Language policy and planning of Amazigh languages in Morocco: a study of the language ideology of the Royal Institute of Amazigh Culture (IRCAM)

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2. A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE AMAZIGH CULTURAL-POLITICAL MOVEMENT

2.1. Amazigh Nationalism

Salem Chaker, former professor of Berber in Paris and an important player in the Kabyle cultural movement, has characterized Amazigh nationalism as "un produit exogène — bien acclimaté, mais exogène —, directement issu des idées et valeurs mises en circulation dans nos sociétés par les contacts avec l'Occident et la colonisation directe" (An exogenous product—well-acclimated, yet exogenous—directly stemming from the ideas and values introduced into our societies through contact with the West and direct colonization).[135] The aspect of acclimated, or the deeply embedded awareness of Imazighen as a people in the Maghreb long before French colonization is early on famously and clearly shown by Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406) as: "they belong to a powerful, formidable, brave and numerous people (*sha'b*, pl. *shu'ūb*); a true people like so many others the world has seen—like the Arabs, the Persians, the Greeks, and the Romans. The men who belong to this family of peoples have inhabited the Maghreb since the beginning."[136]

Though similar sources defining Imazighen as a people during the Middle Ages are meager, an identity-building process for Imazighen can still be traced under the broader identity of Muslim. This can be exemplified, for example, by the case of the Barghawata, an Amazigh confederation established in the Tamasna region, extending along the Atlantic coast of Morocco from the 8th to the 12th century, whose Amazigh version of Islam was equipped with a Quran written in Amazigh and a local prophet independent from the East.[137]

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[135] Chaker, S. (1987). L'affirmation identitaire berbère à partir de 1900. Constantes et mutations (Kabylie). *Revue des mondes musulmans et de la Méditerranée, 44*(1), 13-34. p. 14.

[136] Quoted in Brett, M., & Fentress, E. (1997). *The Berbers: The peoples of Africa*. Malden: Blackwell Publishing. p.1.

[137] Tourneau, R. l. (2012). Barghawāṭa. In P. Bearman (Ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Islam New Edition Online (EI-2 English)*. Brill.; Talbi, M. (1973). Hérésie, acculturation et nationalisme des berbères Bargawata. In Galley, M., & Marshall, D. R. (Eds.). (1973). *Actes du premier Congrès d'études des cultures méditerranéennes d'influence arabo-berbère*. Société nationale d'édition et de diffusion, 217-233.; Chtatou, M. (2021). The Barghwata dynasty (744-1058): A Berber stark defiance of

This emerging identity entered the modern era as modern Amazigh nationalism in an exogenous manner, similarly to the aforementioned case of Arab nationalism, as an outcome of the colonial encounter. This encounter started with the French invasion of Algeria in 1830, which immediately triggered fierce resistance from the local people, including those living in the mountainous coastal area extending eastward from Algiers called Kabylia. People in this region speak Kabyle, the two largest Amazigh varieties in Algeria. The Kabyle people have a long tradition of seeking to retain political autonomy and hostility toward non-local powers, which is only partly due to their ethnolinguistic awareness. This awareness is itself a result of the larger factor of their mountainous isolation, where preserving meager resources is crucial.[138] For the same reason, while the Kabyle people vehemently resisted the French colonization by themselves, they were less enthusiastic about directly joining the resistance movement of Emir Abdelkader with its broader Islamic cause in the late 1830s.[139]

The French colonizers were informed early on about the existence of "two people" in Algeria, historically through William de Slane's translation of Ibn Khaldun's work, presented as *Histoire des Berbères* (4 volumes, 1852-1856), where the conflict between the conquering race of Arabs from the east and the conquered race of Amazigh in their native land is presented as a main line of North African history.[140] Linguistically, they were informed by Adolphe Hanoteau's influential *Essai de grammaire kabyle* (1858), where he presents the usefulness of the study as: "L'étude de la langue berbère, outre l'intérêt qu'elle présente au point de vue scientifique, a pour nous, en Algérie, un but plus pratique et une utilité plus immédiate sous le rapport de l'administration et de la domination du pays."[141]

Related knowledge was utilized by the French in two interconnected trends within colonial administration and the lengthy process of so-called Pacification. Firstly, a "divide and rule" policy emerged in Kabylia, exemplified in the juridical

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Islamic orthodoxy. Eurasia Review.

[138] Temlali, Y. (2020). *La genèse de la Kabylie: Aux origines de l'affirmation berbère en Algérie (1830-1962)*. La Découverte. "La Kabylie et les Aurès: Une autonomie réelle mais relative"

[139] *Ibid.*

[140] Hannoum, A. (2003). Translation and the colonial imaginary: Ibn Khaldun orientalist. *History and theory, 42*(1), 61-81.

[141] Hanoteau, A. (1858). *Essai de grammaire kabyle*. Bastide. p. XVII.

aspect where the status of customary law was elevated alongside, or as a complement to French law, aimed primarily at undermining Islamic law.[142] In a more general way, the "divide and rule" policy was explicitly expressed in 1891 by the politician Camille Sabatier, Député of Oran (1885-1889)[143]: "Divide ut imperes! et pourquoi pas? Pourquoi ne pas prévenir une union (entre Kabyles et Arabes) qui ne pourrait se faire que contre la France."[144]

Secondly, based on a similar "divide and rule" mindset, French colonizers began to formulate a *Kabylophile* ideology, which was essentially an expression of anti-Arab racism. This sentiment was circulated by Auguste Warnier, one of the architects of this ideology, who stated: "While progress is difficult under the Arab regime, if not impossible, it is easy by grafting French civilization onto Berber tradition." This Kabylophile ideology was supported by two principles: "The Arabs are invaders, and the Kabyle Berbers are the only true natives; the latter must be the foundation of our policy, as their origin, past, and civilization undeniably bring them closer to us."[145] Accordingly, the Berber tradition was portrayed by the French as fundamentally opposed to the Arab tradition in all respects: "la sédentarité contre le nomadisme, l'esprit laborieux contre l'indolence, une religiosité peu fervente contre le fanatisme et des institutions 'issues du droit romain' contre des institutions irrémédiablement 'aristocratiques'."[146]

This Kabylophile ideology aimed to substitute the Arabo-Islamic tradition with the French one rather than genuinely promoting Amazigh traditions and was mainly reflected in the educational field. Instead of promoting an Amazigh education, the main colonial policy largely reflected the vision of Émile Masqueray, the director of the École supérieure des lettres in Algiers, who proposed in 1874: " En dix ans, si l'on voulait, tous les jeunes Kabyles parleraient français. Dans l'espace de deux

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[142] Scheele, J. (2008). A taste for law: Rule-making in Kabylia (Algeria). *Comparative studies in society and history*, 50(4), 895-919.

[143] Jolly, J. (Ed.). (1960). *Dictionnaire des parlementaires français: Notices biographiques sur les ministres, députés et sénateurs français de 1889 à 1940* (Vol. 1). Presses Universitaires de France. p. 324.

[144] Ageron, C. R. (1960). La France at-elle eu une politique kabyle?. *Revue historique, 223*(Fasc. 2), 311-352. p. 350.

[145] *Ibid*. pp. 316-317.

