most representative Labor Unions, such as The Confédération Démocratique de Travail (CDT), The Fédération Démocratique de Travail (FDT), or The Union Nationale de Travail au Maroc (UNTM). In an article issued by Al-Massae newspaper, El Bouhssini (2020, 6), University Professor and human rights activist, stipulates that "the occurrence of such protests in Morocco for years is tightly linked to the contraction of political parties' and syndicates' representativeness. As a phenomenon, this is not exclusively Morocco-bound, but it is international" (Translation mine). Indeed, Moroccan citizens have had enough of the bureaucratic, compliant managerial modes of conventional labor unions which would think a million times before organizing sit-ins in public squares. The labor unions are present in the resolution process of the contractual teachers' issue, though. Yet, they remain minor actors and merely tension regulators between the two major actors.

The tendency to step away from traditional Labor Unions and political parties is not restricted to Morocco. In France, for example, the change movement instigated by "Les Gilets Jaunes" was not undertaken under the auspices of the most representative labor or political entities in France. The unifying line of thought of all the protesters is to call for social equity and alleviate all the socio-economic manifestations of poverty and precariousness. Through the organization of protest marches and sit-ins, these activists have truly imposed themselves as negotiating agents and managed to realize objectives that were thought unachievable under the auspices of mainstream labor unions.

Within the same philosophy, Moroccan contractual teachers made the first step into a long journey of protests and eventual attainment of rights. Regardless of the outcome, it is evident that the future socio-political arena is likely to witness similar protest movements. These movements are expected to be conducted independently from political parties and labor unions. This tendency, I presume, will not be without consequences. After all, the role of strong, trustworthy unions and political parties is priceless in the sense that they could have the means and vision to lead and orient social movements in effective and efficient ways. Other than that, there would be immeasurable negative consequences that may jeopardize social security and stability.

2. Micro vs. Macro Repercussions

By and large, the teachers' protest movement in Morocco may be a reflection of non-citizen policies which do not prioritize public interest. The eruption of similar movements in Morocco has arguably discredited the kingdom's image as a haven of peace and social stability. During the wave of the Arab Spring which played havoc with the social security of so many Arab countries, several scholars, politicians and international observers gave credit to the Moroccan power-holders for constituting the exception in a shaky, tense and vibrant region. However, the eruption of problematic issues analogous to that of contractual teachers has created new parameters which may lead to a reconsideration of the previous assumption. This attitudinal switch may have macro repercussions related not just to education but also to other sectors like economy. At the educational level, the educational system may lose validity on a wider scale given that an educational system having serious human resource-bound difficulties would generate students with unsubstantial competitive profiles in the long run.

At the economic level, the persistence of similar movements will not be without prices to be paid. Before deploying their capitals, foreign investors consider first and foremost the parameter of social peace for it provides indicators that the invested capital would thrive and not be endangered. From this perspective, the continuous burgeoning of protest movements within and across regions in Morocco needs to be seriously handled.

At another level, the repercussions of the contract-based hiring will be dire on the main actors in the teaching/learning process, namely the teachers. The role of the teachers is globally recognized as real catalysts for human capital building. In all developed countries, the teachers' financial stability comes first because they

hold in their hands the future of the country: children and youth. Teachers undergoing miserable social, professional conditions would not invest in the demanding teaching endeavor. For these, and several other reasons, all the sides involved in this file are obligated to work out a mutually binding, satisfying resolution to the contractual teachers' issue so as to ensure a stable, sustainable educational climate.

VI. Conclusion

The instrumentality of contemporary digital media in empowering Moroccan youth turns out to be incontrovertible. Inspired by the digital media-channeled wave of youth activism in the Arab region, Moroccan youth have adhered to the digitalized change philosophy. The internet has captured and gratified their deep-seated desire to become major actors in the socio-political sphere- a gratification that they were never able to attain because of the custody that traditional media institutions exercised.

The proliferation of online activism has led to a sizeable shrinkage of the iconicity of political parties and labor unions in Morocco. These entities have lagged behind proving their incapacity to follow the rhythm of the youth-led social movements. Thwarted by bureaucracy and pro-institutional agendas, these conventional entities would never push the bar of socio-political claims as high as the "clic-clic" generation has done. Thus, instead of lining up behind the traditional opinion leaders, Moroccan youth have taken the lead and have envisaged an unconventional militant path whose inception is initially web-bound, and its actualization is eventually carried out in physical public streets and squares.

The case of contractual teachers epitomizes the alienation of Moroccan young activists from conventional political institutions. Opting for a "Coordination" to implement a protest agenda is quite telling in the sense of showing that the bond of trust has loosened and incited Moroccan youth to seek alternatives to mainstream labor unions and political bodies. On the other hand, it seems that official institutions in Morocco insist on having these labor unions as their sole interlocutors, which intensifies the disagreement proportion with these teachers.

The struggle of contractual teachers has manifested itself not only in real life but also at the discursive level. The legitimizing discourse of teachers stands at the other extreme of the delegitimizing discourse purveyed by representatives of the Ministry of Education. The exploitation of language as an influential component of discourse to hook the masses and get them to empathize is a distinguishing trait of the discourse of teachers- a support-seeking discourse both in terms of style and tone. The same strategy, but for an antithetic end, is adopted by the custodians of the educational sector to show the irrationality of the teachers' stance. Between one discourse and its counterpart, the situation remains unresolved with risks of worsening and jeopardizing the educational serenity of innocent learners nationwide.

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