Assessing Students' Perceptions towards the Use of Facebook in the Promotion of Human Rights in Morocco

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Abstract: The paper examines the use of social media among speakers of English in Morocco and the extent to which it has empowered users in various struggles against political and social injustices. More importantly, it explores whether these media have helped students and enhanced their capacity to challenge and speak out against human rights abuses. In so doing, the thesis addresses some key polemical issues and questions germane to the topic, mainly the dialectic between technological and social determinism, the role of social media, mainly Facebook, in shaping democratic change among students. The thesis uses a combination of methodological approaches to explore the structural, textual and contextual dimensions of social media's implications and impact on the promotion and protection of students in Morocco. Through analysing students' writings, the research draws on rich data derived from in-depth qualitative research design conducted with Moroccan students. It offers insights into the embeddedness of social media as a technological medium and also into the interplay between students' perceptions, practices and their political participation. Moreover, the study examines the complex and multi-layered interconnections between Facebook in particular and the various social, political and cultural processes shaping its appropriation and its potential, and enhancing democracy. The study concludes that social media play a significant role in enhancing Moroccan social and collective action capabilities by favouring different forms of mobilization, and facilitating linkages between dispersed constituencies and national public spheres with a view to promoting human rights practices among students in Morocco. The paper argues, however, that the medium does not affect in any radical way the dominant political and social orders inasmuch as its implications and potential remain considerably limited by the various digital divides, and are mediated through the power relations characterizing society in terms of the degree of literacy and political involvement.

Keywords: Social media, digital activism, Arab Spring, social networking sites, democracy, and human rights

INTRODUCTION

Advances in science and technology have played an increasing role in helping human rights and political activists promote the dignity of people worldwide. Digital Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are being deployed to foster and optimize informal rights for citizens who might be subject to abuse and torture. If it is certainly true that the actual decision-making processes in a political system may relate to a few individuals, the complexity of information is of equal importance and is similarly subject to influence by the changing nature of communication.

Since electronic media enable citizens to directly and instantaneously convey their wishes to their representatives with decreasing cost, the nature of political interaction is likely to change. In 2011, we witnessed how the internet and social media applications gave voice to those around the world, helping promote democratic change, raising awareness of human rights issues and enabling citizens to access and exercise their basic freedoms and rights. We assume that the internet can positively influence free expression and a wide range of other human rights. However, many people still face huge battles in simply claiming these rights, and repressive governments can use these same technologies to suppress and undermine them on the other hand.

Social networks, including Facebook, twitter and Myspace, to mention but a few have marked a new phase in communication and recent media history in general. In this respect, we are faced with ordinary

people who have become very strong agencies and have succeeded in broadcasting their own convictions and opinions regarding human rights issues and speaking out against human rights violations and abuses such as arbitrary or unlawful deprivation of life, disappearance, torture and denial of fair public trial and others. Morocco, in this respect, is no exception. The opportunity costs of participation are reduced and electronic access has potentially erased disparities of distance and geography, minimizing the rural-urban distinction that had significant political implications in the past. Social media's greatest strength, however, lies in its ability to support simultaneous, interactive communications among large numbers of people.

Unlike the telephone, which primarily supports one-to-one communications, or radio and television, where information flows in only one way from a single source to a potential audience that can only listen passively, Facebook and social media in general allow information to flow back and forth among millions of sources at the same time. This implies that a large number of `people can be exposed to a medium in which they may have an active role to play in the promotion and protection of human rights. The internet has, thus, become a major tool in Morocco by which students exercise political influence and activism. They (students) all assume that the internet has a great potential to impact the formation and maintenance of promoting and protecting human rights in our country in order to meet the need of its global users.

STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM
The present study is actually intended to trigger a large number of questions and debates about the use of social media, namely Facebook, in the promotion and protection of human rights among speakers of English in Morocco. Indeed, democracy and human rights can surely prosper in a climate of new age information. The incompetence of misinformation and the wilful deceit of disinformation cannot provide the conditions most fundamentally required to permit a situation in which individual members of society can exercise their full rights. It is of paramount importance to highlight that the prospering of human rights also requires a type of media that follows neither the agendas of its political or corporate masters nor the prejudices, assumptions or stereotypes propagated by its own industry. More importantly, the [new] media function more democratically when they are free of market liberalism and political influence from the government. Simply put, these media, according to [1, 2] Keane should be "for public use and enjoyment for all citizens and not for use for the private gain or profit of political rulers or business" (p. 29). Along with this, a new media system would ultimately be more democratic if it included constitutional guarantees of freedom of expression, which aim to serve the public and, thus, help them

preserve their rights and speak out against any instance of human rights abuse.

There has, recently, been a shift towards social media being used not just as a platform to connect with friends and family or to break news stories but to open up a new public sphere involving a large number of people with a view to exchanging views for the promotion and protection of human rights.

