



## **Football *Supportérisme* as Political Expression in the Age of Youth's Political Disinterest**

**Mohamed Boualam and Setta El Houari**

Faculty of Legal and Political Sciences,  
Hassan First University of Settat, Morocco  
[m.boualam@uhp.ac.ma](mailto:m.boualam@uhp.ac.ma)

### **Abstract**

At the same time as Moroccan youth show a declining interest in politics, political expression in the form of tifos (choreographed visual displays), chants and singing has been expanding in football stadiums over the past several years. Through case studies of Moroccan ultras groups (passionate and organised groups of young football supporters) from South, Center, and North regions, this paper seeks to show what political issues football fans chant about. With thematic analysis we find that the Moroccan “ultras groups” express demands that political parties should take into account for each geographic area of the country.

**Keywords:** Political expression, football fandom, Morocco, sport and politics, political engagement, youth.

Football has become one of the most significant signifiers of societal and political trends in modern societies. Research in the social sciences has focused on the study of football fandom, particularly those strong and organised groups of club supporters known as “Ultras”. The study of their political activism in stadiums is a widely researched topic worldwide. Various aspects of this phenomenon have been explored, such as football fans' involvement in fostering activism and protest (Fitzpatrick and Hoey 2022), and the social conditions that make it possible for activist football fans to be recruited and mobilised (Glaurdić 2020). Similarly, the chants of football fans have received significant attention in numerous articles across diverse social contexts (Bell and Bell 2021; Huddleston 2022).

In the Moroccan context, football supporters are at the heart of the news. The local press underlines the political character of the expressions of the ultras when it reports the ultras groups as “spokespersons of social protest”. The protest connotation of the speech of the ultras has visibly marked the political elite in Morocco. The Ultras “Green Boys,” one of the ultras groups that support the Raja Club Athletic (RCA), a team from

Casablanca, the economic capital of the kingdom, brandished a tifo in November 2019 that featured the phrase "Room 101," referencing the torture room from the novel "1984" by George Orwell. Before that, in 2017, the Ultras Eagles group, who support the same club, had attracted attention by producing a song "Oppressed in My Country", the lyrics of which are critical of the rulers, political class, and the beneficiaries of the political regime. As a result, it is recited on many occasions as a form of protest and expression in public spaces. The publications of Ultras groups on their official social media accounts are part of this dynamic. They strongly denounce the arrests of their members by the security forces, these arrests themselves a sign of hostility of officialdom and its desire to exercise control over the content displayed in the stadiums. The vocality of these ultras, from a socio-political perspective, is part of strategic political participation outside the known classical forms. Social, economic, and political claims are made directly during football matches in the stadiums in the form of rational and organised political action.

### **The Context**

Ultras are passionate fan groups who show steadfast devotion to their football team. Originally emerging in Italy, the term refers today to organised football fan groups worldwide. These kinds of supporters show their passion through tifo, choreography, chants, and banners at football stadiums. Ultras groups manage these acts to create an exhilarating atmosphere that boosts their team and terrifies rivals.

The history of ultras in Morocco dates from 2005 with the foundation of the Green Boys (above), the Ultras Winners (Supporters of the Wydad Athletic of Casablanca - WAC), and the Ultras Askary (supporters of the Club Forces Armées Royales in Rabat – FAR). Since then other ultras have emerged and about fifty cover the entire Moroccan territory currently. Their numbers are still increasing and most football clubs are represented (Bennis 2019). Moroccan ultras are considered among the most famous on the international scene. The YouTube channel known as "Ultras World" ranks communities of football fans around the world and annually ranks the top ten, determined by evaluating the level of commitment and innovative practices displayed by ultras groups globally. In 2020, two Moroccan ultras were classified in the Top-10 ultras in the world. Thus, the Greens Boys occupied the 4th place, but the Ultras Askary occupied the first place on a world scale, due doubtless to their famous actions during the match in Rabat played against Raja Club Athletic of Casablanca (RCA) (Ultras World 2020).