[146] *Ibid.* Quoted in Temlali, Y. (2020).

générations, la Kabylie tout entière sera transformée et française."[147]

Though the limited politics reflecting this "divide and rule" mindset were largely unsuccessful in furthering colonial rule, the French Kabylophile ideology left an influence on later Amazigh nationalism, as its main principles are frequently echoed by later Amazigh activists — emphasizing the distinction of Imazighen from Arabs and emphasizing Arabs as invaders and irremediably alien, and Imazighen as the only true indigenous people in North Africa with greater cultural and political rights. However, this remains a lesser aspect of Amazigh nationalism's exogeneity. The primary significance, as noted by Salem Chaker, lies in its origins from the resistance to French colonization and the poetry that reflected this resistance, laying the foundation of Kabylo-Amazigh nationalism, a nationalism primarily defined by a territory but with the Amazigh language being an essential element. And it was among the Kabyle elites educated in French schools by the end of the 19th century that the first explicit manifestations of self-awareness of Amazigh identity in Kabylia emerged.[148]

This self-affirmation of Amazigh cultural identity by the first French-educated Kabyle elites was manifested in their pursuit of research into the Amazigh language, literature, history, etc. This "culturalist" strand of Amazigh nationalism continued into the 20th century with Kabylian Franco-Amazigh scholars and writers, flourishing through works such as *Chants berbères de Kabylie* (1939) and *L'éternel Jugurtha* (1946) by Jean Amrouche, *Les poèmes de Si Mohand* (1960) by Mouloud Féraoun, and *Poèmes kabyles anciens* (1980) by Mouloud Mammeri.[149] It was based on these continuous cultural expressions and affirmation of Amazigh identity that Imazighen, as a modern people or nation, began to engage in political issues, responding to both prevalent trends in the Maghreb — French colonialism, and Arab nationalism.

Kabyles were active in the ranks of the Algerian revolutionary nationalists from the beginning. Since the 1930s, a young generation of Kabyle nationalists joining the *Parti du peuple algérien* (PPA) began to openly express their interest in the study and rehabilitation of the Amazigh language and culture. Among them was Mohand Idir Aït Amrane, a student who, at only twenty years old in 1945, composed the first famous nationalist song in the Amazigh language, *Kker a mmis umazigh* ("Arise, son

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147 Ageron, C. R. (1960). p. 342.
148 Chaker, S. (1987).
149 *Ibid.* p. 16.

of Amazigh").[150] In this song, he references the ancient Numidian kings Massinissa and Jugurtha, aligning with a common memory for Amazighism, and clearly expresses that it is for the "Beloved Algeria" that "we will shed our blood."[151]

As shown by Melha Benbrahim, texts by Amazigh nationalists during this time centered on two topics: advocating for independent and radical nationalism, reviving the tradition of resistance to foreigners and explicitly announcing armed struggle; and emphasizing the Amazigh historical and cultural identity of the Maghreb.[152] Amazigh nationalists did not necessarily view Arabs as foreign to the Maghreb. For example, Mohand Idir Aït Amrane considered Islam as the cement of Arab-Amazigh unity and the brotherhood between the two peoples as the eternal fruit of the Islamization of North Africa. Accordingly, in politics, the majority of Amazigh nationalists thought that cultural issues were secondary to the struggle for independence.[153]

However, the atmosphere within the nationalist movement led by the PPA and later the MTLD (Mouvement pour le triomphe des libertés démocratiques) was dominantly Arab-Islamic, showing intolerance towards any Amazigh elements. Following the so-called crise berbériste from 1949 to 1954, the newly founded Front de libération nationale (FLN) declared that while it respected "all fundamental freedoms without distinction of race or creed," it aimed at the "realization of North African unity within the natural Arab-Islamic framework."[154]

Shortly after Algeria's independence in 1962, the FLN confirmed the Arabization policy aimed at eliminating French influence. At the same tims, Amazigh language and culture also became direct victims of the "one nation–one language" ideology of Arab nationalism. For example, only three months after Algeria declared its independence, the government conducted a highly symbolic act by abolishing the

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[150] Ouerdane, A. (1987). La «crise berbériste» de 1949, un conflit à plusieurs faces. *Revue des mondes musulmans et de la Méditerranée, 44*(1), 35-47.

[151] The Kabyle lyrics can be found at https://m.wikisource.org/wiki/Kker_a_mmi-s_umazi%C9%A3. For the French version of the lyrics, see https://fr.wikisource.org/wiki/Debout_fils_d%27Amazigh_! (accessed May 15, 2024)

[152] Benbrahim, M. (1982). *La poésie populaire kabyle et la résistance à la colonisation de 1830 à 1962* (Doctoral dissertation, Paris, EHESS).

[153] Temlali, Y. (2020). "Le berbéro-nationalisme, un courant non monolithique".

[154] For full text of the Declaration of FLN, see https://mjp.univ-perp.fr/constit/dz1954.htm (accessed June 26, 2024)

chair of Amazigh studies at the University of Algiers.[155] As a reaction, Kabylia became the birthplace of the foremost rival political party after independence, the Front des forces socialistes (FFS), which, although without a clear Amazigh agenda, called for both cultural and political pluralism. As a result, the Amazigh issue in Algeria became strongly politicized.

In the face of aggressive Arab nationalism and the repression of political opposition in Kabylia, a "one nation–one language" ideology gained prominence among Amazigh activists, aiming to counter the denial of the Amazigh language and culture. This ideology is based on the idea that all Amazigh varieties are fundamentally one language with merely dialectal and superficial differences, an idea with long-attested scientific roots. As early as in the *Grammaire et dictionnaire abrégés de la langue Berbère*, published in 1844 based on a manuscript written in the late 18th century, the French orientalist Jean-Michel de Venture de Paradis viewed Amazigh as one language, using expressions such as "the peoples who speak this language have various names" to refer to speakers of varieties as distant as Tashelhiyt and Kabyle.[156] René Basset shared a similar idea, as evident in his *Manuel de langue kabyle (dialecte zouaoua)* (1887), where he described the language as "merely a dialect (of Berber)"[157]

By 1900, activists of Kabylian identity were well informed about the unity of Amazigh, and the idea that their language was only a local variant of Amazigh was widely accepted.[158] This idea forms the foundation of Amazigh nationalism, a cultural nationalism that believes "one language means one people." With the development of this ideology, especially under the oppression by Arab nationalism, the standard language ideology and one nation–one language ideology involving language planning efforts gained prominence in Amazigh nationalism.

These language planning efforts were important for the development of Amazigh nationalism because, from the nationalists' perspective, as an oral language lacking major written traditions and modern vocabularies, the Amazigh language naturally needs a standardization process involving choosing a writing system and coining

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[155] Chaker, S. (1987).

[156] De Venture de Paradis, J. M. (1884). *Grammaire et dictionnaire abrégés de la langue berbère*. Paris: Imprimerie Royale. p. xix.

[157] Basset, R. (1887). *Manuel de langue kabyle (dialecte zouaoua) grammaire, bibliographie, chrestomathie et lexique*. Maissonneuve & C. Leclerc. pp. 1-2.