ANALYZING STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE USE OF FACEBOOK IN THE PROMOTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN MOROCCO
For a better articulation and a further examination of the role of Facebook in the promotion of human rights among youth in Morocco, the researcher sought evidence in analyzing participants-students' writings and looking for the different aspects behind their holding a positive or a negative attitude towards these media tools. This will be thoroughly assessed through the following research question and hypothesis.

Research question: What are students' attitudes and perceptions towards the use of Facebook to promote human rights and democracy in Morocco?

Hypothesis: It is assumed that students have negative attitudes towards the use of Facebook to promote human rights and democracy in Morocco.

Students' positive attitudes towards the use of Facebook to promote human rights
When asked to react to the writing assignment and whether student-participants hold a positive or a negative attitude towards the use of Facebook in the promotion and protection of human rights in Morocco, the provided data include the following productions that are categorized into three thematic units: Improving freedom of expression, promoting democracy and human rights and fostering social solidarity.

Freedom of expression
A- Presentation of raw data
• *Participant 1*
"[...] In Morocco, just like every other country, it is used for more than just its main purposes. People have come to realize that by sharing their opinions on Facebook they can reach a bigger audience. Different people can post their complaints about topics they find important and threatening to their security [...] Social media has offered people a chance to express themselves freely, and work hand in hand to protect their rights [...]"

• *Participant 2*
"[...] Certainly Facebook give the freedom of speaking but this freedom doesn't really matter if it doesn't help in making the change, get out of the social media world

and be applied in real life […] Youth have a lot of ideas to say and changes to make, but their voices are not heard, and their opinions are not be taken seriously. The only way to express themselves is through social media, mainly Facebook."

- *Participant 3*

"[…] the reason is that Facebook give the freedom of speaking wish Moroccan people does not find anywhere else. Every Moroccan Facebook user let it go and speak freely about everything. They can demand for political changing and that's what we see during the elections, they give their opinion about the candidates, and what they really want from them. They also fight against discrimination and demand for equality in every way whether genders discrimination or social class discrimination, and others problems that affect directly the Moroccan society and suffer from [….] But few are naïve enough to believe that liking something on Facebook solves the issue wished is completely wrong. It's only a public statement of support and does not mean they are not willing to take further action. Facebook is only a way to draw attention to a cause and encourage more people to participate and to like or share a post does not really count without taken the cause to the real life […]"

- *Participant 4*

"[…] Facebook still the most popular social networking which allows its users not only to keep in touch with friends and family, but also to post, read, and upload photos and videos. As long as people are allowed to do that, we can say that one of human rights namely freedom is protected. For example by using Facebook, young people can explain their points of view concerning any current topic without being judged negatively […]"

- *Participant 5*

"[…] Homosexuals in Morocco are now able to defend their rights and more open about their orientations?"

- *Participant 6*

"[…] thanks to Facebook everyone can share his opinion and defend it and we can really feel it those last days where a huge part of people refuse elections and criticize political parties and their bullshit that give it the name of program […]"

- *Participant 7*

"[…] it became a window to express themselves and talk about all subject which they cannot talk about it real life Facebook is one of the known social media, the majority of young people use it to chat and to get in touch with what is happening in our daily life […]"

- *Participant 8*

"[…] In Morocco you have the right to talk freely and to express your opinion, people namely use Facebook as a way to defend some ideas and to express their point of view over a currently phenomenon […]"

- *Participant 10*

"[…] it becomes a way also to protect human rights by giving everybody the chance to say his or her opinion about the community problems or obstacles that are stopping us as citizens to get the perfect atmosphere to live in. As an example, the movement of "Zero Graissage" that had a very important participation from the Moroccans citizens, also the movement of Zero mica and others […] Facebook by being the bridge between the government and citizens is protecting human rights.

- *Participant 11*

"Nowadays, Facebook has become essential to free expression in the digital age. It provides a private and safe way to share information and opinions, it has helped with starting so many movements promoting human rights, in Morocco, "Zero Graissage" has been introduced to us through Facebook groups and pages. This campaign's objective is to get rid of robbery and violence in Moroccan streets, spread peace and security and to get the police to start taking harsh measurements towards thieves."

- *Participant 12*

"[…] before we were repressed and scared to share our opinions and now we are more able to do so in a private way"

- *Participant 13*

"[…] Facebook therefore plays a vital role in allowing these patriotic citizens to highlight their ideas, contributions, comments and arguments on this particular issue."

- *Participant 15*

"[…] in Facebook every one can say what he wants, there is a freedom of expression, that's we can called democracy."

