

From Silence to Social Awakening: Exploring the Personal Trajectories of Activists in Morocco's Post-Arab Spring Movements

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Abstract

The Arab Spring served as a catalyst for various movements aiming to implement political change across the Arab world. Morocco, with its rich history of social movements, witnessed the emergence of the Movement of 20th February 2011 (M20F), the Hirak Rif, and the 2018 boycott campaign. The M20F, in particular, challenged the established fear imposed by the Makhzen, marking a transformative moment facilitated by social media and a call against "hogra" – oppression, injustice, and social contempt. While existing studies have focused on the political and social factors behind activism and the consequences of these movements on societies, the present paper takes a more individualistic perspective. Using biographic interviews with several activists from these uprisings in Morocco, and from different backgrounds and affiliations, the paper examines their life trajectories with the aim of understanding what factors influenced their decision to join a movement and the subsequent impact on their lives. This paper presents the profiles of six activists and discusses the rationale behind shaping their activist careers. The respondents developed an interest in activism from various influences—parental, cultural, media, socio-economic conditions, and experiences of marginalization—all united for a common objective of change,

despite diverse ideologies.

Keywords: Social movements, Activism, Morocco, Life course, Political engagement, Movement of February 20th, Hirak Rif, Boycott 2018

Introduction

In an Arab world in turmoil following the consequences of the Arab Spring, different nations have experienced varying degrees of instability. It must be noted that the country has a significant history in social movements, having endured years of protests after gaining independence in the 1960s. Within this framework, Morocco witnessed the rise of the Movement of 20th February 2011 (M20F), and later on, other local movements, namely the Hirak Rif, and the boycott campaign of 2018. The M20F, in particular, marked a significant turning point, breaking the long-standing silence and challenging the established fear imposed by the *Makhzen*¹ (Lofti, 2018). Using social media, young people echoed this social awakening against the "*hogra*", which symbolizes oppression, injustice and social contempt, to find dignity, freedom and justice (Radi, 2017). This article focuses on activists' who played pivotal roles in the M20F and Hirak movements. It is in this context, where the activists were of multiple affiliations, that the following research questions arose: What are the key factors that contribute to the initiation and sustained political engagement, throughout the life course of individuals, and how do these factors evolve over time? How do activists' life courses evolve in response to participation in the M20F and Hirak Rif movements?

Hypotheses

- Individuals who experience significant parental influence at a young age are more likely to initiate and sustain political engagement throughout their life course.

- Life events such as experiences of marginalization, indignation, and poverty act as catalysts, triggering political engagement as individuals seek to address these challenges through activism.

- The life courses of activists involved in M20F and Hirak Rif are not only influenced by the events of the movements but are rather shaped by the cumulative effects of pre-existing life experiences.

- Activists who experience transformative effects during M20F and Hirak Rif movements are more likely to demonstrate enduring engagement in social and political causes.

¹The term "Makhzen" typically refers to the traditional, political, and administrative apparatus in Morocco. Historically, it has been associated with the central authority, including the monarchy and its administrative structures. The Makhzen is often considered as the embodiment of the State power and control in Morocco.

Methodology and Theoretical Framework

This paper presents an overview of the life stories² of six different activists who participated in the M20F and Hirak movements, aiming to establish their profiles. It forms part of a broader PhD research, which includes four interviews with female activists (four are left activists, while the remaining one is associated with the Islamist organization *Justice et Bienfaisance*) and eleven with male activists. It was difficult to get in touch with female activists as they do not represent the majority of the movement's actors. According to the study led by Laouni (Laouni, 2022), 68% of his respondents are males who use the internet for political activism while only 32% are females who use the internet for the same purpose (all of his respondents have no political affiliation).

These profiles were selected because they share similarities in terms of their activist careers with the remaining ones. Additionally, the detailed presentation of all profiles would have made the paper too lengthy, moving away from the clarity and focus of the results. The fieldwork presented a few challenges, particularly in getting in touch with activists who were willing to share their life stories. Furthermore, many of them requested that some of the information they shared should be excluded from the published materials as they link their profiles to the activities they undertook anonymously during the movements (Their request is respected as part of the ethics of research). Finally, it was important to meet with them multiple times to build trust and have more in-depth understanding of their experiences.

The present study methodology is based on the integration of the life course paradigm, which is a theoretical framework derived from life-course sociology. According to the life course paradigm, people's trajectories are changed throughout time by the cumulative effects of interconnected life experiences as well as by isolated occurrences (Elder et al., 2003). It is important to elucidate the interrelationships between the activists' prior life situations, the M20F and Hirak catalyst events, and the ensuing trajectories that shape their post-movement lives by connecting the analysis of their profiles to the life course paradigm. Hence, this investigation clarifies the lasting effects of social mobilization in the larger framework of peoples' life courses while also enhancing the comprehension of the diversity of paths taken by activists.

Glen H. Elder (1998) explains that the life course refers to the temporal sequence of events and transitions that individuals go through during their lives, which are shaped by the interaction between biological, psychological, social, and historical processes. This approach emphasizes the importance of

²Fifteen biographical interviews were conducted but this paper only presented an overview of six militant career paths. The paths highlight the diversity of trajectories and profiles.

taking into account early life experiences (such as childhood and adolescence) in the analysis of later life trajectories, as well as the interdependence between events and transitions throughout life. In addition, Walter R. Heinz and Victor W. Marshall (Heinz et al., 2003) underscore the ways various social institutions, including family, education, and work shape the life paths of individuals. This approach will allow a better understanding of the impact of events occurring during the life trajectories of these activists on their choices and on the process of becoming activists.

The methodology involved conducting biographical interviews in order to unravel the activists' identities, understand how their activist careers were constructed, and investigate the driving forces for their political commitment over the course of their trajectories. Moreover, a longitudinal examination of these interviews will highlight the important turning points, recurring themes, and dynamic changes in the activists' trajectories over time.

These interviews serve to understand how these actors perceive their own journeys in detail and how they explain their actions (Agrikoliansky & Fillieule, 2022). However, the restitution of memory is not often easy. The risk of omission, moments of incarceration, difficult ordeals, and self-censorship represent obstacles during the collection and analysis of data. Schacter (1999) states that human minds naturally commit what he calls "sins of memory", as they struggle to remember events, places, people, and information needed to live one's life. He adds that memory fails in two ways including the "sin of omission" when the person fails to remember a desired fact or event, and the "sin of commission" when the memory is present but it is either incorrect or unwanted. This means that it is natural for memory to fail. Portelli (Shuman, 1993) suggests conceiving memory as an active and meaning-making process, challenging the notion of mere historical recollection. Hence, it is viewed as an oral source that verbalizes the articulation of memory. The latter reveals deeper and personalized meanings of the events or actions of the individual. Portelli points out that these oral sources reveal not only what these people did, but what they wanted to do, what they believed they were doing, and what they now believe they did in the past.