**Table 1: Selected Moroccan ultras - supported clubs and areas.**

| <u>CITY</u>       | <u>SUPPORTED CLUB</u>                             | <u>YEAR FOUNDED</u> | <u>NAME OF ULTRAS GROUPS</u>   | <u>GEOG. AREA</u> |              |
|-------------------|---|---------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| <u>TETOUAN</u>    | <u>MAT : Maghreb Atletico of Tétouan</u>          | <u>2005</u>         | <u>Ultras los Matadores</u>    | <u>NORTH</u>      |              |
| <u>TETOUAN</u>    | <u>MAT : Maghreb Atlético of Tétouan</u>          | <u>2006</u>         | <u>Ultras Syambry Paloma</u>   |                   |              |
| <u>TANGERS</u>    | <u>IRT - Ittihad Riadhi of Tangier</u>            | <u>2007</u>         | <u>Ultras Heraculos</u>        |                   |              |
| <u>BERKANE</u>    | <u>RSB - Renaissance Sportive of Berkane</u>      | <u>2007</u>         | <u>Ultras Orange</u>           |                   |              |
| <u>CASABLANCA</u> | <u>WAC: Wydad Athletic Club</u>                   | <u>2005</u>         | <u>Ultras Winners</u>          | <u>CENTER</u>     |              |
| <u>RABAT</u>      | <u>FAR: Royal Armed ForcesSports Association</u>  | <u>2005</u>         | <u>Ultras Askary</u>           |                   |              |
| <u>CASABLANCA</u> | <u>RCA: Raja Club Athletic</u>                    | <u>2005</u>         | <u>Green Boys</u>              |                   |              |
| <u>CASABLANCA</u> | <u>RCA: Raja Club Athletic</u>                    | <u>2006</u>         | <u>Ultras Eagles</u>           |                   |              |
| <u>RABAT</u>      | <u>FAR: Royal Armed Forces Sports Association</u> | <u>2006</u>         | <u>Ultras Black Army</u>       |                   |              |
| <u>FES</u>        | <u>MAS - Maghreb Athletic Sports</u>              | <u>2006</u>         | <u>Ultras Fatal Tigers</u>     |                   |              |
| <u>CASABLANCA</u> | <u>RCA: Raja Club Athletic</u>                    | <u>2006</u>         | <u>Ultras Green Gladiators</u> |                   |              |
| <u>SALÉ</u>       | <u>ASS - Association Sportive de Salé</u>         | <u>2006</u>         | <u>Ultras Red Pirates</u>      |                   |              |
| <u>SAFI</u>       | <u>OCS - Olympic Club of Safi</u>                 | <u>2006</u>         | <u>Ultras Sharks</u>           |                   |              |
| <u>EL JADIDA</u>  | <u>DHI - Difaâ Hassani d'El Jadida</u>            | <u>2007</u>         | <u>Ultras Cap Soleil</u>       |                   |              |
| <u>KHOURIBGA</u>  | <u>OCC - Olympic Club of Khouribga</u>            | <u>2007</u>         | <u>Ultras Green Cost</u>       |                   |              |
| <u>KINETRA</u>    | <u>KAC - Athletic Club of Kinetra</u>             | <u>2007</u>         | <u>Ultras Helala Boys</u>      |                   |              |
| <u>MARRAKECH</u>  | <u>KACM - Kawkab Athletic Club of Marrakech</u>   | <u>2006</u>         | <u>Ultras Green Boys</u>       |                   | <u>SOUTH</u> |
| <u>AGADIR</u>     | <u>HUSA - Hassania Union Sports Athletic</u>      | <u>2006</u>         | <u>Ultras Imazighen</u>        |                   |              |
| <u>EL OYOUN</u>   | <u>JSM - Jeunesse Sportive d'El Massira</u>       | <u>2007</u>         | <u>Ultras Sahari</u>           |                   |              |

The socio-political context, characterised by political opportunities limited to traditional channels controlled, managed, and regulated by the State, engenders a way to develop new spaces of freedom. Political opportunities exist within structural channels of action, and different nations have distinct arenas of action, with different relationships between those arenas. Some polities may assign tasks to courts, for example, that make the judicial system a promising avenue of protest - but not in others. Some constitutions give enormous powers to their legislative assemblies, but others attempt to balance this power with other structures (Kitschelt 1986). The activism of the ultras groups on the Moroccan political field is intrinsically linked to the protest dynamic in the country. Its significance can only be understood in the broader context of political life as a whole and the diversity of social and protest movements in the streets and public spaces. The denunciation of state oppression and social injustice is reflected in a multitude of protest movements. In 2011, the February 20 movement led protest marches calling for freedom and the establishment of the rule of law. The “Arab Spring” reinforced a culture of resistance that spread and embodied itself through several strategies, tools and spaces: the street, social networks and even football stadiums. The waves of the demonstrations had a geographical character: the Hirak (popular resistance) of the Rif in the North-East in 2016, the Hirak of Jerada in the East of Morocco in 2018 and earlier the demonstrations of Sidi Ifni in the West of the country in 2008.

### **The Ultras-State Relationship**

The relationship between the ultras and the Moroccan state is not linear. The positioning of the ultras in relation to the preoccupations on both youth and society in general gives them an image of a group wanting to defend the rights of marginalised social strata. The bleachers serve as a tribune of anger and discomfort. The political tendency of the speech of the ultras and their feeling of hostility towards official forces has pushed the officials to take certain measures to regulate the activities of the ultras. On the legislative level, a law ( 09.09) of 2011 supplemented the criminal law related to violence committed during competitions or sporting events by providing a series of penalties for perpetrators of violent acts in stadiums. Then the authorities decided to ban the various activities of the ultras following the multiple acts of violence that occurred in the stadiums during the season 2015/2016, especially the confrontations that took place in Casablanca between two ultras rivals of the Raja of Casablanca (Eagles and Green Boys). The violence triggered the deaths of three supporters and injuries to more than 70 others. Two years later, in March 2018, the

authorities decided to lift the ban on ultras, except for tifos which are still subject to the authorities' permission. For the ultras, this ban is a form of discrimination and injustice. Thus, through the messages expressed at the time of each match and through the chants recited in the stands or the posted writings, they challenge this ban.