- *Participant 17*

"[…] Facebook is not just a place to talk with friends or to know new people; but it is a place where you can express yourself and say whatever you want to say, so of course we can promote and protect human rights with a lot of ways; like sharing videos or status where you can share awareness; and of course you can create pages and invite your friends to like your page and share their opinions about democracy […]"

- *Participant 19*

"[…] additionally, people use to express their opinion on Facebook and this way they can convince other

Moroccans citizens to follow their lead. They can help on sharing the defended cause or the political ideas. Thus, democracy can be reached in Morocco […]"

- *Participant 21*

"[…] Facebook is the best way for someone to express his views and to share it with people; we talk here about individual freedom. Everybody use Facebook so the information can be easily transferred to anyone at any time […]"

- *Participant 31*

"[…] it helps them to make new relationships with people in different cultures. Also it contributes to realizing democracy in Morocco by express views with freedom like sharing videos for expressing angry or a political problem with other people […]"

- *Participant 34*

"In my point of view social media namely Facebook has a great impact to the evolution and promotion and protection of human rights and democracy in morocco because it gives the chance and the opportunities to young people who are private from expressing their opinions by practicing efficient roles in the parliament instead they profit from Facebook to manifest their angry by sharing posts and videos in this way they can attract the attention and raise awareness and have reactions of the civil society […]"

- *Participant 35*

[…] Most of the time we keep only talking about the negative sides of social media. However, we neglect another important side that consist of protecting human rights and that's to a new phenomenon whereby Facebook followers started sharing every single event happens during their daily life, not only by using pictures, but as well as videos that most of it made a social buzz and all pages on Facebook shared it."
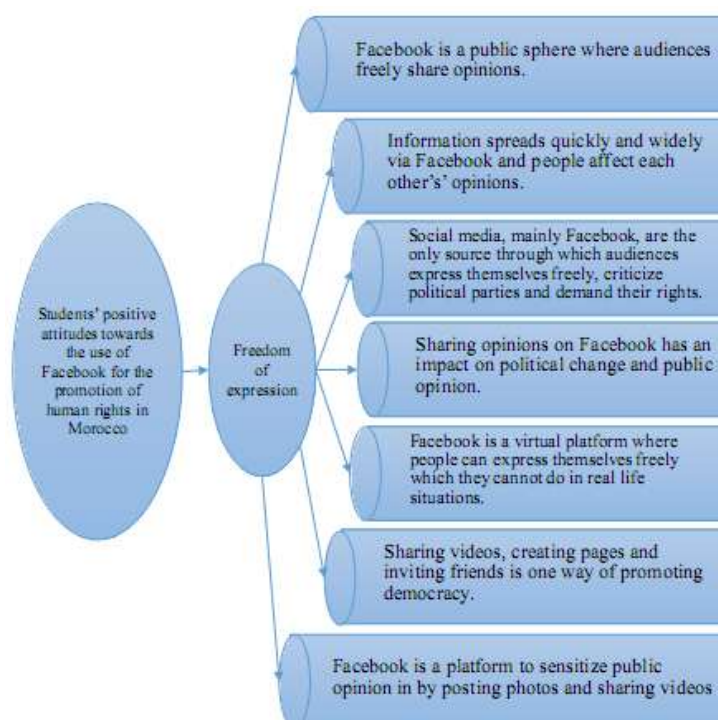
- *Participant 42*

"Nowadays, Facebook or social network in general takes an important place in our generation. It is an easy way to share information with people around the world. We know that people speak and discuss freely more on Facebook and Twitter […]"

- *Participant 57*

"Firstly, Facebook represents a good opportunity to promote some of human rights, such as opinion's freedom. It gives us the right to express and to share our points of view about any topic and anyone. In this context, it also offers a free place to others to critic us and often in a negative and offensive way […]"

B-Data reduction

Fig-1: Organization chart 1: students' positive attitudes - freedom of expression

C-Conclusion

As the reported results show (figure 1), the majority of the respondents agree that Facebook, among other social media forms, play a prominent role in the promotion and protection of human rights in Morocco. Facebook, as respondents' perceive it, is a platform where audiences freely share opinions about different events by "post[ing] their complaints about topics they

find important and [or] threatening to their security […]*" (participant 1). Though people want to express themselves freely about different issues be they political, social, cultural etc., their freedom is woefully restricted. Therefore, they resort to social media, mainly Facebook where they can freely share photos, comment, critique and criticize, as participant 4 confirms: "[…] people have a lot of ideas to say and changes to make, but their voices are not heard, and their opinions are not be taken seriously. The only way to express themselves is through social media, mainly Facebook." In addition to expressing themselves freely, people use Facebook to demand their rights and defend their orientations like homosexuals who "[…] are now able to defend their rights and more open about their orientations" (participant 5).

From the available raw data, we may assume that one of the key roles of social media and Facebook in particular with regard to freedom of expression is its enabling function. It (Facebook) enables the exercise of freedom of expression by creating a huge resonance space, allowing users to share and ideas and concerns, wishes and complaints. It has undoubtedly become a denationalized discourse space and a progressive public sphere where issues of public social and political interest are discussed. Along with this, it is important to note how the issues related to Facebook can be seen through the lens of human rights discourse. Despite the unique nature and characteristics of Facebook that enable it to serve as a vehicle for promoting free expression as well as to bring significant changes in political and social development, it has a great potential for abuse. Therefore, in particular situations, it is necessary to establish a balance between the proper functioning of Facebook and the protection of human rights, including, but not limited to the right to freedom of expression online. This will be thoroughly considered in the next section.