This study is situated in a broader research context on social activism in Morocco, and it aims to fill current gaps in understanding the factors that influence the choice of activism, the experiences of activists, and the dynamics of mobilization in these two movements in particular.

Firstly, the paper sets an overview of the context of the studied movements. Secondly, it presents five activist profiles in order to provide an illustration of various trajectories with different experiences (including three renowned leaders in the activist sphere³). Finally, the paper discusses the

³ Their identities are kept anonymous to respect confidentiality.

results by reviewing the different factors that encouraged their activist engagement and their post-movement evolution.

Overview of the Movements

The Movement of February 20th

Immediately after the Tunisian revolution, several students and activists created Facebook pages and groups to mobilize and claim reforms (Lofti, 2018). Supporters of the movement came from political and legal opposition, as well as political organizations not recognized by the authorities, namely the Islamists (*Justice et Bienfaisance* (JB), Justice and Charity) and the extreme left-wing, along with the so called 'independents'³ (Bennani-Chraïbi & Jekhllaly, 2012). Inspired by the Arab Spring, they set aside their political differences to challenge the status quo. Oussama El Khlifi's call for mobilization on January 28, 2011, marked the beginning, leading to the formation of the 'February 20th Movement, the people want change' (Ksikes, 2015). Numerous online mobilization campaigns followed, notably the video campaign that begun with Amina Boulghabi, one of the female founders of the movement, sharing her intention to participate in the demonstrations. Different faces continued to appear, both male and female, aiming to inspire both genders to participate and promote gender equality (Abadi, 2014). Moreover, the mobilization campaigns used the Moroccan identity (I am Moroccan) in order to invite all Moroccan categories to join the movement (Abadi, 2014). Thousands gathered in Casablanca on February 20, 2011, with parallel gatherings in various cities. Weekly demonstrations and assemblies were organised, demanding changes such as the abolition of Constitution Article 19, secularization, an end to corruption and Makhzen influence, improved access to health, education, and employment, and to stop private resource management. In March, a counter-movement, described as being 'royalist', emerged on social media and in the public space in order to counterbalance the M20F protests, along with the efforts by the *Makhzen* authorities to infiltrate the movement and profile militants in an attempt of defamation. However, this weakened the motivation of several activists (Bennani-Chraïbi & Jekhllaly, 2012). Internal conflicts increased after the July 1st referendum, impacting the movement's unity.

In November 2011, after the Justice and Development Party's success in legislative elections, JB departed from the M20F. However, their skills in terms of organization and mobilization were the key elements to channeling the movement. Despite ongoing demonstrations, ideologies prevailed in slogans and photographs, which annulled attempts at self-limitation (Bennani-Chraïbi, Jekhllaly, 2012). Lofti (2018) notes that the February 20th Movement successfully alleviated fear associated with protests, inspiring a social awakening and influencing local protests like Amendis in Tangier 2015,

protests by trainee teachers, medical students, and the significant Hirak movement in the Rif region.

The Popular Movement of Hirak: Rif Region

On October 28, 2016, in the city of Al Hoceïma, a fish seller saw his cargo confiscated and destroyed⁴ and when he tried to recover it from the dump truck, the man was crushed by it. In the north of the country, a mobilization emerged to denounce the humiliation by the authorities (*hogra*) and marginalization of the Rif region⁵ as it was side-lined by the king Hassan the second after the independence⁶ (Boutaleb et al., 2018). The majority of the Rif population is young, with 16.3% unemployed (a rate higher than the national average). Additionally, 25.1% depend on the help and assistance of their families. Moreover, the region suffers from a low development index (Suárez-Collado, 2017) and does not have an oncology health department despite having a high rate of cancer patients (Schwarz, 2022).

It must be noted that protests started initially during the M20F, claiming the official recognition of the *Tarifit* local language in the public sphere as well as '*a higher degree of self-government for Rif*'. However, the 2011 constitutional reforms did not mention anything about the Rif related issues, and this event represented a trigger which added to the claim of the political autonomy of Rif⁷ during Hirak Rif (Suarez-Collado, 2017). The movement, however, lost its force when the authorities used violence and arrested the different leaders of the movement as well as hundreds of militants.

The Boycott Campaign 2018

Moroccans have demonstrated their discontent through a rich history of protests, motivated by instability, corruption, and a lack of political transparency. However, the *Makhzen* authorities repressed these movements. Boycott, according to Benayad (2018), is described as "soft", targeting wealthy families close to the *Makhzen*. The voice of the people embodied the spirit of the M20F, as the boycott targeted those surrounding the king rather than the king himself. Moroccans protested through their consumption choices, avoiding direct confrontation with authorities while advocating for price reductions and expressing their indignation at being labeled as

⁴ He fished swordfish, an activity prohibited during that period of the year.

⁵ They protest against the unfulfillment of the government's promises to develop the Rif region, the absence of oncology medical premises, absence of universities and public infrastructures, to name but a few.

⁶ The president of the Rif republic was an eminent figure fighting against Spain and France during the war in the 1920s. He was considered rebellious by the monarch.

⁷ The flag of Rif was used during the demonstrations, starting from the M20F to express the community's identity

thoughtless and considered *stupid* (شعب لمدايخ، استحمار الشعب). The movement aimed to strengthen the people's voice, which was fading due to authorities' violence, and assert their role as actors in society.

As a result, thousands of Moroccans joined the boycott of certain brands to test the country's political economy, using the anonymity of social media. The targeted products included Afriquia gas stations (owned by Akhenouch, the Minister of Agriculture), Sidi Ali mineral water bottles (Meriem Bensaleh, former president of the CGEM -Employers' Union-), and Centrale Laitière (a subsidiary of Danone). These companies monopolize and dominate their respective markets. According to an Al Jazeera report in 2018 (Masbah, 2018), they controlled over 50% of the market share with their products, allowing them to set prices, especially since the Competition Council's role had been suspended since 2013. The movement successfully mobilized the masses in the country to denounce wealth distribution inequalities and express their refusal to submit to billionaires (Ben Youssef & Khalil, 2023). Additionally, boycotters referred to a parliamentary report in August 2018, which revealed an increase in profit margins for fuel distributors since the price liberalization in 2015. The report estimated a gain of 17 billion dirhams before the fuel subsidy abolition (Berrada El Mehdi, 2018).