[158] Chaker, S. (1987). p. 26.

neologisms. Addressing these two issues involves important ideological considerations, because, as Salem Chaker points out: "Only the linguistic parameter is immediately relevant for distinguishing 'Arabs' and 'Berbers' in the Maghreb."[159] Thus, language planning likely represents one of the few efficient ways for Amazigh activists to assert and promote their ideology that the Imazighen constitute a homogeneous nation distinct from the Arabs. This is, at times, also expressed in a more radical form similar to the French colonial *Kabylophile* perspective positing that Amazigh culture is the only authentic culture in the Maghreb, while the Arabic one, despite centuries of population and language mixing, remains fundamentally exogenous.[160]

These ideologies and related language planning efforts are best exemplified by the influential *Académie Berbère* in Paris, established by Mohand Arav Bessaoud during his exile in 1966. Born in the village of Taguemount Ledjdid in Kabylie in 1924, Mohand Arav Bessaoud was both an ardent Amazigh activist and an active Algerian nationalist. He joined the PPA and later the FLN in the fight for Algeria's independence.[161] After independence, faced with the authorities' pan-Arabist ideology, their dictatorial nature, and the brutal suppression of Amazigh activists, he joined the FFS rebellion in 1963 but became disillusioned by its dismissal of the Amazigh cause.[162] Following the rebellion's defeat two years later, Mohand Arav Bessaoud left for France, where he engaged more openly and dedicatedly in Amazigh activism. During this time, his most influential activity was co-founding the *Académie Berbère d'Échange et de Recherches Culturels* with other activists, including the famous Kabyle singer Taos Amrouche, army officer Abdelkader Rahmani, and pharmacist Mohand-Saïd Hanouz.[163]

As reminded by Lionel Galand, the *Académie Berbère* was "more concerned

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[159] *Ibid.* p. 25.

[160] Temlali, Y. (2020). "Le berbéro-nationalisme et le berbérisme: Deux courants distincts".

[161] For Bessaoud's experience during the the war of independence, see Bessaoud, M. A. (1991). *Heureux les martyrs qui n'ont rien vu: La vérité sur la mort du colonel Amirouche et de Abbane Ramdane*. FeniXX.

[162] Bessaoud, M. A. (1966). *Le FFS, espoir et trahison*. FeniXX.

[163] Aïtel, F. (2014). *We are Imazighen: The development of Algerian Berber identity in twentieth-century literature and culture*. University Press of Florida. p. 115.

with action than with science."[164] The nature of the organization was hotly debated from its establishment, with discussions on whether it should be a less populist, more intellectual association or include grassroots activism. The latter approach, championed by Mohand Arav Bessaoud, prevailed.[165] During its operation for a decade, the *Académie Berbère* strengthened awareness of Amazigh identity and greatly raised the prestige of the Amazigh language and culture. These achievements, through multiple efforts, were summarized in the preface of a history of the academy as follows:

> "... he (Mohand Arav Bessaoud) needed to unearth the portraits of Numidian kings to show that the Berbers have a history, that they had kingdoms, kings, and warriors ..., and to prove that the Berbers are intelligent people, he had to invoke Plotinus, Saint Augustine, Apuleius, Ibn Khaldoun ..., and explain that they contributed greatly to humanity through their contributions to the civilizations of the peoples who colonized them. Then, he had to revive Tifinagh, recover lost words (*Azul*, *Thanemirth*), name the days of the week ..., and invent words that never existed ..., move heaven and earth ... if necessary, to restore the Berber's pride in belonging to this noble Numidian race, which successive colonizers tried in vain to portray as barbarians."[166]

The works of the academy were thus twofold: historical and linguistic. Historically, it aimed to create a subversive memory of Maghribian history, centering mainly on the Numidian kings (202 BCE-25 BCE) who were viewed as true native and anti-invasion Amazigh heroes. Linguistically, it embodied a combination of standard language ideology and Amazigh nationalism, believing that the Amazigh language, though comprising multiple varieties, is internally uniform and can be managed and standardized accordingly with elements mixed from different dialects. This is mainly reflected in two ways: the adoption and adaptation of the ancient

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[164] Galand, L. (1989). *Les langues berbères*. In La réforme des langues: Histoire et avenir (Vol. IV). Hamburg: Helmut Buske Verlag. p. 342.
[165] Aïtel, F. (2014). pp. 115-116.
[166] Bessaoud, M. A. (2000). *De petites gens pour une grande cause, ou l'histoire de l'Académie Berbère: 1966-1978*. p. 8.

Libyco-Berber alphabetical writing known as Tifinagh for writing Kabyle; and drawing from other Amazigh varieties to enrich and modernize Kabyle vocabulary. The neologisms of the *Académie Berbère* borrowed from a wide range of Amazigh varieties. For example, *tanfust* ("history") came from Mozabite, *ifeḍ* ("a million") from a Tuareg term designating a very large number, and *anbaḍ*/*anabaḍ* ("government") from central Moroccan *baḍ* ("power, authority").[167]

The efforts of the *Académie Berbère* were influential due to intensive meetings of activists in Parisian cafés and the publication of its bilingual (French and Amazigh) monthly bulletin, *Imazighen*, which included a wide range of content such as political and historical texts, grammar lessons, lexical pages, proverbs, riddles, tales, and poems, and which was widely circulated not only in France but also in Algeria and Morocco.[168] Thus, using the Tifinagh script and creating Amazigh neologisms were prominent as the two most important expressions of Amazigh nationalism in the crucial language aspect. These two trends will be introduced in detail.

2.2. Tifinagh

The new writing system developed by the *Académie Berbère* for writing Kabyle, known as Neo-Tifinagh, is inspired by the Libyco-Berber script that dates from ancient times in North African, Saharan, and Canarian inscriptions.[169] The origin of the Libyco-Berber script is debated, as stated by Karl-Gottfried Prasse: "L'origine de l'alphabet libyque est inconnue. ... Toutes les tentatives de le dériver des hiéroglyphes égyptiens, des alphabets sudarabique, grec, ibérique, voire phénicien-punique, n'ont pas réussi jusqu'ici à fournir la preuve décisive."[170] This script gradually developed into Tifinagh, a script used among the Tuareg people, who inhabit the central and southern Sahara regions of Algeria, Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso.[171] Although the historical connection between Libyco-Berber and Tifinagh is undeniable, there are

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[167] Achab, R. (2013). pp. 78-88.
[168] *Ibid.* pp. 78-79.; Aïtel, F. (2014). pp. 115-116.
[169] Pichler, W. (2007). *Origin and development of the Libyco-Berber script*. Rüdiger Köppe Verlag. p. 6.
[170] Prasse, K. G. (1972). *Manuel de grammaire touarègue (tahaggart)*. Akademisk Forlag. p. 146.
[171] Elghamis, R. (2011). *Le tifinagh au Niger contemporain: Étude sur l'écriture indigène des Touaregs* (Doctoral dissertation, Leiden University). pp. 61-62.

reasons to consider it a new type of graphic system, with most signs being either new or having changed their form and phonetic value.[172]

Tifinagh has flexible writing direction, as described by Werner Pichler:

> In Tifinagh there is no restriction to one direction of writing. People say "ässhurud" = "there is no rule". Vertical writing from bottom to top is still classified as the original, authentic form of writing and is used predominantly by old people and women. Normally the direction from top to bottom is not used. Younger people who have learned Arabic and/or French at school write mainly in horizontal lines from left to right (which is supposed to be influenced by Latin writing) or from right to left (influenced by Arabic writing). Writing in circles or spirals is possible but rare.[173]

As detailed by Ramada Elghamis, Tifinagh is used nowadays by Tuaregs alongside Latin and Arabic letters in various contexts, including traditional applications such as private correspondence, private administration, marking goods, judicial and administrative functions, managing village cooperatives, memory aids for language learning, decorative and emblematic purposes, signage, and divination practices. With the aid of printing and media, its usage has expanded into fields such as journalism, political propaganda, and religion.[174]

Tuareg Tifinagh became known to western scholarship through various works, including those by Adolphe Hanoteau (1860), Said Cid Kaoui (1900), and Charles de Foucauld (1920).[175] It was primarily through the *Dictionnaire touareg-français, dialecte de l'Ahaggar* by Charles de Foucauld, published in 1951-1952, that the Ahaggar Tifinagh script became known to Kabyle enthusiasts, and inspired the Neo-Tifinagh of the *Académie Berbère*.[176]

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[172] Pichler, W. (2007). p. 92.