In sum, through Facebook, users affect each other's' opinions by sharing videos and posting human rights issues, which has an impact on shaping public opinion .As a result of the potential of Facebook as an interactive and global medium, freedom of expression has gained much importance With all these accounts in mind and based on this study's findings, we may conclude that students hold positive attitudes towards the use of Facebook to promote human rights in Morocco. Therefore, our hypothesis assuming that students have negative attitudes towards the use of Facebook to promote human rights and democracy in Morocco is refuted.

Promoting democracy and human rights
A- Presentation of raw data
- *Participant 2*
"[…] Of course social media helps in promoting and protecting human rights and democracy but here in

Morocco most of people are not getting yet to the level of social media education wish is very important because social media only help and the real work is up to the people leaving in the society."

- *Participant 3*
"[…] Social media is a double edged sword. It should be used wisely as a mean of expressing opinions and views as long as it consider the society and it future. And also what's going on social media should not stop there, it should came out and be taken seriously. That's how social media can help in promoting and protecting human rights and democracy."

- *Participant 8*
"[…] democracy in general means the participation of people in public decision making. On Facebook the president of the government says that he's connecting on Facebook every day to see what's happening and to collect some information about the opinions of people and their suggestions."

- *Participant 13*
"[…] As it is clearly known that freedom of expression is a major part of human right, in this light Facebook helps in the promotion and protection of human right in morocco […]"

- *Participant 18*
"[…] currently we have noticed that a lot of Moroccan people mostly poor people who cannot defends their nights by themselves, so they turn to social media. Like the Moroccan woman lock up in the Saudi Arabia for no reason, and she made a video of her crying and begging for help to get out of the prison, and come back to Morocco. After one week that video made a buzz in Facebook in Morocco, and the video have reached the king of Morocco and finally he made a decision to save her."

- *Participant 19*
"The social media are very important in the political life and in the promotion of human rights. Many people are always connected on Facebook and this way they can have easily and fast the information and so, to be aware about the democratic programs in Morocco and the eventual strikes or other political events and they can participate to it.

- *Participant 25*
"[…] the most impressive role of social media is shown in human rights, it can be so affective on people, change their minds enlighten them about a subject or phenomenon, it's easy today to convince people by social media than other ways, it shows how important human life is how amazing humanity is, and how much people need to fight for their rights wherever they are."

- *Participant 22*

"[…] Facebook is most important way to help in the promotion and protection of human rights and democracy. But the most important question is "how? » How can Facebook promote human rights? To answer this question; I try to give a recent example in Morocco is Zero Mica. This operation initiative, beginning July 1 under the law 77-15, could bring about consequences unseen beyond initial planning lives of many Moroccans following the national prohibition of producing, importing and commercializing plastic bag."

- *Participant 23*

"[…] Recently a 21 years old Moroccan lady went to Saudi Arabia in order to work as a maid, but then she was kidnapped and sexually harassed. She recorded a video in order to tell her story and ask for help from Moroccan authorities. Indeed the video was shared all around the world and she got back to her country. Finally we can conclude that Social media gave people the chance to express and defend themselves, and to protect themselves from any harassment."

- *Participant 29*

"[…] These last years owing to Facebook most people were able to take back their rights, for instance a Moroccan girl who had been kidnapped for several years however owing to a video shared by her in Facebook in which she talked about her guilty and dreadful days , thus she succeed to enjoy her freedom one more time."

- *Participant 31*

"[…] it also helps to protect the human rights when today we see there the various problems that are resolved from a single publication on Facebook as "the boy is stolen by a thief to 10 years of age" and other phenomena that dominate social media […]"

- *Participant 32*

"[…] in my opinion, social media, namely Facebook contribute to the protection of human rights and democracy in Morocco, because people use social media as a primary means of political information because Facebook gives people the right to free expression and access to information […]"

- *Participant 40*

"I think that social media namely Facebook can help in the promotion and protection of human rights because it exposed all of the crimes of people and sometimes help policemen find criminal. Social media aid to share opinions and post ideas so it helps to develop democracy. The social media are an essential element in the creation and development of a democratic culture in any country. They provide information that influence opinions and attitudes and political choices […]"

- *Participant 48*

"[…] Education is another example of human rights ,Face bookers have started a new complain concerning the country side where a teacher teaches sixty students is one class at a primary school or sometimes more than one class at the same time , so face bookers are now asking directly the minister of education to solve this problem out Democracy is also promoted on Facebook specially with these elections , we find face bookers that don't want to vote while others are voting and supporting one specific political party […]"

- *Participant 44*

"[…] another life example is Ibtissam's a simple Moroccan girl who married a Saudi citizen, he took her all the way to his country and he torture her, she used Facebook as a way to call for help and it worked, now she's here safe with her family. As a conclusion I really think that Facebook these days has a big role when it comes to helping and protecting human rights and spreading democracy among young people."