### **Literature Review**

Football stadiums are increasingly becoming one of the public arenas allowing the free expression of opinions, feelings of deprivation and social unease. They become an area of political socialisation and sociability, where individuals give themselves the opportunity to address social and political questions (Bromberger 2002:80). This phenomenon is taking on a scale not known before and supporters have become political activists using a wide repertory of expression in slogans, tifos and songs. These means remain the most used channels to express unease and the feeling of dissatisfaction with the social, economic, and political situation of the country. Ultras culture is transforming into a new form of political expression taking charge of the ills of society and its problems (Bromberger 2002; Busset and Gasparini 2016; Lestrelin 2015).

Football fans become political activists, using different methods to express their political opinions and positions. One prevalent method involves prominently displaying banners containing visible political messages related to political and social issues during matches. These fans participate actively in protests or demonstrations held outside stadiums or other public spaces, strategically employing the broad media coverage and popularity surrounding football to enhance the propagation of their message and thus garner awareness for particular problems or grievances. In certain instances, supporters may opt to engage in boycotts of specific matches, products, or companies as a means of engaging in political activism and expressing their dissatisfaction, with the intention of exerting pressure on clubs and their officers. The utilisation of social media platforms enables individuals to effectively disseminate information and engage a broader audience beyond the conventional confines of their activities. In Morocco, there is also a recurring phenomenon where ultras groups frequently coordinate donation campaigns and participate in philanthropic endeavours and excursions aimed at assisting marginalised and impoverished communities residing in rural villages and isolated regions.

The chants and messages of the ultras represent rhetoric aimed at strengthening the sense of belonging in a group when facing the supporters of an opposing camp but at the same time they highlight people's demands

and give them scope (Bromberger, Hayot, and Mariottini 1995). Then, the bleachers are a political platform (Kabbadj 2019); the tifos, slogans and songs carry a political charge towards the state (Zairg 2019).

### Methodology and Condition of Research

The main objective of our work is to cover the different themes addressed by the songs of the ultras in Morocco. As noted, the number of ultras in Morocco exceeds fifty, and to study all their songs remains a difficult task considering the proliferation of productions from each ultra. We therefore limited the number of ultras and their songs in our sample, but it seemed relevant to spread the study cases spread over the entire Moroccan territory, and so we divided the country into three geographical areas: south, center, and north, and selected study cases in each area. The selection was guided by the reputation of the chants on social networks.

**Figure 1: The chants that are the subject of the study**



In the south, the most famous of the ultras is Imazighen 06, and the most viewed song on its YouTube channel is "Polizia Partenza" (Ultras Imazighen 2015), part of the album "La Doce" released in 2015 with a total number of views exceeding 1.6 million since. In the center, the song that has echoed since 2017 is "Oppressed in My Country", produced by the Ultras Eagles 06, a song that is sung at every collective protest action in Morocco. Because of its words, which carry a significant political charge, this song has surpassed 16 million views on the YouTube channel of the electronic newspaper Le7TV.ma (2018). In the same geographical area, we selected the

song “Irreversible: Outro” by the ultras Helala Boys 2007 (2012), which has reached more than 3 million views since its sharing on the YouTube channel. This ultras is considered to be among the first to have introduced the political discourse of protest into their songs in the stands in Morocco. In the northern part of the kingdom, we have chosen a song from the ultras Hercules 07, supporters the Tangier Itihad club. These ultras have produced a song that circulated very fast and widely on social networks (especially Facebook and YouTube); it has been viewed 200, 000 times on the Facebook page of the newspaper hespress.com (2019) and shared several times on other pages. The same song had more than 5.3 million views after being covered by an artist Reda Al Aroudi on his YouTube channel (El Aroudi 2020).

### **Using Thematic Analysis**

We chose a qualitative thematic analysis as the most adequate method for our purposes. It is a suitable method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) in data and a rigorous approach can produce insightful analysis that answers specific research questions (Braun and Clarke 2006, 97). The identification of themes in the data collected (the chants of the ultras in our sample) was subjected to the main requirement, which is consistency throughout the process. As Bazeley claims (2009, 9), themes only reach their full meaning when they are linked together in order to form a coordinated image or an explanatory model. Themes or models in the data can be identified either inductively as “ascending ” (Frith and Gleeson 2004) or theoretically and deductively as “descending” (Boyatzis 1998; Hayes 1997). According to Thomas (2006, 2), the main objective of the inductive approach is to organize the research results to bring out frequent, dominant or significant themes inherent in raw data. However, it cannot be denied that the top-down and bottom-up processes are desirably interactive.

“Describe, compare, relate” is a simple three-step formula for reporting results. The data collected (the lyrics of the songs) were analysed in a similar way to that described by the three-step procedure suggested in the literature (Creswell and Poth 2018; Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña 2020). Data were prepared for analysis by transcribing and reducing the data into themes through a data coding and representation process using MAXQDA 2020 software. The procedures used for the analysis largely followed the approach proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006).

