

Mapping Queer Resistance in Morocco

MESA Undergraduate Research Workshop 2021 - Hanane Idihoum

Background:

- Increase in violence experienced by the queer community during the pandemic lockdown due to online outing campaigns.
- Scene of Moroccan queer Activism: Growing number of feminist and queer advocacy groups organizing and forming alliances with each other and other international collectives.

Methods:

The research begins with a survey of the number of organizations in Morocco, their geographical distribution, their funding, and the networks they are part of. It also examines the legal framework under which they operate in addition to their visions, objectives, activities, and the services they offer.

Rationale/Thesis

In this paper, I argue that the current discourse on queerness in Morocco that prioritizes a cultural critique at the expense of a socio-economic and postcolonial one conceals the heterogeneity of the queer communities in Morocco and ignores a class critique of injustice in the country.



Research Findings/Conclusion

Research debunks the following two statements:

Morocco by culture is anti-queer: Moroccan culture is a combination of religion, traditions, and values. This culture has been severely transformed through the colonial moment that dominated a significant portion of Moroccan history. Anti queerness in Morocco is recent and can be traced to the rise of the post-colonial legal system that is inspired by the Western legal system.

Queerness as a Western import: although queerness is indigenous, there's something to be said about the dominant discourse of queerness in Morocco. Narratives of queer empowerment, a turn towards identity politics, and a one-sided focus on queer gender and sexual identity based on the argument of cultural constructions of gender and sexuality have led me to the following conclusion. Queer liberation in Morocco has taken the shape of neoliberal queer resistance. The queer movement in Morocco absolutized the critique of cultural anti-queerness in Morocco at a time when a class critique of society was most needed.