- *Participant 52*

"[…] I believe that Facebook has a very big importance to preserve human rights and promote democracy, all over the world especially in Morocco. It becomes a tool to push the government and society to give people their rights, at least their normal rights, and the actual case is about a child named "Aya. Aya is in a very bad situation, just because she is obese, she does not go to school, she does not play like other children do. She is marginalized just because of her over weight, so someone published her case on Facebook, and there is a doctor who decided to make a surgery for her, so that she can go back to her normal thief "
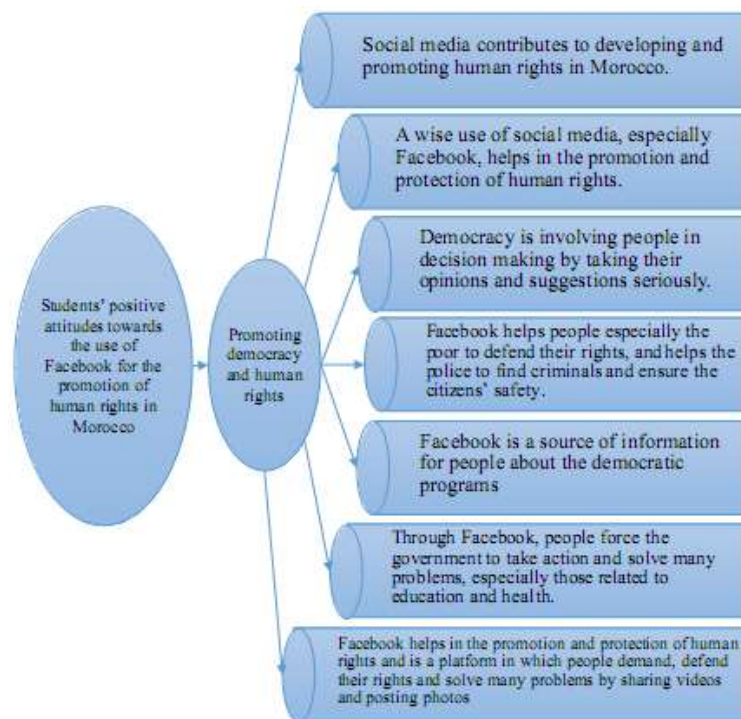
B- Data reduction

Fig-2: Organization chart 2: students' positive attitudes - promoting democracy and human rights

C- Conclusion

Many participants, as the obtained results show (figure 2), confirm that "social media [especially Facebook] help in promoting and protecting human rights and democracy in Morocco" (participants 1, 13, 22, 31, 32, 40, 44, 52). This contribution manifests, according to the participants, in different domains. Media literacy vouches for a good use of Facebook, and, therefore, a successful contribution to the promotion of democracy and protection of human rights, because Facebook, as (participant 2) confirms, *"helps in promoting and protecting human rights and democracy but here in Morocco most of the people are not getting yet to the level of social media education [literacy] wish is very important because social media only help and the real work is up to the people"*. Similarly, (participant 3) sees that Facebook *"should be used wisely as a means of expressing opinions and views as long as it considers the society and its future. And also what's going on [...] should come out and be taken seriously."* Moreover, involving people in decision making is, according to the participants, another most important way to promote democracy and human rights, because *"[...] democracy in general means the participation of people in public decision making"* (participant 8). The same participant stresses that Facebook is a platform that can bridge the gap between citizens and politicians, for him *"the head of the government says that he's connecting on Facebook every day to see what's happening to collect information about the opinions of people and their suggestions."* For the same student-participant, the main aim of public participation is to encourage the public to have meaningful input into the decision-making process. Public participation, thus, provides the opportunity for connection between officials and the public and the integration of citizens in political debate with a view to promoting democracy and human rights.

More importantly, as their voices are muffled with the society, people, especially the poor, can use Facebook to protect and defend their rights as *"we have noticed that a lot of Moroccan people mostly poor people who cannot defend their rights by themselves, so they turn to social media"* (participant18). Indeed, Facebook users can quickly and widely share information, which has a great impact on changing public opinion. Users affect other people and make them *"change their minds enlighten them about a subject or phenomenon [...] it's easy today to convince people through social media than other ways, it shows [...] how much people need to fight for their rights wherever they are."* (Participant 25).

In short, contrary to our assumption, the majority of the participants hold positive attitudes towards the use of Facebook to promote and protect human rights and democracy in Morocco.

Social solidarity
A- Presentation of raw data
- *Participant 1*
"[...] many topics have been brought up on social media and have had many supporters, which helped

find solutions in most cases. For example, the case of an 11-year-old Moroccan girl, who was forced to leave school due to harassment? This girl suffers from a rare genetic condition and weighs almost 200 kg. Her story attracted many viewers who sympathized with her and reached out for a well-known surgeon asking for his help, which he accepted to offer [...]"

- ***Participant 6***
"[...] anyone can make a small video where he explains his misery and in a blink of an eye, we found a million people supporting him things that makes me think about the poor girl who was ripped in Saudi Arabia and a lot of other people [...]"