[173] *Ibid.*

[174] Elghamis, R. (2011). pp. 167-295.

[175] *Ibid.* p.117.; Hanoteau, A. (1860). *Essai de grammaire de la langue Tamachek*.; Cid Kaoui, S. (1900). *Dictionnaire pratique tamâheq-français (langue des touaregs)*. A. Jourdan.; de Foucauld, C. (1920). *Notes pour servir à un essai de grammaire touarègue (dialecte de l'ahaggar)*. J. Carbonel.

[176] de Foucauld, C. (1951–1952). *Dictionnaire touareg-français, dialecte de*

Ahaggar Tifinagh[177]

a	ⵔ	ⵖ	ⵗ	n	ⵍ	t	ⵜ
b	ⵒ	h	ⵀ	ⵏ	ⵎ	ṭ	ⵟ
d	ⵄ	j	ⵊ	q	ⵎⵎ	w	ⵡ
ḍ	ⵄ	k	ⵅ	r	ⵔ	x	ⵅⵅ
f	ⵋ	l	ⵍⵍ	s	ⵙ	y	ⵢ
g	ⵖ	ḷ	(= l)	ṣ	(= s)	z	ⵣ
ǧ	ⵖⵯ	m	ⵎ	š	ⵛ	ẓ	ⵥ

Writing Kabyle with Tifinagh letters was an innovation. By the time the *Académie Berbère*, led by Mohand Arav Bessaoud, came up with the idea of using Tifinagh, writing the language with Latin letters was already popular among activists, especially thanks to the advocacy of Mouloud Mammeri.[178] Mohand Arav Bessaoud himself was initially reluctant to adopt Tifinagh, facing criticism that viewed the alphabet as "an archaic script" and its revival as "the rekindling of extinguished embers" He was eventually convinced by the Moroccan activist Mahjoubi Aherdane.[179] Mahjoubi Aherdane was an influential Moroccan politician with close ties to the monarchy, serving as the defense minister at the time.[180] He participated in 1957 in the foundation of t*he Mouvement populaire,* a royalist party dominated by rural Amazigh speakers, though without a specific Amazigh agenda.[181] An ardent Amazigh nationalist, he himself advocated early with Hassan II (reign 1961-1999) for recognizing Amazigh as a national language and for it to be taught across the country in the same manner as Arabic.[182]

Mohand Arav Bessaoud recounts in detail how the *Académie Berbère* was

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l'Ahaggar (Vols. I–IV). Imprimerie Nationale de France.; Elghamis, R. (2011). p. 317.

[177] Elghamis, R. (2011). pp. 64-65.

[178] Bessaoud, M. A. (2000). p. 90.

[179] *Ibid.* pp. 89-91.

[180] López García, B. (2017). Compte rendu de Mahjoubi Aherdan, "Mémoires". *Hespéris-Tamuda, 52*(2), 465-473.

[181] Willis, M. (2008). The politics of Berber (Amazigh) identity: Algeria and Morocco compared. *North Africa: Politics, region, and the limits of transformation*, Routledge, 227-242.

[182] López García, B. (2017).

decisively convinced by Mahjoubi Aherdane, "our Moroccan brother," to adopt Tifinagh. The persuasive words of Aherdane are as follows:

> "You say in your leaflets," Aherdane pointed out to me, "that our language was written long before Jesus Christ, but you do not show this writing or think to teach it. I imagine, therefore, that you are a prisoner of Latin characters. Tifinagh, my dear, is not just another script for us but a witness to a significant part of our history. They attest, in any case, to the existence of a civilization; they express the identity you seek to defend. I will go even further in case you are not convinced. You are not unaware that the Jews have reclaimed their ancient script, which some considered a model of difficulty for writing their language. And yet, they lack neither linguist-scholars nor financial means if they had wanted to adapt the Latin alphabet. Instead, they reclaimed their ancient script, and I imagine you can guess why."[183]

Thus, it can be observed that Tifinagh was chosen by Amazigh activists as a symbol to manifest the existence of Amazigh history and civilization. Following the decision, activists began adapting Tifinagh to suit Kabyle phonology. In comparison to the Ahaggar script, around half of the signs are new, either added or replaced, in the plan of the *Académie Berbère*.[184] Therefore, it should be considered a new system, called Neo-Tifinagh. Among the most important changes, the dot-signs featured in Tifinagh were considered "impractical" and "a source of confusion" and were largely replaced.[185] For instance, ⵗ, ⵖ, ⵛ, ⵜ, ⵝ, which represent the values ɣ, h, k, x, and q, respectively, become ⵖ, ⵀ, ⴽ, ⵅ, and ⵇ in Neo-Tifinagh. Notably, while there are no dot-signs for consonants in Neo-Tifinagh, those for the vowels "a" (·) and "u" (ⵓ) are preserved. The complete alphabet is shown as follows:

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[183] Bessaoud, M. A. (2000). p. 91.

[184] Aghali-Zakara, M. (1994). Graphies berbères et dilemme de diffusion: Interaction des alphabets latin, ajami et tifinagh. *Études et documents berbères*, (1), 107-121.

[185] Bessaoud, M. A. (2000). p. 90.

Neo-Tifinagh of the Académie Berbère[186]

b	ⴱ	ḡ	ⵣ	n	ⵏ	č	ⵛ/ⵊ	y	ⵡ /ⵙ
β	ⴰ	h	ⵀ	q	ⵇ	t	ⵜ	z	ⵣ
d	ⴷ	ḥ	ⵃ	ɣ	ⵖ	θ	ⵅ	ẓ	ⵥ
ð	ⴸ	x	ⵅ	ɛ (ʕ)	ⵄ	ṭ	ⵟ / ⴼ		
ḍ	ⴹ	k	ⴽ	r	ⵔ	j	ⵊ	a	ⵯ
ḍ/ð	ⴻ	ḵ	ⵆ	s	ⵙ	ǧ	ⵠ	i	ⵉ
f	ⴼ	l	ⵍ	ṣ	ⵚ	$t^{ˢ}$	ⵜⵙ	u	ⵓ
g	ⴳ	m	ⵎ	š	ⵛ	w	ⵡ	ə	ⵔ

Besides the replacement of dot-signs, Neo-Tifinagh writes all vowels, whereas the traditional Tuareg script only writes vowels at the end of the word.[187] Additionally, while Tifinagh is flexible as to writing direction, Neo-Tifinagh is written from left to right. Thus, in comparison to Tuareg Tifinagh, which can be influenced by both Latin and Arabic features, Neo-Tifinagh of the *Académie Berbère* might be considered a "Latinized" Tifinagh.

2.3. Neology

Ramdane Achab traces the first Amazigh neologisms back to 1945, when they appeared in Amazigh nationalist songs composed by Kabyle activists of the Algerian national movement. The majority of these new creations do not derive from words previously existing in Kabyle but rely on borrowings from other Amazigh varieties.[188] Mohand Idir Aït Amrane played a leading role in this round of coining neologisms, which lasted around a decade. For example, in his famous *Kker a mmis umazigh*, he uses the very word "Amazigh," which originates in Moroccan varieties and was unknown in traditional Kabyle culture, which lacked a word for the Amazigh language and its speakers as a whole.[189]

Relying mainly on the memoirs of Aït Amrane and Malha Benbrahim's work on Kabyle poetry during the colonial period, Ramdane Achab identifies around twenty-

[186] Elghamis, R. (2011). pp. 318-319.
[187] *Ibid.* pp. 297-303.
[188] Achab, R. (2013). pp. 57-77.