Results: The Activists' Experience

The following section presents the main life events and turning points that shifted the respondents' trajectories towards the decision to engage in the above-mentioned uprisings.

« We must free citizens from poverty, precariousness, and social injustice»: Said (Leader Hirak Rif, Voie democratique, left activist)

Said, born in 1972 in a village near Al Hoceima, currently serves as a teacher. Tragically, his father, a farmer, passed away when Said was only a year old, leaving his housewife mother to be the anchor of their small family. As the youngest of two sisters, Said faced challenges in his early education due to the absence of a family record book. Consequently, he attended school as an auditor⁸. The family's challenging living conditions led to his older sister relocating to Al Hoceima, where she was cared for by a known family, while Said found refuge with another family in Imezouren.

In 1982, his mother passed away at the age of 30. Despite the hardships, Said tenaciously pursued his education, managing to enroll in school and eventually joining middle school in 1984, which coincided with a period marked by uprisings. These tumultuous times fueled his interest in politics and activism. Excelling in his studies, Said frequently delivered

⁸ In Morocco, the law prevented children from enrolling in school if their parents did not have a family record book to prove the parents are married and had children within wedlock.

presentations on the Palestinian cause and the Egyptian revolution. In his second year, he reunited with his sister in Al Hoceima, while attending Sidi Abed middle-school, where his commitment to addressing the challenging national situation solidified.

The student movement in 1986-87 was marked by protests, strikes, oppression, and incarceration, and this deeply impacted Said. Despite facing expulsion from his high school, he demonstrated resilience and secured a place at the technical high school of Oujda through outstanding results in the regional exams. There, he immersed himself in the vibrant activism of the university student movement (despite being a high-school student), while campaigning for educational reforms, advocating for improved dormitory conditions, and engaging with regional and international events.

In 1991, Said enrolled in university to study general law, aligning himself with the left student faction⁹. Over the span of four years, he actively campaigned and was eventually elected as the vice-president of the national association of unemployed graduates. This role exposed him to various national and international experiences, fostering a broader perspective.

In 2002, Said immigrated to Spain, returning to Morocco in 2011, just before the M20F. His participation in the movement was motivated by his experience and a sense of responsibility, particularly in highlighting authorities' violence. This was a focal point as the Rif's M20F prioritized the fight against such violence over democratic demands. Subsequently, he played a pivotal role in the launch of the Hirak under the banner " لا للدكاكين السياسية و الجمعيات " الاسترزاقية"¹⁰, emphasizing the region's distrust of political actors and associations. Said describes the initial seven months of the Hirak as grandiose, marked by creative forms of protest, widespread participation, and impactful demands. Despite enduring two incarcerations under harrowing conditions, Said remains an active advocate, aligning with organizations such as AMDH (The Moroccan Association of Human Rights) and the *Front Social Marocain*. He also supports causes against human rights violations, the release of political detainees, workers' rights, and the rising cost of living.

« *It was unique and grandiose; when I went out to protest, my mother went out with me* »: Mounir (Left activist)

Mounir was born in 1991 in Nador to a merchant father and a housewife mother. He is also the eldest of two brothers and works in a factory in Tangier. He recounts growing up in several financial difficulties. The city lacked infrastructure for children and youth, and he felt a significant gap

⁹ Afterward, he went to Rabat to continue his studies and enhance his activist involvement, but he did not have scholarships, and due to financial issues, he abandoned the idea of continuing his education.

¹⁰ No to administrative parties with neither values nor ethics to defend, and no to associations created to benefit from donations from international organizations.

between his hometown and Tangier when they once visited family when he was a teenager. He obtained a bachelor's degree in Oujda and a master's degree in social sciences in Kenitra. Before university, he had not considered activism as a possibility until the onset of the Arab Spring. He states that, like the majority of young people, he began to take an interest in politics because the dream of change was possible and tangible¹¹. Consequently, as soon as the call of M20F was launched, he joined to denounce corruption and advocate for democracy.

Thanks to the movement, he became acquainted with the VD and AMDH, which he joined because he felt they advocated for vulnerable social groups. This profoundly touched him, creating a personal connection and an immediate desire to play a role in positively impacting his region. In 2015, he assumed responsibilities within the association, identifying human rights violations and later taking charge of student members. After that, he was appointed the national secretary of the Youth of the VD. During this period, he immersed himself into books that further shaped his ideological convictions, including works by El Herrif, Abdelhamid Amine, Che Guevara, Mohamed Amzian, Abdelkrim Alkhattabi, among others.

He actively campaigned on various issues, such as unfair dismissals and the case of Daniel Calvan, the Spanish pedophile. Mounir consistently underscored the untapped natural and maritime potential of the region, the precariousness of families relying solely on trade with smuggled products from Melilla, and the numerous frustrations of Rifians who peacefully expressed their grievances during the Hirak. Mounir actively participated in the protests, describing how the movement resonated with every soul in the region. The demonstrations were spontaneous, following live calls by Silia, El Mejjauoui, Asrihi, Nabil Ahmjiq, and Imrachen, who were highly popular. However, after seven months, the *Makhzen* initiated oppression, employing violence such as tear gas and beatings. Mounir was incarcerated twice due to his Facebook posts and was forcibly arrested at his home. Several of his comrades opted for immigration, recognizing that the situation was unlikely to change.

In 2018, he found a job opportunity in Tangier. Eventually, his activist involvement waned over the years as his work consumed most of his time, and incarcerations had taken a toll on him.

¹¹ He explains that he did not realize that his living conditions could be improved if someone denounced them. He had to walk 30 minutes to get to high school. To go to university, he had to take 2 buses which took between 1h30 and 2h. All public services are in a poor state, no universities in the region, no hospitals with an oncology department, and no work opportunities apart from Melilia's business through smuggling products which was banned after Covid.

« *I don't see myself as an exile* »: Samir (Hirak Rif Leader, Left activist)

Samir was born in 1992 in Nador in a working-class neighborhood. He is the youngest of two brothers and a sister. His father was a trader in products smuggled from Melilla and was affiliated with the USFP (*Union Socialistes des Forces Populaires*, left political party) during the 1980s and 1990s. The exposure to politics from childhood was due to his father's involvement. His elder brother is radical in the Amazigh movement, and his sister is a member of the JB, an Islamic Organization. Samir's early interest in politics grew as he closely followed revolutions in Egypt and Libya, although he did not have a specific orientation or a desire to engage in activism. With the rising of M20F, he joined the movement because it embodied all the discourse he heard at home during his childhood (social injustice, democracy, indignation), and the social reality of Morocco was similar to that of Egypt. He began participating regularly, contacting the coordination committee of marches in his city to join the organization¹².