## **Analysis and findings**

The thematic analysis generated nine themes:

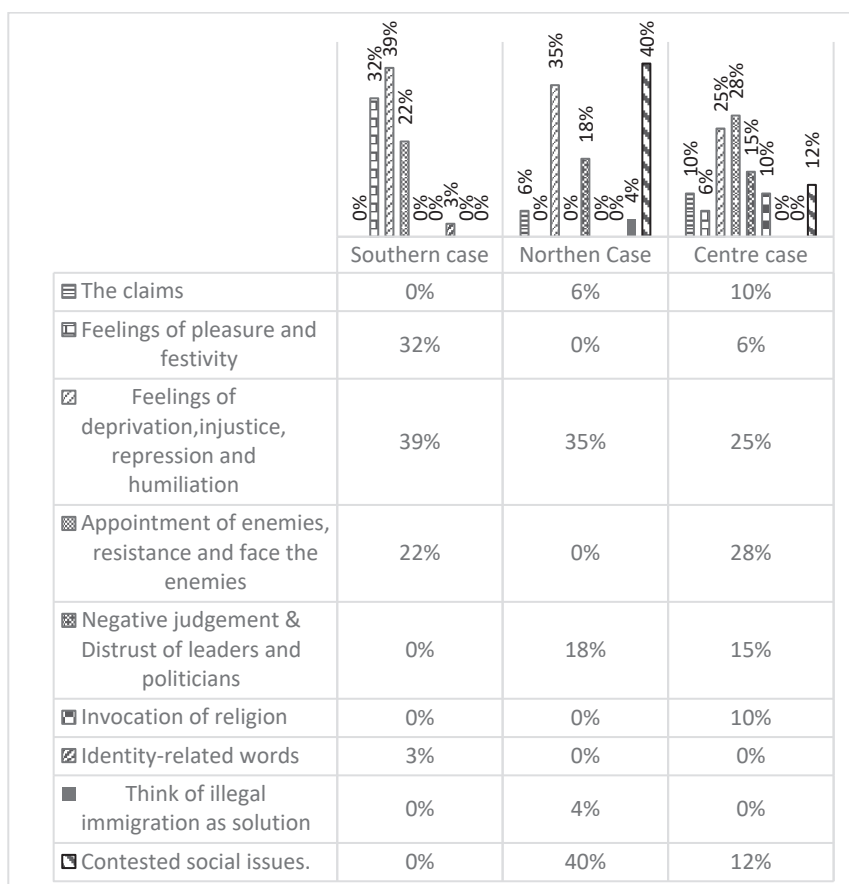
- Feelings of frustration, injustice, repression and humiliation.
- Appointment of enemies, resistance and face the enemies.
- Contested social issues.
- Negative judgement and distrust of leaders and politicians.
- Feelings of pleasure and festivity.
- The claims (social, economic and political).
- Invocation of religion.
- Think of illegal immigration as solution.
- Identity-related words.

These themes are shown in graphic format in Graph 1 : Thematic Analysis of Ultras Songs Studied based on Geographic Areas: North, Centre and South.

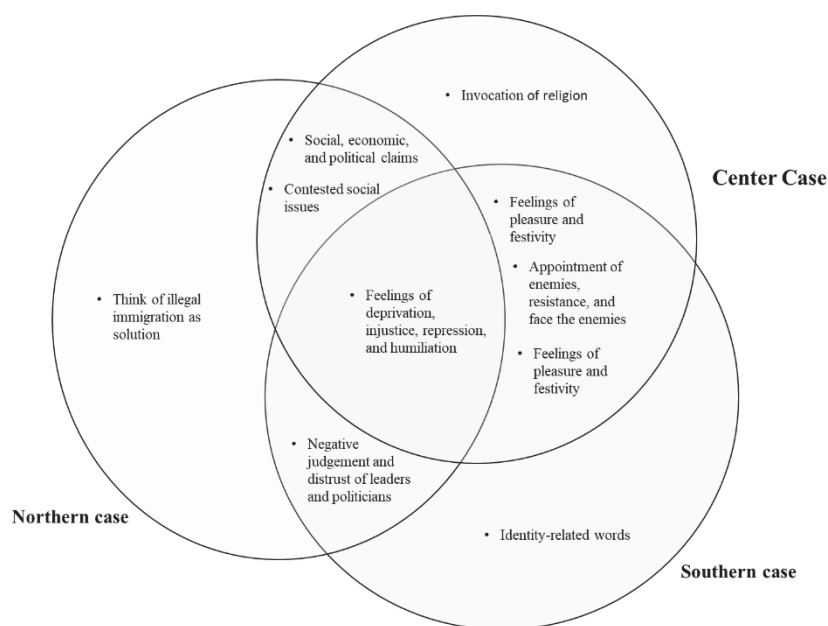
It seems that there are marked differences between the three cases under study, and while we find that there are themes that distinguish each case from the others, we find also that there are intersections between two or more cases. These intersections can be represented in Figure 2.



**Graph 1 : Thematic Analysis of Ultras Songs Studied based on Geographic Areas: North, Centre and South.**



**Figure 2: The Three Cases according to the Themes addressed**



### **Comparative Studies of the Three Case Studies**

#### *Cross-cutting themes of frustration, injustice, repression, and humiliation*

We can clearly identify the thematic in common between the different cases studied as feelings of frustration, injustice, repression, humiliation, and corruption among officials. This suggests that despite potential changes in the political landscape or leadership transitions, the underlying mechanisms of control and repression persist, ensuring the perpetuation of the political regime. "A continuity of repressive practices, of the structures that support them, and of the actors who lead them" (Vairel 2014) is rooted in the understanding that such systems tend to maintain their grip on power through consistent patterns of repression, control, and leadership.