- ***Participant 17***
"[...] this can really help fight humans and children's rights, I like to throw Aya as an example, she's 11year old, and she will do an operation that costs a lot of money with 0 Dh just because of Facebook [...]"

- ***Participant 21***
"[...] Facebook is a means which may be the reason for creating such an association if a person suffers from a serious disease and it has financial problems he can share his pain with people on Facebook, these people can in their next to share its publication [...]"

- ***Participant 28***
"[...] recently there was a girl who was kidnaped by a woman and through publications and videos shared between people on their Facebook parents of this girl have found [...]. I think Facebook is a large network because it protects the humanity rights through people who share publications and videos that relate to social problems or other there by facilitating the diffusion of news [...]"

- ***Participant 33***
"Nowadays, social Media have an important role in our social and daily life; it helps the citizens to share their problems and to give their opinions about the phenomena and the problems we live [...]"

- ***Participant 36***
"[...] I think that social media is being one of interesting element to contribute in the development

and the promotion it have a huge advantages to defined human right, to share the phenomena which can be destroy the security of society such as the girl Aya who suffer from discrimination in Morocco she can't go to school because of her weight , social media and especially Facebook decide to share the situation of Aya to find a solution to the answer appear and a lot of doctors accept the challenge to change the reality of Aya to give to her the chance to study such as her friends without discrimination."

- ***Participant 37***
"[...] nowadays , there is lot of social problem that still without solution , here is an example of that Moroccan girl , she is only 11 years old and she was refused in all the hospitals and schools because of her weight , she is from a poor family so she doesn't have money to travel outside of Morocco looking for help . Then this news was published and shared on lot of profiles and pages on Facebook and that makes this problem more popular , after a few days a nongovernmental association adopts her case and decides to help her and take care of her sickness thanks to social media [...]"
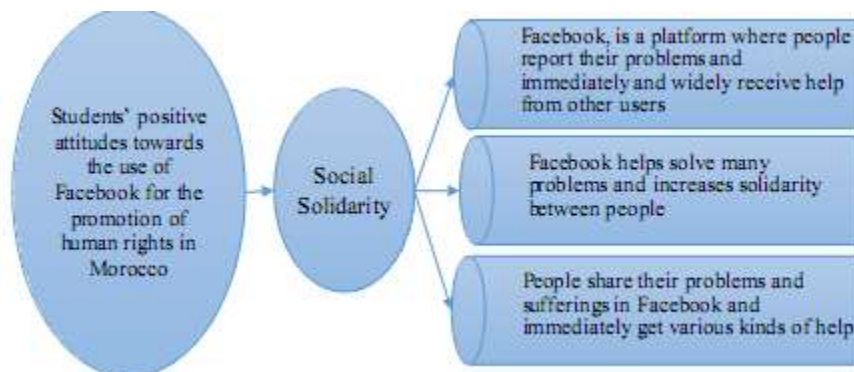
- ***Participant 48***
"[...] Social media namely "Facebook" plays a very important role in the protection and the promotion of human rights and democracy Security is an example of Human right, when a baby girl was kidnapped from hospital the day she was borne, all people on Facebook were sharing and writing posts about it, so they can put pressure on the police and the kidnapper as well to return the baby girl back to her parents [...]"

- ***Participant 49***
[...] In my opinion social media can help in the protection of human rights and democracy a specially Facebook, and there are so many ways that can help to protect human rights, for example, Aya a younger girl, she has 12 years old, she is so young and she needs to study, but no school can accept her because she has a fat weight. The positive role of Facebook in this situation is to help this girl to find a school start her studies, save her education and feel more secure, and this is some rights that Facebook can protect.

B- Data reduction

Fig-3: organization chart 3: students' positive attitudes - social solidarity

C- Conclusion

In addition to considering Facebook an important tool of freedom of expression and a means to promote and protect human rights and democracy in Morocco, some respondents regard it as a platform to seek and provide social solidarity (figure 3). People use Facebook to report their worries and problems and they receive help from other users who immediately sympathize with them. Participant 1 reports that *"[…] many topics have been brought up on social media and have had many supporters, which helped find solutions in most cases. For example, the respondent adds", the case of an 11 year old Moroccan girl […] suffers from a rare genetic condition and weighs almost 200 kg. Her story attracted many viewers who sympathized with her […]"* Similarly, participant 6 asserts that, *"anyone can make a small video where he explains his misery and in a blink of an eye, we found a million of people supporting him […]".*

In sum, almost all participants state that social media and Facebook in particular have the potential to mediate social solidarity among citizens. They all believe that Facebook as an instant communication tool has brought people together faster to support and help each other. Along with this, the findings of the present study show that the majority of the participants have positive attitudes towards the use of Facebook as a platform to promote and protect democracy and human rights.

Students' negative attitudes towards the use of Facebook to promote human rights

A- Presentation of raw data

• *Participant 9*

"[…] we cannot miss the impact of Facebook on Moroccan people's life nowadays, as it puts their private lives at risk, by displaying their personal information's, and tracing their daily movements. it also leads to many serious problems , especially when it comes to young people as they can be easily manipulated and harassed by mad ones , who can use them to their own advantage and personal satisfaction ,

witch effects this range's mentality and influences their creativity , productivity and way of thinking[..]