Samir is unique because he spoke of the great fear that haunted him, especially after meetings and general assemblies, as they were all monitored by the authorities. "*I walked, and I couldn't help but look behind me because I was so afraid.*" In 2012, he joined the *Voie Démocratique* (Democratic Path, VD) because he felt aligned with their ideology and the values they defended, and he also joined the AMDH. He later enrolled at the University of Oujda (majoring in English literature) and joined the faction of the progressive left¹³. At that time, with much energy and the M20F dissipating, he invested himself fully in the struggles of the student movement. He temporarily paused his studies between 2012 and 2014 due to financial reasons. In 2016, he obtained his bachelor's degree, and during that same year, he mobilized for the boycott of the electoral campaign, which was followed by the onset of the Hirak movement. He was one of the pioneers of the marches following the death of Mohcine Fikri, along with a representative from the *JB* and three others from the Amazigh movement. The movement quickly grew, and all affiliations joined a single organizing committee, with Samir taking on the responsibility of general management in Nador (as he had cumulated experience during the M20F).

The movement faced significant internal conflict between leftists and Amazigh supporters (as they were against the Monarchy and fought for the region to be independent and self-governed). The wave of incarcerations began in 2017, and Mounir was arrested in August. Samir recounts having to correct the minutes multiple times before signing them, but his comrades had

¹² The coordination included members of different political affiliations in the Nador region without extremists, radicals, Islamists, leftists, etc.

¹³ The faction was secretive and operated in the shadows of other factions.

not read any and had signed confessions incriminating them. He was the only one released at that time, but he was harassed by the authorities, who directly targeted him in every demonstration and beat him. He expressed, "*I always left the protests in an ambulance.*" Afterward, he started working with an association, and the authorities pressured him with frequent summons. In 2020, he traveled to France and participated in two marches organized there. In the second one, activists from the Amazigh movement burned the Moroccan flag. Upon returning, Samir realized that the mayor of Nador and the delegate from the Ministry of Health had called the association and instructed them to dismiss him since he was a separatist. Thereafter, he resigned and returned to France. He explains that he could have easily sought political asylum and obtained his residence permit¹⁴, but he does not consider himself a refugee. Instead, he preferred to struggle alone during the lockdown until he resolved his situation. He continues to be active within the AMDH in France.

« *It's not due to religious ideology* »: Yasser (*Parti de Justice et Développement, Conservative Party*)

Yasser, born in 1989, currently serves as a computer science professor at a university in France. He grew up in Tlate Lwlad, a village near Khouribga. Being the only child, he pursued his undergraduate studies at the multidisciplinary faculty in Khouribga, followed by a Master's degree in France. Yasser's father, an active member of the village council, was also involved in the political sphere within the Socialist Union of Popular Forces (USFP, a left party). He engaged Yasser in political activities from a young age. Yasser developed a keen interest in reading the USFP newspapers, particularly the section highlighting the journeys, dedication, and sacrifices of various party militants.

He left home to attend a military high school, and took on responsibilities at the age of 15. This experience, coupled with the challenges of using public transportation to reach the village, allowed him to perceive life differently and recognize the need for someone to advocate for the improvement of citizens' living conditions. Throughout his academic journey, Yasser actively participated in cultural activities organized by different student organizations.

In 2008, he noticed how members of the Student Renewal (RE, student faction of the PJD (Party of Justice and Development, conservative party)) faction were mistreated by the majority at the faculty, including students affiliated with the USFP¹⁵ and the administration. Yasser felt a sense of solidarity and empathy towards them. He forged close friendships with four members and joined the RE in 2009. Yasser emphasizes that his initial

¹⁴ The first to ask for political asylum were the republicans and separatists

¹⁵ The majority of students in Khouribga originated from Oued Zem and Bajjaad, which are historically strongholds of the USFP (Union Socialistes des Forces Populaires).

affiliation was driven not by religious conviction but by solidarity, later evolving into a political commitment. He believes that the PJD was the only party capable of countering the Party of Authenticity and Modernity's (PAM, Administrative party) thirst for control, grounded in principles of democracy, hard work, and clean political practices.

While studying in France since 2011, Yasser remained connected to the PJD, actively participating in online activities related to the M20F, attending Youth meetings, and organizing the PJD's electoral campaign in 2011. Despite the PJD's electoral success, Yasser never sought leadership roles. His commitment to politics was driven by a genuine desire to contribute rather than personal ambition.

During the emergence of the Hirak, Yasser defended the movement online and participated in protests led by the diaspora in France to support the release of those incarcerated. He co-founded a press page with friends to post articles about the defended causes. For Yasser, the key lies in identifying common ground between his convictions and the demands of various movements, such as dignity, equality, and the fight against corruption, to unify goals and strengthen the struggle rather than focusing on the differences and conflicts between the different parties.

In 2017, Yasser established a cultural and sports association in Tlat Lwlad for the village's children, aiming to provide what the government and other institutions had failed to deliver. In 2018, he founded a local office in Fini with PJD comrades to address complaints from residents and combat fraud and corruption in the Settat region. Despite achieving success, Yasser resigned when he realized that some bureau members exploited the struggles for personal gain. Transitioning to the boycott campaign in 2018, he viewed it as an opportunity to combat the combination of money and power in the political field.

Yasser created a dedicated page for article writing, revealing financial realities to mobilize a wider audience. However, he remains skeptical about the political scene in Morocco, considering it distant from a climate of « good » political practice. Consequently, he now focuses on remotely managing the association for the children of his village. He believes it is the most impactful way to achieve positive long-term results, ensuring that adult citizens are aware of their rights and duties.

« I am Adlist and proud! »: Hicham (M20F Leader, Justice et Bienfaisance, illegal Islamic Organization)

Hicham was born in 1979 in Casablanca and is the eldest of his three brothers. His father worked as a laborer, and his mother was a housewife. He grew up in the working-class neighborhood of Ktaa Wld Aicha. He considers himself lucky as he attended primary school for free at a private institution. This was made possible by an uncle who worked there and did not have

children. He excelled in his studies because he was driven by the desire to prove his worth in the midst of a socio-economic class higher than his family's.