On the other hand, it is relevant to contextualise this social protest dynamic more broadly, taking into consideration the economic, social, and political situation. For Gurr (2016), the feeling of relative deprivation

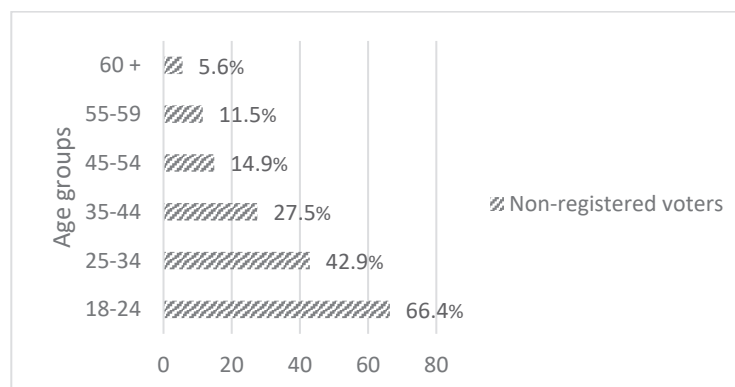
contributes to the emergence of social conflict. Relative deprivation, as Gurr explains it, is produced when the goods obtained decrease in quantity while expectations are not met or increase. This gap between the perceived legitimate expectations and the required goods is “relative deprivation”. The social change that Moroccan society has undergone in recent years is clearly remarkable; the comparison of “all with all” (as we term it) would be at the heart of this feeling of frustration. It is enough not to have goods (material or symbolic) acquired by others for frustration to rise to surface and create a flurry of protests. Demands among young Moroccans are clearly identified in the songs of the ultras. “If some individuals enjoy material or symbolic good and others do not, then....” - the meaning is: If some people have the opportunity to take pleasure in material or symbolic goods while others are unable to, this causes others to feel dissatisfaction which in turn motivates them to mobilise against the current situation and insist that they be given the same opportunities. The subjective "feeling" of felt deprivation is essential to the concept of the relative deprivation .

This trend of protest is also motivated by distrust in the political elite, and this leads to rupture with political life. This expressed mistrust of institutions supposed to play the role of mediation between citizens and the state (political parties, unions, civil societies) makes political action in the country complex. The corruption of political officials is strongly emphasised through the songs as well.

The statistics show that young people in Morocco are becoming less interested in political engagement that takes place through the conventional means by which citizens can seek to satisfy their needs and preferences. Statistics on young Moroccans' voting involvement in elections, such as those for the 2021 legislature, show that young people are less interested in voting than older age groups. The rate of young people who are not on the electoral rolls is very high, reaching 66.4% in the category of those aged 18 to 24, and 42.9 percent in the category of young people aged 25 to 34, and then a rate of 27.5 % among those between the ages of 35 and 44. These results demonstrate a lack of interest among young people in signing up for the electoral lists that grant the right to vote (see Graph 2).

Having distinguished the topic that constitutes a common denominator between the three cases under study, we show below the distinctive topics of each case separately and what distinguishes them from others.

**Graph 2: Voter Registration by Age Groups ( in %)\_  
Moroccan General Election\_2021**



Source: HCP 2021b

*The centre case: The vocation of religion*

Young Moroccans are very attached to religion. Several studies emphasise that the religiosity of young Moroccan Muslims is strong, and that today’s youth are more religious than the youth of yesterday (El Ayadi, Rachik, and Tozy 2013). The Arab Human Development Report published in 2016 by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP 2016), for example, reveals this reality. Religion has a strong presence among youth in the MENA region and Morocco in particular: in 2010, 93% of young Moroccans declared that religion constitutes an important part in their daily lives; this number jumped to 99% in 2013. Religion affects the ideology and intellectual orientations of young people, and the way they act towards society and family (UNDP 2016:35–36). The unconscious work of inculcation, assimilation, the conscious work of socializing and educating religious capital can contribute largely to the formation and reproduction a deeply embedded religious “ethos” (ibid, 171). The present study confirms that religion is an important factor in the daily life of young Moroccans who are consistent their attachment to religion.

The identification of the individuals with a group to which they belong, with its norms and values, in short with its culture, is a crucial element in the process of social integration and the transmission of traditional values. The importance of the religious fact could also be explained by upheaval, disorientation due to urbanisation, globalisation and technological developments which are causing major changes in societies. Young people

continue turning to religion to counter an overall sense of exclusion and lack of opportunity. In general, this orientation of young people towards the invocation of religion is a question which is inscribed in the cultural structure of society and the individuals who compose it. Identification with the religious fact represents for young people a refuge from the socio-economic and political problems in their daily lives and from the exclusion of which they are victims. The ultras songs reflect this reality well.