[189] Chaker, S. (1987). p. 27.

four pertinent texts containing more than twenty neologisms, listed here:[190]

• 7 terms from Tuareg: *agaraw* (“sea”); *amaḍal* (“earth, world”); *mraw* (“ten”); *tera* (“love, will”); *tiggureg* (“independence, freedom”); *tilelli* (“freedom”); *timidwa* (“friendship”);

• 6 terms from Central Moroccan Amazigh and Tashelhiyt: *amaziɣ* (“Berber”); *anegmu* (“oppressor”); *aɣzu* (“dungeon, prison”); *aɣzuz* (“standard, flag”); *mraw* (“ten”); *usman* (“lightning”);

• 2 terms from Mozabite: *aɣlan* (“country, nation”); *mraw* (“ten”);

• 6 new terms coined on the basis of existing Kabyle terms: *adyan* (“history”); *amenhaṛ* (“lead, direct”); *ayaw* (“ally”); *azegzaw-zegg^{w}aɣ* (“green-and-red”); *tiddukelt* (“union”); *amadan* (“people”).[191]

Through the sole intermediary of around twenty terms, as observed by Ramdane Achab, “almost the entire arsenal of Berber neology has been revealed, experienced and put into context”.[192] This neological arsenal includes, for example:

• Derivation of form, such as *adyan*, meaning “history,” derived from the feminine form *tadyant*, meaning “event, adventure, or story,” whose masculine form was previously unusual;

• Semantic extension, such as *ayaw*, which ordinarily means “nephew” or “uterine relative,” neologically used to mean “ally”;

• Internal borrowings, from a wide range of Amazigh varieties, such as the very word *amaziɣ*;[193]

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[190] Achab, R. (2013). pp. 66-70.; Benbrahim, M. (1982).; Aït-Amrane, M. I. (1992). *Ekkr a mmis oumazigh. Mémoire. Au lycée de Ben-Aknoun 1945*. Alger.
[191] Achab, R. (2013). p. 70.
[192] *Ibid.* pp. 77.
[193] *Ibid.* pp. 66-72.

Though versatile in neological tools, it should be noted that the number of neologisms during this period remained relatively low, and many terms were not echoed in later usage. This is partly because these first experiments in neology, along with the poets and songs containing them, and Amazigh cultural expressions in general, were severely suppressed starting from the second half of the 1950s.[194] It wasn't until the late 1960s and 1970s, roughly simultaneous with the activities of the *Académie Berbère*, that the second and more systematic round of Amazigh neology started. This was mainly thanks to the work by Mouloud Mammeri at the University of Algiers, where he gave courses in Amazigh grammar, literature, and civilization.[195]

Mammeri started to reveal his neologisms, mainly technical terminologies for introducing the Amazigh language, in the early 1970s. These efforts resulted in the manual *Tajeṛṛumt n tmaziɣt* (Grammar of Amazigh), completed in 1972. Another project directed by Mammeri began shortly afterward, leading to a comprehensive and systematic dictionary of new Amazigh terms, titled *Amawal*, compiled between 1972 and 1974 in Algiers.[196] Unlike *Tajeṛṛumt n tmaziɣt*, which focuses solely on grammatical terms, *Amawal* is the first work to explicitly identify a certain number of general lexical needs of the Amazigh language and attempt to address them on a massive scale.[197] Many of these new terms had already been adopted and spread by the *Académie Berbère* through activists who attended Mammeri's courses before the publishment of the dictionary.[198]

The two works are of particular relevance to this thesis. *Tajeṛṛumt n tmaziɣt* serves as the primary reference for the grammatical vocabulary of IRCAM, *Amawal n tjerrumt*, where a significant number of neologisms from *Tajeṛṛumt n tmaziɣt* are found.[199] It is interesting to note that the only two Arabic loans found in the latter—namely *ajemmal* ("collective") and *tunṭiqt* ("syllable")—are both replaced in IRCAM's work with *amegru* and *tafirt*, respectively.[200] This is also the case for

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[194] *Ibid.* pp. 75-77.
[195] *Ibid.* p. 92.
[196] *Ibid.*
[197] *Ibid.* p. 117.
[198] *Ibid.* p. 88.
[199] Boumalk, A., & Nait-Zerrad, K. (Eds.) (2009). *Vocabulaire grammatical amazighe (Amawal n tjerrumt)*. IRCAM. p. 12.
[200] Achab, R. (2013). pp. 109, 115.; Boumalk, A., & Nait-Zerrad, K. (Eds.) (2009).

Amawal, which provides a substantial number of terms for the general vocabulary of IRCAM. However, the Arabic loans in *Amawal*, which already constitute an extremely low percentage, are selectively replaced in IRCAM's vocabulary. For example, *aterras* (infantryman) in *Amawal* becomes *amakal* in IRCAM's vocabulary; *afsax* ("eclipse") becomes *anubẓ*; and *amecwaṛ* ("stage") becomes *tikli* or *tijjlt*.[201] This cannot be seen as a general rejection of external borrowings. For instance, French loans in *Amawal*, such as *ajenyuṛ* ("engineer"), are well adopted as *ajnyuṛ* by IRCAM.[202] I will return to this issue in a later chapter to analyze the ideology behind IRCAM's hostility towards Arabic loans.

2.4. The Amazigh Cultural Movement in Morocco

The efforts of the *Académie Berbère* successfully raised Amazigh consciousness and inspired the further development of the Amazigh cultural-political movement in both Algeria and Morocco. In Algeria, this laid the foundation for the "Printemps berbère." In March 1980, when the regime launched another wave of Arabization efforts targeting cultural and educational institutions in Kabylia, tensions escalated following the cancellation of a lecture by Mouloud Mammeri on ancient Amazigh poetry at the University of Tizi Ouzou. This sparked widespread demonstrations and strikes across the region.[203] The movement was eventually suppressed, however, sporadic protests continued to occur. It was from this definitive moment, coupled with further developments, that a popular Amazigh movement was established in Kabylia with "explicit cultural, ideological, and political translations".[204]

In Morocco, shortly after the establishment of the Paris-based *Académie Berbère (d'Échange et de Recherches Culturels)*, a similar organization called the *Association Marocaine de Recherches et d'Échanges Culturels* (AMREC) was founded in Rabat in late 1967. Its goals included collecting Amazigh cultural heritage, promoting the

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pp. 141, 159.

[201] Achab, R. (2013). p. 139.; IRCAM's terms from https://tal.ircam.ma/dglai/search/index?e=0&&l=2 (accessed July 29, 2024)

[202] Achab, R. (2013). p. 139.; Ameur et al. (2017). p. 99.

[203] Maddy-Weitzman, B. (2011). *The Berber identity movement and the challenge to North African states*. University of Texas Press. pp.79-80.

[204] Chaker, S. (2001). Berber challenge in Algeria: The state of the question. *Race, gender & class*, 135-156.