From a young age, Hicham developed a keen interest in radio and following news in classical Arabic. In middle school, he felt an increasing gap between himself and other students, particularly during the Iraq invasion when many schools were on strike. In a courtyard full of students unaware of the invasion, he wanted eagerly to raise awareness and mobilize against the unjust aggression. Although he could not vocalize his thoughts, he immersed himself in political readings, focusing on Arab political situations, especially the Palestinian and Iraqi causes.

Things began to change at Moulay Abdellah High School, where students were diverse and from all social classes, and Hicham encountered a leftist Arabic teacher. Hicham explained how enthusiastic he was to engage in the classroom and how it encouraged him to read and develop arguments. When strikes began, he felt happy and fulfilled as his *"flame had finally ignited."* One day, out of curiosity, he joined his brother for the Fajr prayer at the mosque, despite not knowing how to perform ablutions. From that moment, he felt a profound connection to religion and never missed prayers. Friendship with members of Consolidation and Reform (CR) deepened, and he was *"swept away by the movement before even realizing it,"* proudly taking the responsibility of defending Islam.

Participating in CR summer camps¹⁶ for two consecutive years left a lasting impression, immersing Hicham and his comrades in religious studies and practices. During his baccalaureate year, a sports coach at school, affiliated with Justice and Charity (JB, Islamic organization), began inviting Hicham and other young men from the mosque to his home for religious lessons. Hicham later enrolled at Faculty of Social Sciences Ain Chock to specialize in Islamic studies, fulfilling his childhood dream of engaging in activism by joining the National Union of Moroccan Students (UNEM). Throughout his academic journey, he was an active member of the union, participating in various student protests and demonstrations until financial constraints forced him to leave his studies and pursue a teaching career.

After completing two years of training in Marrakech, Hicham returned to Casablanca determined to join JB. His distinguished status, coupled with his initiative, led him to replicate his civilian work experience within CR by creating the cultural association Addoha within JB¹⁷. As the M20F unfolded, Hicham and his comrades decided to fully engage in the movement while respecting each other's approaches, with Hicham emerging as one of the

¹⁶ Morality, good behavior, prayer, night prayers in groups, recitation of the Quran, football, swimming in the beach far from unhealthy desires (deserted beaches and non-mixed people).

¹⁷ Diversity of activities and volunteering: Quran, evening classes, seasonal events (Ramadan, Eids, etc.), book fair, women's day, awareness campaign, etc.

leaders. He vividly described the moments of protests and general assemblies, emphasizing how individuals, regardless of their religious beliefs, united to establish true democracy¹⁸. Following the Hirak, Hicham shifted his focus to counteracting the escalating censorship of freedom of expression, which extended to social media and resulted in numerous incarcerations¹⁹.

In 2018, he observed that the boycott taught the people a new culture of protesting against capitalism and corruption. Although he personally did not find reasons to actively participate in the mobilization, as the online community took charge, he continued to be highly active within JB through lively debates, conferences, teachings, and on social media, defending Islam and promoting democracy despite facing obstacles.

« *All organizations are corrupt*»: Adil (Independent, no political affiliation)

Adil, born in 1989 in Casablanca, runs a small shop specialized in the sale and repair of computer equipment in a working-class neighborhood of Casablanca. As the only child, he grew up in extreme poverty, having lost his father at the age of three, which led his mother to sell bathing gloves on the streets and work as a cleaner to meet their basic needs. Feeling a sense of duty to contribute financially from the age of 10, he began working in grocery stores and later in phone repair shops. His interest in radio and following news in classical Arabic started during his childhood while working.

He recalls participating in a middle-school play that sparked several questions about the world. The narrative was about children wanting to leave Earth aboard a spaceship to escape wars and corruption, seeking a world of peace free from inequalities.

Gradually, his interest in global politics grew, especially towards the Palestinian cause and American invasions. In this context, he organized his first marches at school, mobilizing students and neighbors spontaneously to raise awareness among onlookers in the street about the nature of causes they "should" defend. Following the M20F call on Facebook, he felt involved and began creating content about the Arab Spring and upcoming marches. However, his mother prevented him from going out on the designated day, citing concerns about his "*revolutionary impulses*." Nevertheless, he actively participated in the protests, joining the committee for creating slogans and

¹⁸ The JB women were protected during the demonstrations, they walked in groups of female surrounded by men from the organisation; women did not participate in general assemblies because the environment was not suitable for them (cigarettes, vulgar words and mixity); everyone's religious convictions were respected.

¹⁹ Omar Radi, Zefzafi, Bouachi, and others... Or like the incarceration of a brother (comrade within the group) who was wrongly accused of marital infidelity."

learning more about politics and its jargon during the marches²⁰. He was convinced that he did not want to belong to any party or organization, deeply believing that all are corrupt and serve their own interests.

Being inspired by his interactions with affiliated activists, he created a coordination group for the youth in the Riad al Oulfa neighborhood in collaboration with Mouad el Haked²¹ to mobilize them to improve the neighborhood's infrastructure. In 2012, Adil was incarcerated for eight months due to a Facebook post. The experience was destructive but reconstructive, as he enrolled in an independent²² high school program in prison, dedicating himself to graduating and to philosophical and revolutionary readings. After obtaining his high school diploma, he enrolled in the Faculty of Sciences with a promise not to engage in activism. However, a faculty decision regarding failing grades reignited his passion, and he mobilized a large number of students to participate in a three-day student battle. They succeeded, but he paid the price with an invalidated semester²³ and disciplinary actions.

In 2015, he mobilized his neighbors to boycott municipal election campaigns, which was successful²⁴. They wanted to replicate the experience in legislative elections, but he was incarcerated eleven days before the voting day for a month. Despite these constraints, he continued to advocate through regular Facebook posts, especially during the 2016 Hirak. In 2018, he was less active due to increased surveillance by authorities, avoiding missteps. For him, the significant aspect indicated that the boycott of these products taught the people a new culture of countering the patronage and large capital holders without confronting the Makhzen giant. Adil's passion reignites whenever there is someone or a cause to defend, but without excessive personal involvement. He dedicates himself more to his work because protests have become a routine devoid of meaning and endurance, and incarcerations were not easy to endure. Additionally, the power of the rich has strengthened, as they now have the ability to manipulate public opinion and social media users by manipulating algorithms to divert attention and make them forget the real social problems.

« When you militate, you have to pay a price: sacrifice the people whom you knew but no longer support your actions, sacrifice your well-being, say no to an easy life » Nabila (Voie Démocratique, activist)

²⁰ He took notes during every demonstration and debate he attended so he could do research when he got home.