*The north: immigration, a particular theme*

The specificity of the northern area of Morocco and its proximity to Europe are explanatory elements for this remarkable trend of an unfinished desire to reach the other side of the Mediterranean (Spain in particular). Each year there are several attempts at illegal immigration, for example the one that occurred in April 2021 when 130 young Moroccans tried to reach the city of Ceuta by swimming despite the risks and dangers faced. For a long time and until the beginning of the 20th century, Morocco knew migratory flux (Alaoui 2013), with most of the emigrants came from the poorest and mountainous regions of southern Morocco (Atouf 2004). After the revolution the numbers of people wishing to emigrate has increased and the conditions of emigration have become more complex. The host countries have imposed restrictions on emigrants, such as having qualified skills and employment contracts, and those regulations have contributed to the increased complexity and difficulty of the legal emigration procedure. Consequently, some individuals choose to employ illicit emigration methods because of their perception that it is a more accessible alternative to meeting prescribed legal requirements (ibid). The socioeconomic conditions in the country no doubt have caused Moroccans to think more and more about emigration. A public survey carried out by the Arab Barometer Report (2019) estimated that around 44% of Moroccans dream of emigrating, an increase compared to previous years.

The profiles of Moroccan emigrants are diverse: they may be low-skilled workers, guest workers, highly skilled workers, businesspeople and students, and though mostly male include a growing number of women (Berriane, de Haas, and Natter 2015). For example, in the Netherlands, most emigrants in this country come from the north of Morocco, the Rif (Ennaji 2014). Young people belonging to the northern regions of Morocco are the most likely to think of emigration. Indeed, according to the report published by the High Commission for Planning (HCP 2020), the main reasons that push Moroccans to emigrate are socioeconomic with job-seeking at first position with 44.5%. The unemployment rate in this region (eastern and

northern) is higher than the national level (HCP 2021a) allows few work opportunities for young people. Having migrants abroad is a factor that also feeds the rate of potential migrants when Europe does not seem like a distant destination. Most of the first generations of immigrants from Morocco to Belgium came from Nador in northern Morocco (Reniers 1999), for example. The existence of networks between immigrants in Belgium and their families, friends or neighbours in their country of origin can strengthen a desire to emigrate (Timmerman et al. 2017).

#### *The question of Amazigh identity in the south*

The Amazigh identity has undergone a long process of questioning and construction, whether at the level of speech, language, literature and ideological production; at the level of the organizational relationships, coordination, and internationalisation; or at the political level of political demand (Tozy, Lakhsassi, and Aït Mouss 2006). In the Moroccan context, the emergence of the Amazigh claim began at the end of the 1960s. Intellectuals, generally from the city, the educated middle class and cultural organizations of civil society, founded the Amazigh Cultural Movement (MCA), a mission to promote the Amazigh language and identity. The movement introduced the notion of diversity to Moroccan national culture (Aït Mous 2011) and it bore fruit, as an institution was founded to enhance the prominence of the Amazigh people in the cultural life of the country – that is, the “Royal Institute of Amazigh Culture”.

The implementation of the most recent constitution, adopted in 2011, established Tamazight as an official language: - "Tamazight is an official language of the state and the common heritage of all Moroccans " (Dahir n ° 1- 11-91, 2011, art.V, § 1). It is stated in the fifth chapter, fourth paragraph that an organic law determines the stages of the activation of the official character of Tamazight, and the modalities of its integration in the field of education and in the priority areas of public life, in order for it to fulfil its future function as an official language. This goal was achieved in July 2019, after Parliament approved it, knowing that the Amazigh language had been integrated into education previously by the Ministry of National Education. In 2023, Morocco's King approved the celebration of the Amazigh New Year, also known as "Yennayer," as an official national holiday. Nevertheless, the Amazigh movement's activists still claim a more advanced status for the Amazigh language, including for example the adoption of the Amazigh script on bank bills and the national identity card (CIN), and to be obligatory in administrative transactions and official documents. Thus, the inscription of the songs the ultras in this perspective,

of a struggle to recognise the Amazigh identity, comes from the same direction as the movement initiated by the civil society and the cultural elite.

### **Conclusion**

Ultras are increasingly becoming a research subject of interest to social scientists studying sports (Doidge and Lieser 2018). This importance stems from the fact that they begin to engage in new fields of social life and society in general by going beyond the framework of football simply as sport. We have seen how the chants of the ultras are not limited to the encouragement of a supported football club, but they go beyond it to expose the concerns of the people. This interest in the political concerns of social classes suffering from economic and social issues has increased the brilliance and popularity of these songs among individuals of different affiliations; therefore, their productions (slogans, tifos, songs) are widely received by the public and reused whenever the opportunity arises, and the context requires it.

We have presented a comparative study of models of ultras songs in Morocco, using as a criterion the geographical affiliation (south, center, north); based on the thematic analysis it was concluded that although there are themes that unite the songs of the ultras, on the other hand, the geographical determinant gives a certain variation between them. If feelings of deprivation and humiliation constitute the common basis between the three cases of the sample studied, there are themes that characterise each geographic region: migration in the north and issue of identity in the south. It also confirms that the ultras constitute a voice to convey the demands specific to each region, and that they are very close to the concerns of the populations. The behaviour of the ultras groups is not separated from the dynamics of the political life of the country. The theme that unites the cases we have studied, which is the feeling of relative deprivation, is intimately linked to the demands of the popular movements that Morocco has known over the past ten years.