Amazigh language, and raising identity consciousness. Some of the most active members of this first Amazigh cultural association in Morocco were Brahim Akhiat, a high school teacher and poet; Ali Sidqi Azaykou, who would become a prolific poet, historian, and one of the most influential Amazigh activists in the country; and Ahmed Boukous, who had just completed higher education in literature, history, and pedagogy at Mohammed V University and would soon be heading to France to be trained as a social scientist and linguist.[205] All three activists joined the board of IRCAM (Conseil d'Administration) in 2002, with Ahmed Boukous shortly after becoming the Rector.[206]

There is a close connection in the development of the Amazigh cultural movement in Morocco with developments in France and Algeria. French colonialism in Morocco started in 1912, with the Sultan and his administration under the protectorate retaining significant influence over administrative, economic, political, and legal matters. As in Algeria, French colonizers in Morocco similarly believed that the Berbers were vital for France's stable presence in the country, creating and maintaining a balance between them and the Arabs. This led to the implementation of "a sound Berber policy" that called for the utmost respect for Amazigh customs.[207] The policy was implemented at the very beginning of the protectorate. As stated in the Dahir (royal decree) of 1914, the Amazigh tribes should be administered "according to their own laws and customs," and French authorities would be responsible for creating the appropriate legal texts or regulations.[208] The policy was further specified in the so-called Berber Dahir of 1930, in which the customary tribunals were formally established to rule civil, commercial and other cases, while most criminal cases were reallocated to the French courts.[209]

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[205] Maddy-Weitzman, B. (2011). p. 95.; Ilahiane, H. (2006). *Historical dictionary of the Berbers (Imazighen)*. The Scarecrow Press. p. 22-23.; https://www.ircam.ma/fr/activites/ev-nements/hommage-a-m-ahmed-boukouss (accessed July 1, 2024)

[206] IRCAM. (2003). *Bulletin d'information (Inghmisn n usinag)*, 1. p. 4.

[207] Hoisington Jr, W. A. (1978). Cities in revolt: The Berber Dahir (1930) and France's urban strategy in Morocco. *Journal of contemporary history, 13*(3), 433-448.

[208] *Ibid.*

[209] For the text of the Berber dahir, see Halstead, J. P. (1967). *Rebirth of a nation: The origins and rise of Moroccan nationalism, 1912-1944*. Cambridge, Mass. pp. 276-277.

In contrast to the Kabylian mode in which the French legal system was established above customary law and Islamic law, in Morocco, the French legal system was in essence in competition with the rule of traditional courts.[210] Thus, when French law took further hold in 1930, not only educated city dwellers displayed vehement resistance to it, but rural Amazigh speakers, as stated by John P. Halstead, "were even more repelled by the dahir as a joint attack on their religion and their traditional autonomy".[211] Consequently, as Katherine Hoffman observed, the French "Berber Policy" taking root in Morocco and reaching its apex with the Berber Dahir, led to a reverse trend whereby Islamic law was more widely embraced in rural areas and many Amazigh speakers opted to be ruled by a *qadi* (judge of Islamic law) rather than a judiciary council.[212] Additionally, alongside their Muslim identity and traditional tribal loyalties, Moroccan Amazigh speakers expressed awareness of a distinct "Morocco-sized" identity.[213] These factors collectively laid a solid foundation for a form of Amazigh nationalism, which, contrary to French expectations of opposition to Arab conquest and Islamization, prioritized the country's independence from colonization.

Similar to Algeria, the first generation of Amazigh nationalists began to emerge from Franco-Amazigh schools in Morocco. The most notable example was the school in Azrou, which opened in 1927 and became a collège three years later. Initially designed by the French as a "school for the Berbers and by the Berbers" to counter Arab-Islamic nationalism, it became a "hotbed of Moroccan nationalists."[214] It was at the Collège d'Azrou where Mohamed Chafik, later the first rector of IRCAM,

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[210] Scham, A. (1970). *Lyautey in Morocco: Protectorate administration, 1912-1925*. Berkeley: University of California Press. p. 200.

[211] Halstead, J. P. (1967). p. 180.

[212] Hoffman, K. E. (2010). Berber law by French means: customary courts in the Moroccan hinterlands, 1930–1956. *Comparative studies in society and history*, *52*(4), 851-880.

[213] Wyrtzen, J. (2011). Colonial state-building and the negotiation of Arab and Berber identity in protectorate Morocco. *International journal of middle east studies, 43*(2), 227-249.

[214] Ageron, C. R. (1971). La politique berbère du protectorat marocain de 1913 à 1934. *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine (1954-)*, *18*(1), 50-90.; See also Bennhlal, M. (2005). *Le collège d'Azrou: Une élite berbère civile et militaire au Maroc, 1927-1959*. Paris: Karthala.

became a Moroccan nationalist before developing into an Amazigh activist.[215]

As a result, in the immediate years after Morocco's independence, it would be difficult to identify an "Amazigh bloc" in the political context. The *Mouvement Populaire* (MP), founded in 1957, could be labelled as "a predominantly Amazigh political party" in certain contexts.[216] However, it took great care to avoid appearing as a purely Amazigh-speaking or identity-based movement in order to gain wider support from rural masses in order to counter the dominance of urban, bourgeois *Istiqlal*.

Meanwhile, the Arabization policy of the authorities after independence showed similar hostility towards Amazigh cultural expressions as seen in Algeria. Among the numerous academic units and institutions that vanished after 1956 in Morocco, any institution recognizing Tamazight as an administrative language was shut down.[217] Under the Arabic one nation–one language ideology, the Amazigh language faced trivialization and ignorance, to the extent that it was presented as "just a dialect of Arabic"[218] and its speakers were perceived as "simply someone who hasn't gone to school."[219] This was the predicament from which the Moroccan Amazigh Cultural Movement began. Given the situation it faced, the movement had a fundamental objective to raise the prestige and status of the Amazigh language and culture in order to counter the established Arabic "high culture," aiming to establish Amazigh as an equally standardized, literacy- and education-based system of communication.[220]

Therefore, it is not hard to understand why the efforts of the *Académie Berbère* in awakening awareness of Amazigh identity and raising the prestige of the Amazigh language and culture gained popularity in Morocco and in 1970 Mohand Arav Bessaoud received thousands of letters of support from the country.[221] In this period of what could be called an "Amazigh awakening" of the 1960s and 1970s, several

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[215] Bouyaakoubi, L. (2009). *Mohamed Chafik: L'homme de l'unanimité: parcours d'une figure emblématique de la revendication amazighe au Maroc*. Tamaynut-Anfa. pp. 25-43.

[216] Maddy-Weitzman, B. (2011). p. 88.

[217] El Guabli, B. (2023a). The idea of Tamazgha: Current articulations and scholarly potential. *Tamazgha studies journal, 1*(1), 7-22.

[218] Kossmann, M. (2013b). p. 30.

[219] Quoted in Maddy-Weitzman, B. (2011). p. 90.

[220] For the definition of "high culture," see Gellner, E. (1983). *Nations and nationalism*. Cornell University Press. p. 54.

[221] Aïtel, F. (2014). p. 116.