²¹ A Moroccan Rap musician who was incarcerated during the M20F.

²² He left school to work at the age of 17.

²³ Although he succeeded in the previous semester, the sanction included made him fail.

²⁴ He and comrades from the coordination distributed flyers with the words 'we will not vote' (*mamswtinech*), then began talking to passers-by about this campaign.

Nabila was born in 1989 in Lakhase, a village near Tiznit. She grew up in a poor family dependent on agriculture and witnessed from her childhood the challenges of rural life and the effects of drought on her community. These living conditions raised her awareness towards a desire for change. Her older brother was an activist during his high school years and taught her engaged songs by Marcel Khalifa, Fayruz and others. However, he abandoned school and activism and was involved in a long period of depression caused by drug addiction.

In middle school, she was able to benefit from a scholarship and boarding which allowed her to move to the city of Tiznit. Her academic experience was marked by defining moments that reinforced her commitment. In high school and university, she was influenced by committed teachers and joined various left-wing associations and movements, fighting for causes such as human rights, equality, freedom, social justice, and against imperialism and capitalism (the causes of Palestine and Iraq). She was also actively involved in the different cultural activities within the association and explained how inspiring those moments were and how she enjoyed her time there. Moreover, she participated in summer camps organized by the left wing political party VD, which helped her develop a larger social network and deepen her understanding of democracy, human rights, and activism.

After graduating from high school, she enrolled in the faculty of Humanities in Agadir, where she joined the extreme left student faction (*Voie Démocratique basiste, VDB*) and was actively involved with them for seven years. During that time, she neglected her studies while advocating for students' causes, the release of political prisoners, and participating in the M20F movement. Her political activism evolved significantly with the latter, inspired by the Arab Spring. Nabila actively contributed to this movement, advocating for democracy, an end to corruption, and greater social justice in Morocco. She highlighted the importance of unity and solidarity in the fight for change, despite the obstacles encountered, such as repression and lack of support from certain parts of society.

In addition to her political commitment, Nabila has also been involved in the feminist branch of the VDB to promote women's rights and contribute to raising awareness regarding women's discrimination. This involvement stemmed from an incident when she was sexually harassed in the coffee shop where she worked part-time during her fifth year at university. She was fired from her job because she refused to accept her boss's mistreatment. Therefore, she took action by writing a report to the human rights organization and sending it to local media until she received financial compensation.

After graduation, she moved to Tangier and began working in an organization supporting drug users (HASNUNA). Simultaneously, upon witnessing the treatment of illegal immigrants by the authorities, she initiated

the regular drafting of reports for a human rights organization and provided financial assistance to those sent to hospitals. In addition to these actions, she actively participated in marches protesting the increase of electricity and water bills caused by the company AMENDIS a year later. Subsequently, she joined the boycott campaign in 2018 and vocally expressed her opposition to capitalism and rising prices online. Furthermore, Nabila spearheaded the fight against economic precarity and advocated for workers' rights following the incident involving the drowning of 28 textile workers in an underground factory in Tangier. She established a committee to support the families of the victims and brought the matter to national and international attention by contacting media until the families received their financial compensation.

Discussion: Analysis of the Activist Career

The concept of career comes from the Chicago school and allows for better reflection on the processes of activism in the political domain. Agrikoliansky (2001) points out that the concept of career considers human actions as dynamic processes that unfold over time, rather than as a simple reflection of structural constraints or utilitarian calculation. By taking this concept into consideration, it is possible to emphasize the interpretive capacity of individuals, i.e. their ability to attach meaning to their actions and the situations in which they find themselves. Becker (Agrikoliansky, 2001) explains that the notion of career makes it possible to understand action, in its concrete modalities, as the outcome of a succession of stages or sequences which influence the general trajectory. This trajectory is not considered as determined once and for all by the original position or socialization. According to Becker, career is a dynamic and evolving process, which can be influenced by the choices, strategies, and interactions of individuals with their social and professional environment. Thus, a career is not simply a succession of positions, but also a path that reflects the experiences, aspirations, and constraints of the individual throughout their life (Fillieule & Pudal, 2010). Furthermore, he emphasizes that it allows "rebuilding a succession of phases, changes in behavior, and perspectives of the individual. Each phase requires an explanation, and a factor acting during one phase of the sequence may have negligible importance during another phase. [...] The explanation of each phase thus constitutes an element of the explanation of the final behavior."(original text in French, page 172). Several works, particularly those of Fillieule and Mayer (Fillieule & Mayer, 2001), consider the notion of a career as a research tool that can be used to thoroughly analyze why individuals choose to act in a certain way while also examining the positions they occupy successively over time. This approach would provide a better understanding of the motivations leading to militant engagement, the various

forms that engagement can take over time, as well as the multiplicity of engagements throughout the life cycle (Fillieule, 2001).

In this regard, it is observed that the family played an essential role in the engagement of several of these activists. The fact that the father is affiliated with a certain ideological current encourages family discussions, immersing the child from a young age in a politically conscious environment. Additionally, accompanying the parent to party headquarters can also have an impact. Gustfield (1960) explains that the family represents a very important factor in the development of the child's interest and political participation in the future. Similarly, Muxel (2001) attributes paramount importance to "youth experiences" that set the first impressions (which could potentially change based on experience) and contribute significantly to long-term orientation.

In this case, Samir and Yasser grew up in a politicized environment at home because their fathers were members of the USFP. On the other hand, Nabila was inspired first by her older brother. It was observed that by being close to a civic, ideological, or political consciousness at such a young age, some children acquire tools that allow them to understand their environment with a certain prism. The parents' discourse around the table or the statements they make in front of the television are elements that contribute to shaping the vision and personality. As a result, they interpret political television programs, documentaries they watch, and newspapers they read based on their references and experiences, unlike children socializing outside of this type of family framework (effects of disposition and effects of framing -*effets de dispositions et effets de cadrage*- (Déchaux, 2010)). Moreover, Mannheim (Muxel, 2001) attributes primary importance to "youthful experiences" which establish the individual's first impressions and contribute considerably to his or her long-term orientation.

However, this is not the case for all the interviewees. Muxel (2001) suggests moving away from this determinism by using the concept of "political experience," which takes into account the dynamics of each individual's realities and experiences before forging a political identity. This approach allows for the inclusion of the individual's personal interpretation of their own experiences to better understand their political engagement or orientation. This is reflected in several of the interviewees who developed political interest through their lived experiences, not necessarily being inspired or oriented by a parent.