At the same time, the geographical affiliation of the ultras groups distinguishes them from one another in relation to certain concerns specific to a particular geographical area. In the south, the question of Amazigh identity is marked in the Ultras Amazigh song because the citizens residing in this area are mostly Amazigh. In the north, immigration remains the subject that characterises this region for several considerations, including those linked to the geographical location close to Europe or as a solution to feelings of humiliation and deprivation. In the centre, the recourse to religion can be seen as a solution which alleviates the concerns of the region. These

songs reflect the social life of individuals in general and of football fans in particular.

The critical discourse produced by ultras groups targets the political class in general, but it is interesting to note that it is no longer addressed to the king of the kingdom. Their songs and slogans are aimed at elected, state officials and managers of sports clubs and football teams. They also target the police and security agents. The ultras, although involved in the criticism of the political affairs of the country, always play within the rules and respect the unifying constants of religion, national unity, and the monarchy. It is true that the number of cases studied represent a small sample, but all the same they remain representative as they were selected as the most popular on social networks. The widening of the circle of the cases studied to a larger number of songs would constitute a qualitative advantage and give more comprehensive results.

## References

- Aït Mous, Fadma. 2011. 'Les enjeux de l'amazighité au Maroc'. *Confluences Méditerranée* N° 78 (3): 121. doi:10.3917/come.078.0121.
- Alaoui, Rachid. 2013. 'Peut-on Parler de Diaspora Marocaine ?' *Hommes & Migrations*, no. 1303 (July): 7–15. doi: 10.4000/hommesmigrations.2543.
- Arab Barometer. 2019. 'Arab Barometer V Morocco Country Report'. ([https://www.arabbarometer.org/wp-content/uploads/ABV\\_Morocco\\_Report\\_Public-Opinion\\_Arab-Barometer\\_2019.pdf](https://www.arabbarometer.org/wp-content/uploads/ABV_Morocco_Report_Public-Opinion_Arab-Barometer_2019.pdf)).
- Atouf, Elkbir. 2004. 'Les migrations marocaines vers la France durant l'entre-deux-guerres'. *Hommes et Migrations* 1247 (1): 48–59. doi: 10.3406/homig.2004.4122.
- Bazeley, Pat. 2009. 'Analysing Qualitative Data: More than "Identifying Themes"'. *Malaysian Journal of Qualitative Research* 2 (2): 6–22.
- Bell, John, and Paul Bell. 2021. 'And This Is What We Sing – What Do We Sing? Exploring the Football Fan Songs of the Northern Irish "Green and White Army"'. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 56 (8): 1206–23. doi:10.1177/1012690220979715.
- Bennis, Said. 2019. 'Tamatollat Lkhitab Ihtijaji Li Ultras Fi Lmaghrib Wa Taabiratoho Syassia [Representations of the Protest Discourse of the Ultras in Morocco and Its Political Effects]'. *Lubab*, no. 2 : 143–72.



- Berriane, Mohamed, Hein de Haas, and Katharina Natter. 2015. 'Introduction: Revisiting Moroccan Migrations'. *The Journal of North African Studies* 20 (4): 503–21. doi: 10.1080/13629387.2015.1065036.
- Boyatzis, Richard E. 1998. *Transforming Qualitative Information: Thematic Analysis and Code Development*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Braun, Virginia, and Victoria Clarke. 2006. 'Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology'. *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 3 (2): 77–101. doi:10.1191/1478088706qp063oa.
- Bromberger, Christian. 2002. *Passions ordinaires: football, jardinage, généalogie, concours de dictée*. Paris: Hachette littératures.
- Bromberger, Christian, Alain Hayot, and Jean-Marc Mariottini. 1995. *Le Match de Football: Ethnologie d'une Passion Partisane à Marseille, Naples et Turin*. Collection Ethnologie de La France 16. Paris: Maison des sciences de l'homme.
- Busset, Thomas, and William Gasparini, eds. 2016. *Aux frontières du football et du politique: supportérismes et engagement militant dans l'espace public*. Savoirs sportifs, vol. 8. Bern Berlin Bruxelles Frankfurt am Main New York Oxford Wien: Peter Lang.
- Creswell, John W., and Cheryl N. Poth. 2018. *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches*. Fourth edition. Los Angeles: SAGE.
- Doidge, Mark, and Martin Lieser. 2018. 'The Importance of Research on the Ultras: Introduction'. *Sport in Society* 21 (6): 833–40. doi:10.1080/17430437.2017.1300377.
- El Aroudi, Reda. 2020. 'Hadi Blad Al-Lhagra [This Is Land of Humiliation]'. YouTube video. February 27, 2020, 3:40. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sennyAM9cWQ>).
- El Ayadi, Moḥammad, Hassan Rachik, and Mohamed Tozy. 2013. *L'islam Au Quotidien: Enquête Sur Les Valeurs et Les Pratiques Religieuses Au Maroc*. Casablanca (Maroc): la Croisée des chemins, Fondation Friedrich Ebert.
- Ennaji, Moha. 2014. *Muslim Moroccan Migrants in Europe*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan US. doi:10.1057/9781137476494.
- Fitzpatrick, Danny, and Paddy Hoey. 2022. 'From Fanzines to Foodbanks: Football Fan Activism in the Age of Anti-Politics'. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*. doi:10.1177/10126902221077188.