• *Participant 27*

"As far as I'm concerned, social media doesn't help in the protection of human rights, especially Facebook, because despite of the creation of some pages of sensitization and awareness, people are still not aware of so many things due to illiteracy, they take it for fun, not seriously, for them it's maybe nothing […]"

• *Participant 30*

"[…] I see that Facebook does not protect human rights and democracy in Morocco. I will give you an example: Facebook does not protect the personal life of an individual, you can find your photos with others you not even know without your permission. Sometimes you even find criminals by false accounts steal money from people and police is not involved in this. The law in Morocco does not protect people's social networks and especially Facebook. This is my opinion about this subject.

• *Participant 38*

[…] In my opinion, Facebook cannot help in the promotion and protection of human rights for the following reasons:
The development of social networks in particular has an impact on the respect of privacy life, which stems from the fact that everything is shared there. To conclude the government must apply some rules to the risk of limiting freedom of expression, for Internet companies to protect privacy and to develop standards for an online environment, and for users how to protect their privacy and freedom of expression."
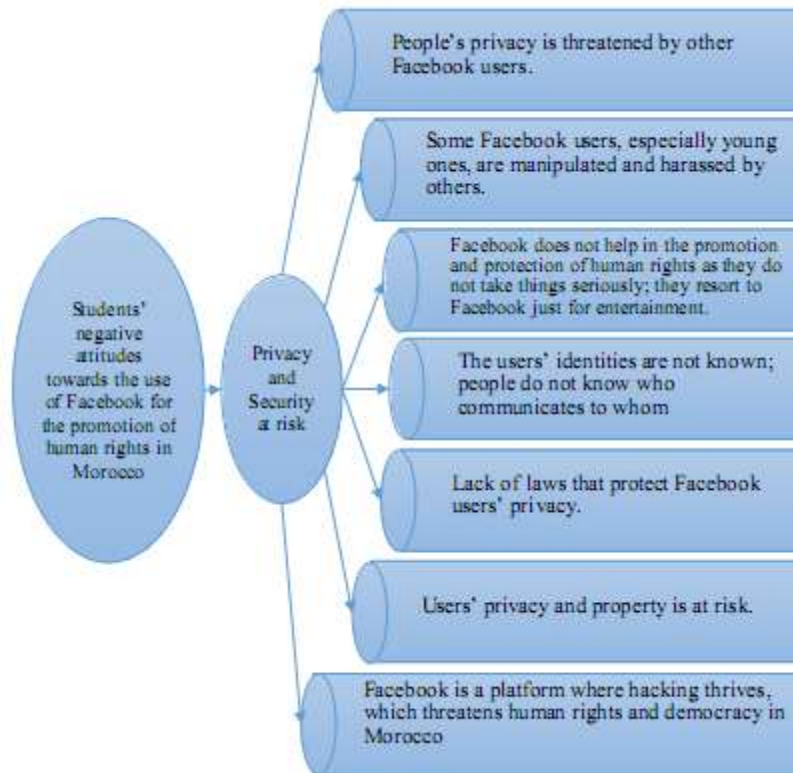
• *Participant 39*

"[…] I think face defence human rights with giving reality of things and issues. But in the hide side the face take your information without your knowledge it does not take your name, address, birth day it is more than that. and also it does like a big door to hacking indeed bad people using Facebook to hack , to watch you from

the camera I know people who was destroyed by hacking , and I advice you dear reader to watch this movie (ratters) it will give you a lot about this areas . To sum up I will say the Facebook is like a sword with dual edges"

- ***Participant 47***

"[...] I don't support the idea of Facebook all the way, it doesn't protect human rights, and it protects the people in control of it, same people that control us. Most people are stuck in amaze, so it's their destiny to act like lab rats."

B- Data reduction

Fig-4: organization chart 4: students' negative attitudes - privacy and security at risk

C- Conclusion

The provided data show that very few student-participants believe that Facebook does more harm than good to its users especially children. This section investigates privacy violations and risks on Facebook and how users understand the potential threat to their privacy. In particular, it explores Facebook users' awareness of privacy issues, their experiences, and their meaning-making processes. The privacy concerns delineated in the previous (figure 4) are confirmed by several participants (participants: 9, 27, 30, 38, 39 and 47). They all believe that Facebook deeply penetrates its users' everyday life and tends to become invisible once it widely adopted. In a similar vein, pervasive technology including Facebook often leads to unintended consequences such as threats to privacy. All the aforementioned participants argue that concerns of online social networking sites (SNSs) include inadvertent disclosure of personal information, damaged reputation, unwanted contacts, harassment, sexual child abuse, and identity theft [3]. The findings of this study confirm the results of previous study findings, which show that Facebook poses severe risks