Said, a prominent leader of Hirak, did not grow up in a family where politics was discussed. Nevertheless, he was interested in the Palestinian cause and had met leftist activists from the early years of adolescence. He lived a difficult life without his parents, suffered from poverty, and then aligned himself with the values of leftists aiming for social justice and equal distribution of wealth. Identifying with these aspects, he began to advocate for

improved living conditions of families in the region. Similarly, Adil grew up in a poor environment and began working at the age of ten to overcome financial difficulties, even though he had never been involved in politics. Certainly, he had an interest in the Palestinian cause. However, the turning point occurred when he participated in a theatrical play highlighting corruption, wars, and utopia. It was during this time his interest grew, yet he refrained from affiliating himself because, in his view, organizations solely serve their own interests. Consequently, it is clear that parental affiliation is not a fixed determinant of children's orientation but can represent a precursor, taking into account other elements of experience, including media exposure, individuals of influence, cultural associations, and more.

It is noteworthy that the majority of the interviewees have been exposed to the situation in Palestine, Iraq, Libya, and others through television, radio, and reading newspapers. In this regard, Amsidder et al. (2012) highlights that traditional media has contributed to shaping public opinion in the Arab world since the 1990s. Additionally, they influence participation in cultural activities within associations (Bono, 2013), whose members are either affiliated with the VD or Islamic parties. This paper cites the example of Said, Nabila, and Hicham, who have experienced participating in cultural activities and summer camps organized by the CR and VD (and also nine other activists not listed in this paper but are part of the wider research framework). Moreover, summer camps have played a crucial role in shaping the militant career of these activists. They undergo a two-week immersion in either leftist-humanist values and trainings or Islamic teachings, values, and lifestyle. Rachik (2015) explains that these camps represented a moment of indoctrination and strengthening of bonds between members since participants came from different cities and immersed themselves in political trainings, sports, spiritual activities, workshops, and debates. Hicham also stated that, "*It was a unique and wonderful experience, fifteen intense days where we learned the equivalent of a school years' worth of lessons with unparalleled entertainment.*"

Some were also activists in the above-mentioned movement without affiliating with any political party, engaging in cultural activities during their teenage years, participating in associative activities, or attending summer camps. The M20F redefined their understanding of social issues and profoundly changed their views and beliefs. This category of independents represented the majority of the movements' actors as demonstrated by l'Economiste (Laouni, 2022) in a national opinion survey led in 2011, showing that 96% of the respondents (a total number of 1046 participants) were not politically affiliated. In this context, a survey carried out by the HCP among 5,000 young people aged between 18 and 24 in 2011 (Fainine, 2011) showed that 1% are affiliated with a political party or are active members of a union,

9% are involved in volunteering, 4% attend political party or union meetings, and 4% participate in demonstrations or strikes. This may reflect a distrust of traditional political institutions, which is also one of the characteristics of the M20F. Despite their interest in social change, young people perceive these institutions as corrupt, preferring more direct, independent, and spontaneous forms of activism. Furthermore, according to the World Value Survey conducted in 2011 (BTI 2016- Morocco Country Report, 2016), 70% of Moroccans do not trust political parties at all. These data highlight a marked disinterest among young Moroccans and the general population in traditional political institutions, highlighting a deep distrust of political parties and a preference for less institutionalized forms of engagement. This conclusion suggests a significant evolution in the perception of engagement in Morocco, where forms of activism are evolving towards a more individualized approach that is focused on specific causes. Ion (1997) asserts that affiliation or membership can be symbolic while mobilization is more individualized. This implies that there is a new form of commitment where identification with a cause is above membership in an organization. In other words, non-adherence does not necessarily mean disinterestedness.

It is necessary to specify the role of peers and networks in the construction of these activist careers. The interviewees were inspired during their adolescence by teachers, new acquaintances, and activists. Youniss (1980), as cited in Dejaeghere and Hooghe (2011), argues that peer relationships significantly influence individuals and shape their opinions and attitudes, including political opinions. Additionally, the presence of network ties and a sense of belonging to a certain category of people (such as workers, women, students, citizens, the oppressed, etc.) are of importance in the context of mobilization (Tilly, 1978 cited in Popenoe, 1983). Diani (2000) contends that these ties play a crucial role in the formation, coordination, and sustainability of activist movements. In this context, Said became politically engaged when he established relationships with members of the student movement at the age of 15. Subsequently, he remained involved and never let go. As for Mounir, who grew up in a household discussing politics, he only considered engagement once he became close to activists of the VD. Similarly, Yasser, having grown up with USFP ideas, would never have considered joining the PJD if he had not approached RE members at the university. This emphasizes the importance of university years and the student movement.

As a matter of fact, the latter period marks the peak of protest activities in which the interviewees engaged, given the network they developed, their biographical availability, and the energy they possessed (McAdam, 1986). Between M20F and student battles (strikes, class boycotts, demands, defending students in conflict with the administration, solidarity with national and international causes, etc.), joining a faction seems obvious given their

political interest. However, independents who prefer to fight without affiliating may choose not to join any faction. In this perspective, Mashayekhi (2001) states that student activists act as the "social conscience" of society because they are in a privileged position to analyze and understand political, economic, and cultural contradictions, perhaps better than other social groups. These years are also characterized by learning event organization, conferences, the basics of activism (preparing demands files, organizing protests, listening to student issues, mobilization), as well as in-depth debates and readings. According to the "impressionable years model" (Alwin & Krosnick, 1991), individuals are highly vulnerable to change in political attitudes during this age range. This means that young people may be particularly open to influence as they become increasingly aware of the social and political world around them, especially at the stage of life where they seek to forge a sense of self and identity. All of this helps refine their approach and channel their energy. Additionally, the factor of lived experiences contributes to their development.

Sapiro (1994) emphasizes the importance of events that occur and influence an individual's political participation, choices, and values. According to her, there is a dynamic of political attitudes that change based on events. This is particularly evident with the triggering event of M20F, which mobilized individuals who had never been politically active or had any political experience. In this regard, movement activities are not actions in themselves but are considered contexts that activate values. Values do not necessarily lead to certain lines of action; on the contrary, in certain contexts, certain values and attitudes are activated, prompting individuals to decide to join activism (Toubøl & Gundelach, 2023). The mention of the movement's demands and the realization that protests had succeeded in creating change in neighboring countries were sufficient to mobilize them and alter the course of their lives. This is how Mounir and Samir became involved, thanks to M20F. Samir was haunted by fear at the end of each general assembly, but the movement strengthened him and motivated him to become a leader. Mounir, on the other hand, discovered the VD and AMDH through the movement and then joined them. Additionally, all the interviewees described M20F as "*Just Wow...*" (Adil, independent), "*THE movement I was waiting for, can you imagine?*" (Hicham, JB), "*so many emotions*" (Nabila, VD), "*the movement was my whole life for a year*" (Salma, Party of Democratic and Socialist Vanguard). The movement channeled the energy of both young and older people, making them a unified voice that denounces social injustices and demands change. Bennani-Chraïbi and Jekhllaly (2012) pointed out that despite all the ideological differences, Islamists and leftists united for a common objective and collaborated in the aspect of organization, putting aside

their political backgrounds, their conflicting histories, and their ideologies to challenge the status quo in Morocco.