Amazigh cultural associations thrived in Morocco following the establishment of AMREC. Among the most influential were the *Association Nouvelle pour la Culture et les Arts Populaires* (ANCAP) or *Tamaynut*, and the *Association de l'Université d'Été d'Agadir* (AUEA). Although political agendas, particularly leftist ones, occasionally emerged in the activities of these associations, they were neither consistent nor widely accepted. Regional and political differences largely drove the increase in the number of associations, as evidenced by the departure of Ali Sidqi Azaykou from AMREC in 1975 to start a new association.[222]

The "Printemps berbère" in 1980 in neighboring Algeria brought a change in the situation in Morocco, where the politicization of the Amazigh issue seemed imminent. Azaykou once evoked the option of political autonomy for Moroccan Amazigh, a demand he said paralleled those of the Basques in Spain and the IRA in Northern Ireland.[223] This modern ethno-political type of politicization urged King Hassan II to intervene. On the one hand, he established the *Commission Nationale pour la Sauvegarde des Arts Populaires*, headed by Mahjoubi Aherdane from his inner circle, and allowed the publication of a bimonthly journal, *Amazigh*, to serve as a public platform to discuss issues surrounding the Amazigh language and culture.[224] On the other hand, Amazigh associations and activists were persecuted. For example, it was because of an article published in the first Arabic-language issue of *Amazigh* attacking the Arabization policy that Azaykou was sentenced to one year in prison.[225] Additionally, Ahmed Boukous was not allowed to hold a passport for many years, while Hassan Idbelkassem, the founder of *Tamaynut*, was imprisoned for one week in 1982 for displaying a sign in Tifinagh script at his office.[226]

This situation, where the Amazigh cultural movement was deprived of any public activity, only began to change in the 1990s, a period that marked the beginning of a new era for human rights globally.[227] The Moroccan Amazigh cultural movement

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[222] Feliu, L. (2006). Le Mouvement culturel amazigh (MCA) au Maroc. *L'année du Maghreb*, (I), 274-285.

[223] Chahir, A. (2006). Leadership politique amazigh. In H. Rachik (Ed.), *Usages de l'identité Amazighe au Maroc*. Imprimerie Najah El Jadida, 196-226. Quoted in Maddy-Weitzman, B. (2011). p. 99.

[224] Maddy-Weitzman, B. (2011). pp. 97-98.

[225] *Ibid.* p. 98.

[226] *Ibid.*

[227] Rollinde, M. (1999). Le mouvement amazighe au Maroc: Défense d'une identité

referenced human rights in two interconnected aspects. Historically, the strategy, as summarized by Brahim El Guabli, involved "the (re)invention of tradition and the creation of a subversive memory" to affirm that the Amazigh language and culture are the oldest in Morocco, corresponding to the idea of Indigeneity.[228]

This idea of Indigeneity was reflected in the *Charte d'Agadir* issued in 1991 by the main Moroccan Amazigh cultural associations. In this charter, they asserted that "L'historicité de la langue et de la culture amazighes et leur enracinement dans la terre marocaine sont attestés depuis plus de 5 millénaires selon les documents archéologiques disponibles." [229] On this basis, the associations outlined their fundamental demands regarding the linguistic aspect: (1) constitutional recognition of Amazigh language as a national language; (2) establishment of a national institute for Amazigh studies and research; (3) inclusion of Amazigh language and culture in various cultural and educational activities; (4) presence of Amazigh language and culture in scientific research programmes; (5) presence of the language in written and audiovisual media; (6) promotion of production and creation in the Amazigh language in the field of knowledge and culture; and (7) implementation and utilisation of means of expression and learning in the Amazigh language.[230]

The first requirement of constitutional recognition of the Amazigh language as a national language was consistent with the Amazigh cultural movement as a whole. As Salem Chaker commented on the Algerian case: "la langue est posée comme trait définitoire fondamental de l'identité berbère" and "la revendication (du mouvement culturel berbère) est avant tout linguistique (= 'berbère langue nationale')."[231] This caused the second requirement to play a particularly important role at the practical level since it was Amazigh as a language standardized by the institute that would be recognized as the national language and preferably used in fulfilling other demands.

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culturelle, revendication du droit des minorités ou alternative politique?. *Revue algérienne d'anthropologie et de sciences sociales* (8), 63-70.; El Guabli, B. (2023a).

[228] El Guabli, B. (2020). (Re) Invention of tradition, subversive memory, and Morocco's re-Amazighization: From erasure of Imazighen to the performance of Tifinagh in public Life. *Expressions maghrébines, 19*(1), 143-168.

[229] For the original text of The Charte d'Agadir relative aux droits linguistiques et culturels in French, see https://www.axl.cefan.ulaval.ca/afrique/maroc-charte_agadir-1991.htm (accessed March 17, 2024).

[230] *Ibid.*

[231] Chaker, S. (1987). p. 25.

The tasks of this potential institute, as further listed in the Charter, included the elaboration of a unified graphic system allowing for the adequate transcription of the Amazigh language; the standardization of the grammar of the language; and the production of pedagogical tools suitable for teaching the language. These contents would become the primary functions of IRCAM a decade later.

Two years after the issuance of the *Charte d'Agadir*, Hassan II delivered a speech on August 20, 1994, in which he deemed it "imperative" to introduce primary education of the three "national dialects"—namely, Tarifiyt, Central Moroccan Amazigh, and Tashelhiyt. Furthermore, he asserted that the country should be based on "multiple geniuses and diverse authenticities and customs, each as rich as the others".[232] However, to the frustration of the activists, the King's lip service brought no real change at the legislative level. This frustration was only exacerbated by the establishment of the *Haut Commissariat à l'Amazighité* (HCA) in neighboring Algeria in 1995, which was attached to the president's office and tasked with "la réhabilitation et la promotion de l'Amazighité en tant que l'un des fondements de l'identité nationale" and "l'introduction de la langue Amazighe dans les systèmes de l'enseignement et de la communication."[233]

In Morocco, the activists' repeated demands and urging of the authorities to fulfill their promises culminated in the Amazigh Manifesto in March 2000. The Manifesto, directed to the newly-crowned King Mohammed VI was written with the lead of the esteemed Amazigh scholar Mohamed Chafik from the inner circle of the royal family (as will be introduced in the following chapter) and signed by 229 individuals comprising of academics, authors, artists, entrepreneurs, and civil servants.[234] The manifesto contained a series of explicit demands related to Amazigh issues echoing the *Charte d'Agadir*. These demands included the constitutional recognition of the Amazigh language, the promotion of economic development in Amazigh-speaking regions, the inclusion of Amazigh language teaching in the educational system, the establishment of scientific organizations for the standardization of the language, the creation of educational tools for its instruction, and the requirement that Tamazight be used in public environments catering to those

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[232] Bennhlal, M. (1994). Maroc: Chronique intérieure. *Annuaire de l'Afrique du nord*, 33, 569-596.

[233] https://www.hcamazighite.dz/fr/page/le-hca-p7?tag=bloc_28 (accessed July 29, 2024)

[234] Maddy-Weitzman, B. (2011). p.159.

who are not fluent in Arabic, among others. For the urgency of the demands, the king was warned: "The question, now, is on the verge of moving from being an economic and cultural one to being a political question. This will, undoubtedly, be the case if the necessary steps are not taken–and within appropriate time limits–to redress what needs redressing. This is so because the Amazighs will not forego their 'Amazighity'."[235]

In response to the manifesto, nearly 200 Amazigh associations declared their support, and 150 activists convened in Bouznika two months later to deliberate on potential tactics to realize the demands.[236] Following the Conference at Bouznika, the creation of a Moroccan Amazigh party became imminent, as argued by militants such as Rachid Raha who asked "Pourquoi les Imazighen du Maroc devront s'organiser politiquement?".[237] One year later, in June 2001, activists planned to gather again in Bouznika for the Second National Conference on the Amazigh Manifesto when access to the town was cut off by police, preventing delegates from assembling.[238] However, just when an escalation seemed inevitable, a favorable response came from the authorities on July 30, 2001. In his Throne Day speech, King Mohammed VI directly addressed the Amazigh issue and promised the establishment of a royal institute of Amazigh culture.[239] Following this, on October 17 of the same year, Royal Decree No. 1-01-299 was issued, formally ordering the establishment of the Institut Royal de la Culture Amazighe (IRCAM) in Rabat. The main purpose of the institution was to collect and transcribe expressions of Amazigh culture, conduct related research and studies, and facilitate the teaching of Amazigh by producing educational tools such as general lexicons and specialized dictionaries.[240]

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[235] From the Berber (Amazigh) Manifesto. The text of the Manifesto in English and French can be found at http://www.mondeberbere.com/chafik_berber-manifesto.html (accessed March 17, 2024)

[236] Sater, J. N. (2003). *Civil society and political change in Morocco* (Doctoral dissertation, Durham University). p. 223.