to its users' privacy. At the same time, it is extremely popular and seems to provide a high level of gratification to its users. Indeed, several studies found that users continually negotiate and manage tension between perceived privacy risks and expected benefits [4]. The reported findings show that only 6 participants in our sample assume that privacy risks outweigh the perceived benefits, which supports the research hypothesis claiming that students hold a negative attitude towards the use of Facebook for the promotion and protection of human rights.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The main objective of this study has been to examine students' attitudes and perceptions towards the sue of Facebook in the promotion of human rights in Morocco. When analyzing students' writings, the results show that the majority of the respondents hold positive attitudes towards the use of Facebook as a means to promote and protect human rights in Morocco. They all consider Facebook as a public sphere where people demand and defend their rights, and express themselves freely by reporting things they have never

dreamt of in real life situations. This has involved citizens in taking part and contributing to the development process. Contrary to this, some of them hold negative attitudes towards the use of this social media tool. According to some users, privacy is threatened on Facebook by other users, as it puts their private lives at risk, by displaying their personal information, and tracing their daily movements. It also leads to many serious problems , "especially when it comes to young people as they can be easily manipulated and harassed by mad ones , who can use them to their own advantage and personal satisfaction" (participant 9). Such a dysfunctional effect of Facebook needs further research and analysis.

While social media affords the opportunity for the promotion of participation and protection rights, it also manifests some dysfunctional effects in terms of exposing children and young people to information that may be potentially harmful to their holistic development. As most participants reported and as already noted, social media has heralded a new culture of cybercrimes that go against child rights. It is widely argued in the literature that the proliferation of social media and computer technology has made the job for predators against the child much easier, and children have become targets of Internet-based crimes [5]. In a similar vein, participant 30 stresses that "Facebook [does] not protect the personal life of an individual; you can find your photos with others you do not even know without your permission. Sometimes you even find criminals by false accounts steal money from people and police is not involved in this. The law in Morocco doesn't protect people's social networks and especially Facebook".

It seems of great importance to stress the fact that the findings of this research affirm a list of rights that is more robust than many could realize. All the rights that have been mentioned by respondents actually form the moral core of four of the six categories of rights found in the UDHR (Universal Declaration of Human Rights): (1) physical security and psychological integrity, (2) basic individual's freedoms, (3) equality, and (4) social and economic rights. The majority of our respondents have acknowledged the positive role that Facebook has played in the promotion and protection of human rights in the country. However, a significant aspect of the findings related to students' attitudes towards the use of Facebook for the promotion of human rights in Morocco was limited to fostering only a few of the universal rights, namely freedom of expression, promoting democracy and social solidarity. Highlighting the aforementioned rights provides actual and potential contributions and clear examples or respondents' awareness of some of their rights. Indeed, despite the potential and promises of social media as a medium that can promote human rights principles, its appropriation is shaped primarily by the literate and the

politically involved who have the capabilities to address human rights violations.

Corroborating many key findings in the study show the many communication practices and forms through which social media are empowering the users regardless of their being victims or actors. The section also has shown how important this medium is for youth in surmounting different structural and administrative barriers marking the ordinary Moroccan citizen such as the difficulty of accessing public media and the restrictions on basic freedoms. Along with this, the study emphasizes the interrelatedness and complementariness of social media as an alternative media and a diverse form of communication. The interlinking potential of social media is often described as its most defining characteristic. This potential has immense implications for the promotion and protection of human rights as it enables individuals and groups to build links that are crucial to the success of these media in disseminating and denouncing reactions and reports about human rights abuse. Moroccan authorities have become more sensible to this potential as they have started to seek evidence to accept or decline any piece of information shared through social networking sites (SNSs). They very often react promptly taking immediate and appropriate decisions to adopt a democratic system that strives towards social justice, peaceful resolution, and clear responsiveness to the massive cries for social and political reforms.

The aim of this study was to examine whether students with a certain proficiency in English hold positive or negative attitudes towards the use of Facebook for the promotion and protection of human rights in Morocco. The findings in this research suggest that although some participants hold negative attitudes towards the use of Facebook, the majority sees that this social media tool plays a primordial role in protecting human rights and promoting democracy in Morocco. Therefore, our hypothesis assuming that students have negative attitudes towards the use of Facebook to promote human rights and democracy in Morocco is refuted as the students' perception and attitude towards Facebook was extremely positive.

To this end, it is imperative to state that the promotion of human rights amongst youth in Morocco is largely dependent on the use of Facebook because more youth are often displaying stronger reliance on it as their online platform for securing democracy and human rights. Hence, targeting and tailoring political messages online through Facebook and investigating what motivate youth to develop an interest in politics and human rights should be an important factor in future research. As youth continues to become increasingly dependent on Facebook to keep up with the demands of their socio-political rights and civic engagement, it can be assumed that youth will continue

to rely on online forms of social and political interaction. The rise of social media has affected more than just communication practices – it has provided a substantial new media platform for the democratization of interests and ideas by dramatically expanding the opportunity for free expression of controversial ideas in the country.

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