- Frith, Hannah, and Kate Gleeson. 2004. 'Clothing and Embodiment: Men Managing Body Image and Appearance.' *Psychology of Men & Masculinity* 5 (1): 40–48. doi:10.1037/1524-9220.5.1.40.
- Glaudić, Josip. 2020. 'Football Activism as Political Contention: Contextual Determinants of Membership in the Association of Supporters of Hajduk Split'. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 55 (8): 1094–1115. doi:10.1177/1012690219889565.
- Gurr, Ted Robert. 2016. *Why Men Rebel*. Abingdon, Oxon; New York, N.Y.: Routledge.  
<https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/e/9781315631073>.
- Hayes, Nicky, ed. 1997. *Doing Qualitative Analysis in Psychology*. Hove, East Sussex: Psychology Press.
- HB2007com. 2012. *Helala Boys - Irreversible : 8 - Outro*. YouTube video, February 22, 2012 , 5:32  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sA11DXybNdo>).
- HCP. 2020. *La migration internationale au Maroc*. 2020. Morocco, Rabat: Haut Commissariat au Plan (HCP).  
<https://www.hcp.ma/file/230793/>).
- . 2021a. *Note d'information du haut-commissariat au plan relative à la situation du marché du travail en 2020*. Morocco, Rabat: Haut Commissariat au Plan (HCP).  
<https://www.hcp.ma/attachment/2233052/>).
- . 2021b. *Quelques caractéristiques des primo-votants aux élections de 2021*. Morocco, Rabat: Haut Commissariat au Plan (HCP).  
<https://www.hcp.ma/attachment/2232968/>).
- Hespress. 2019. Ultras Heraculos: Hadi Blad Lhogra [Ultras Heraculos : This Is Land of Humiliation]'. Facebook, September 24, 2019.  
<https://www.facebook.com/Hespress/videos/839062066495472/>).
- Huddleston, William. 2022. 'Kicking off: Violence, Honour, Identity and Masculinity in Argentinian Football Chants'. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 57 (1): 34–53. doi:10.1177/1012690220988651.
- Kabbadj, Omar. 2019. 'Ultras: Stades, Nouvelle Tribune Politique'. *Telquel.ma*, January 4, 2019. ([https://telquel.ma/2019/01/04/ultras-stades-nouvelle-tribune-politique\\_1624467](https://telquel.ma/2019/01/04/ultras-stades-nouvelle-tribune-politique_1624467)).
- Kitschelt, Herbert P. 1986. 'Political Opportunity Structures and Political Protest: Anti-Nuclear Movements in Four Democracies'. *British Journal of Political Science* 16 (1): 57–85. doi:10.1017/S000712340000380X.

- Le7TV. 2018. 'Oghniat Fi Bladi Dhalmoni [A Song Oppressed in My Country]'. YouTube video, October 25, 2018, 3:20. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Auxpy-0wHE>).
- Lestrelin, Ludovic. 2015. 'De l'avantage de comparer les *carrières supportéristes* à des *carrières militantes*'. *Sciences sociales et sport* 8 (1): 51. doi:10.3917/rsss.008.0051.
- Miles, Matthew B., A. M. Huberman, and Johnny Saldaña. 2020. *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook*. Fourth edition. Los Angeles: SAGE.
- Reniers, Georges. 1999. 'On the History and Selectivity of Turkish and Moroccan Migration to Belgium'. *International Migration* 37 (4): 679–713. doi:10.1111/1468-2435.00090.
- Thomas, David R. 2006. 'A General Inductive Approach for Analyzing Qualitative Evaluation Data'. *American Journal of Evaluation* 27 (2): 237–46. doi:10.1177/1098214005283748.
- Timmerman, Christiane, Nadia Fadil, Idesbald Goddeeris, Noel Clycq, and Karim Ettourki, eds. 2017. *Moroccan Migration in Belgium: More than 50 Years of Settlement*. CeMIS Migration and Intercultural Studies 1. Leuven, Belgium: Leuven University Press.
- Tozy, Mohamed, Abderrahman Lakhsassi, and Fadma Aït Mouss. 2006. *Usages de l'identité Amazighe Au Maroc*. Edited by Hassan Rachik. Casablanca: Impr. Najah el jadida.
- Ultras Imazighen. 2015. 'Ultras Imazighen - Album 'La Doce' - 6 - Polizia Partenza'. YouTube video, May 25, 2015, 2:57. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rsPqUckUsLY>).
- Ultras World. 2020. 'Top-10 Ultras Actions of 2020 || Ultras World'. YouTube video, December 27, 2020, 26:00. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZrNXSRUFFWQ>).
- UNDP, ed. 2016. *Youth and the Prospects for Human Development in a Changing Reality*. The Arab Human Development Report, 6.2016. New York, NY: United Nations Development Programme, Regional Bureau for Arab States.
- Vairel, Frédéric. 2014. *Politique et Mouvements Sociaux Au Maroc: La Révolution Désamorcée ?* Presses de Sciences Po. (<https://www.cairn.info/politique-et-mouvements-sociaux-au-maroc--9782724615951.htm>)
- Zairg, Reda. 2019. 'Maroc : Les Ultras, un «mouvement protestataire» ?'. *Yabiladi.com*, December 25, 2019. (<https://www.yabiladi.com/articles/details/87073/maroc-ultras-mouvement-protestataire.html>).