[237] "Pourquoi les Imazighen du Maroc devront s'organiser politiquement?" in *La gazette du Maroc*. No. 190, 22 November 2000.

[238] Communiqué du comité du Manifeste Amazigh. Rabat le 24 juin 2001. http://amazighworld.org/human_rights/morocco/morocco_communique_comite_du_manifeste_amazigh.php (accessed March 16, 2023)

[239] https://mjcc.gov.ma/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/30-07-2001-.pdf (accessed March 30, 2024)

[240] Dahir n 1-01-299 du 29 rajab al khaïr 1422 (17 octobre 2001) portant création de

This new development signified that one of the most consistent and urgent demands of the Moroccan Amazigh cultural movement, second only to the constitutional recognition of the Amazigh language but also essential for it, was realized. However, it is essential to note that IRCAM was established as an instrument by the authorities to prevent an ethno-identity-based politicization of the Amazigh issue. The Royal Decree stressed that IRCAM is "chargée de sauvegarder, de promouvoir et de renforcer la place de notre culture amazighe... en tant que richesse nationale et source de fierté de tous les Marocains."[241] This expression echoes a strategy by the Algerian HCA, which frames the language of "Tamazight" as "language of all Algerians" to deterritorialize and de-ethnicize the linguistic and cultural claims from a specific group of people, which might hinder the national unity of the country.[242]

The Moroccan IRCAM was established six years after the Algerian HCA, and the adoption of a similar strategy in response to the Amazigh movement suggests that Moroccan authorities, to some extent, took into account the experience of their hostile neighbor in handling the Amazigh issue. Shortly after the establishment of IRCAM, in 2002, Algeria took the lead again in responding to the Amazigh movement by amending Article 3 of its Constitution, adding to the statement "Arabic is the national and official language" the clause: "Tamazight is also a national language. The State works for its promotion and its development in all its linguistic varieties in use throughout the national territory."[243] Though Amazigh did not attain the same official and national status as Arabic but was only recognized as a national language, its inclusion in the Constitution was still significant—a development that Morocco lacked at the time.

A similar constitutional recognition of the Amazigh language in Morocco, long pursued by the Moroccan Amazigh cultural movement, was finally realized in 2011 in the context of the "Arab Spring." Amid the popular uprisings that swept across

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l'Institut Royal de la Culture Amazighe. *Bulletin officiel, 4948*, pp. 1074-1076.

[241] *Ibid.*

[242] Abrous, D. (1995). Le Haut commissariat à l'amazighité, ou les méandres d'une phagocytose. *Annuaire de l'Afrique du nord*, tome XXXIV, CNRS Éditions, 583-590.

[243] Constitution of Algeria, as amended in 2002. available at: https://aceproject.org/ero-en/regions/africa/DZ/algeria-constitution-with-the-amendments-of-10/view (accessed March 5, 2025)

North Africa and the Middle East, beginning in Tunisia in December 2010, the situation faced by Moroccan authorities was relatively moderate. Compared to other countries where the slogan "the people want to topple (*isqat*) the regime" dominated protests, Moroccan demonstrations were characterized by the slogan "the people want to reform (*islah*) the regime."[244] That said, the situation was far from something that could be ignored by the authorities. By mid-February 2011, the Moroccan "Arab Spring" quickly developed into the February 20 movement, with 37,000-60,000 demonstrators protesting in over 50 cities and towns, and weekly protests continuing for months afterward.[245]

The movement, serving as an umbrella "for all those left outside the public space who wished to reclaim that space, democratize it, and transform it into a genuine avenue for debate,"[246] inspired wide participation, including activists from the Amazigh movement, with Amazigh flags prominently displayed in the demonstrations.[247] One of the most tragic incidents during these protests occurred in the Tarifiyt-speaking Rifian city of Al Hoceima, where on February 20, a protest gathering of 37,000 people ended in the death of five individuals due to a fire inside a bank.[248] With these developments once again forecasting the politicization of the Amazigh issue, the authorities incorporated a response specific to the Amazigh movement within their broader reaction to the February 20 movement. On March 9, King Mohammed VI announced plans for fundamental constitutional reform in a nationwide television address, in which he emphasized that the new constitution would "enshrine... the Amazigh component as a core element and common asset belonging to all Moroccans."[249]

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[244] Maddy-Weitzman, B. (2022). *Amazigh politics in the wake of the Arab Spring*. University of Texas Press. p. 125.

[245] Badran, S. Z. (2018). *Demobilization in Morocco: The case of the February 20 Movement*. (Doctoral dissertation, University of Kansas). p. 3.

[246] Mekouar, M. (2016). *Protest and mass mobilization: Authoritarian collapse and political change in North Africa*. Routledge. p. 95.

[247] Maddy-Weitzman, B. (2022). p. 131.

[248] Naudé, P. F. (2011). "The death toll from the protests in Morocco stands at five dead and 128 injured". Jeuneafrique. https://www.jeuneafrique.com/182305/politique/le-bilan-des-manifestations-au-maroc-s-l-ve-cinq-morts-et-128-bless-s/ (accessed March 5, 2025)

[249] "King Mohammed VI's Speech to the Nation," March 9, 2011, Quoted in Maddy-Weitzman, B. (2022). p. 132.

Accordingly, the new Constitution of Morocco, issued later that same year, explicitly states in Article 5 that while "Arabic remains (*demeure*) the official language of the State," "likewise, Amazigh constitutes an official language of the State, being a common heritage of all Moroccans without exception."[250] Though the two languages are not listed in parallel within a single sentence but rather in two separate sentences, with Arabic prioritized in sequence, the elevation of Amazigh's status—not only as a national language, as in Algeria, but as an official language—was still significant. This is especially evident when considering that the 1996 Moroccan Constitution made no mention of Amazigh and began with the statement: "The Kingdom of Morocco, a sovereign Muslim state whose official language is Arabic, constitutes a part of the Greater Arab Maghreb."[251]

IRCAM, along with its functions, is closely tied to this status planning process as a precondition for the officialization of Amazigh. As the new Constitution states: "An organic law defines the process of implementation of the official character of this language, as well as the modalities of its integration into teaching and into the priority domains of public life, so that it may be permitted in time to fulfill its function as an official language." Moreover, certain expressions in the new Constitution, such as viewing Amazigh as "a common heritage of all Moroccans without exception" and describing the unity of the country as "forged by the convergence of its Arab-Islamist, Amazigh, and Saharan-Hassanic components, nourished and enriched by its African, Andalusian, Hebraic, and Mediterranean influences," closely resemble those found in IRCAM's founding documents. Therefore, to fully understand the officialization of Amazigh in Morocco, it is essential to closely examine these documents, where IRCAM's ideological framework is also embedded.

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[250] Secrétariat général du gouvernement, Direction de l'Imprimerie Officielle, Royaume du Maroc. (2011). La Constitution. Série "Documentation Juridique Marocaine", Dahir n° 1-11-91, 30 juillet 2011.

[251] Constitution du 13 septembre 1996. https://mjp.univ-perp.fr/constit/ma1996.htm (accessed March 3, 2024)