During the field research, Nabila, Salma, and Amira emerged as prominent female leaders of the movement. Nabila was based in Agadir (though she travelled to Rabat for different demonstrations), Salma in Casablanca, and Amira in Rabat. Salma²⁵ had to manage the general assemblies held in the city and also communicate with the media on a weekly basis. Her face became one of the prominent faces of the movement in 2011. It is important to mention that even Islamist women participated massively in the protests, while stating that, “*the men of the organization protected us from gender mixity and its dangers like harassment, we marched strongly and proud and we loved participating actively to the change*” (Khadija, *Justice et Bienfaisance*). As Abad (2014) stated in her study, women have indeed participated in decision-making, public debates, and mobilizing the masses. She adds that by visually representing all types of Moroccan women, they succeeded in deconstructing traditional gender identities that perpetuate the enduring power dynamics.

Nevertheless, the M20F had various biographical consequences for the activists. For example, Salma suffered from severe depression, divorce, incarceration, a career change, and was stabbed during the protests. Her life completely changed. Samir immigrated due to pressure from the authorities. As a result, they no longer engage in political activism. The impact of this shared event is not negligible. To be more precise, this concerns the post-mobilization phase where activists face the choices of disengagement, militant conversion, or persevering in their commitment. The paths taken by the interviewees differ. Said continues to advocate for human rights, against the rising cost of living, among other issues. He feels deeply involved in his commitment despite incarcerations, pressure from authorities, and his professional and family commitments. For him, defending citizens' rights is a duty that must be maintained to bring about change and social balance. He travels continuously between Al Hoceima and Rabat, precisely to organize and participate in various political events. Similarly, Hicham continues to be politically active but not on the field. He is highly involved in JB and conducts several seminars on various topics concerning Islam, democracy, and the Palestinian cause. He is interested in raising awareness among the youth and often expresses himself on social media regarding current issues. However, he has disengaged from the field (except for marches organized to free political detainees) because he finds that there are no suitable profiles for political engagement and mobilization in this era dominated by trivialities that guide the people today. In turn, Samir actively advocates for human rights in France

²⁵ This is not her real name as she asked to keep her identity anonymous

after his immigration. He explains that he could not stop because the human cause is close to his heart, and he does not accept injustice and indignation. However, he has distanced himself from political activism in Morocco due to pressure from authorities and the lack of tangible results after HiraK Rif. As for Yasser, he has chosen to limit himself to the associative aspect to promote cultural and sports activities in his hometown. He remains hopeful that change can be created by educating a generation in good values and manners. Change is tangible, and the added value is concrete. In the political and rights aspects, corruption and serving personal interests hinder change. For him, activism is no longer useful as a result. On the other hand, Adil and Mounir have disengaged because they feel tired due to incarcerations, pressure from authorities, and professional commitments. They have lost hope that change can be established given the post-HiraK and post-M20F situation.

Sommier (2012) explains that disengagement is a complex process and has several facets, including a change in role (from on-field activist to an administrative role), individual reorientation, or complete disengagement. These cases are observed among the interviewees who are less involved (except for Said) in protest activities on the field and do so more occasionally online, or when they invest in other fields, particularly in associations or humanitarian work (Nabila). This is illustrated by Cheynis (2013), who explains that voluntary association work represents a place for survival and perpetuation of the history of beliefs and demands of the Moroccan left. It is also a way to remain faithful to the activist self.

Respondents unanimously agree that being an activist demands continuous efforts of perseverance, energy, and long-term patience because struggles for change are lengthy and arduous. Politics is complex and challenging to explain to citizens who represent the masses. They must first understand the demands, internalize them, believe in them, persist in hoping for effective dialogue with the government, and then continue to fight for change. Said states that this is why it was easier to mobilize citizens during HiraK compared to M20F. This reason also led several activists to disengage as the demands were challenging to be heard and realized. Furthermore, biographical availability played a significant role in this disengagement process. This point is highlighted by the civic engagement model of Schlozman et al. (2012) as cited in Nulman (2020), who assert that individuals engaging in politics are likely to have biographical availability, the desire, and the opportunity to engage. However, when an individual is politically engaged, they are more likely to be engaged again in the future. In other words, professional and family commitments act as a hindrance to activist engagement. Finally, the last factor addressed by the respondents is "fatigue" due to the weight of incarcerations and commitment. In this regard, Nulman (2020) explains high-intensity engagement as a form of participation

involving effort, time consumption, and risk. This level of intensity can lead the activist to "burnout" and consequently to take a step back.

Conclusion

In conclusion, a deeper understanding is gained of how political experience is constructed through the life trajectory of individuals, which is influenced by various aspects of socialization. Between parental influence, key encounters, cultural and associative activities, exposure to media and readings, living conditions, the February 20th experience, marginalization, indignation, poverty, and perceived inadequate public services, the respondents developed an interest in engagement at different ages and rebelled against a common enemy despite their ideological and political differences. This is, however, not without consequences for their lives. Their activist engagement has had notable biographical repercussions through their choices of professional careers (social actions, teaching), choices of partners (spouses who are activists or delayed marriage), as well as their ambitions (including concerns about transmitting values and civic education, staying in touch with the youth by leading cultural and debate workshops, volunteering). It was also noticed that the participation in the boycott by these activists was motivated by their perception of a struggle against capitalism and the consolidation of wealth in power. Despite diverse ideological backgrounds, the respondents developed an interest in activism at different stages of life, with significant consequences for their professional career choices.

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Statement for Human Participants

This study was approved by Faculté des Lettres et Sciences Humaines Ain Chock, Laboratoire de recherche sur les Différenciations Socio-anthropologiques et les Identités Sociales, Université Hassan 2. All ethical measures were respected including confidentiality and anonymity. The principles of the Declaration of Helsinki were respected as well.

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