

of implementing the use of Tamazight (Berber language) in the classroom. Clearly, this education project necessitates lexical standardization of heretofore-oral Tamazight, the creation of dictionaries, and agreement over what script to use to teach an oral language in a formal classroom. Until now even Derija (Moroccan colloquial Arabic) was kept out of government schools in favour of a more standardized "correct" Modern Standard Arabic. Allowing Derija officially into the classroom presents a set of problems, but Tamazight stands to be even more difficult because of pronounced regional differences in the spoken language and because of the lack of a universally accepted way to write it. Standardizing the use and inscription of Moroccan Tamazight is a task that scholars and the Amazigh rights movement have been discussing for years,³ but the king has now directly involved the state in the project. It is common for a state to promote its national language. It is far more unusual for a state to champion a minority language, especially one that it had previously all but banned.

Because we do not yet know how fully IRCAM will be implemented or what effects it will have, this chapter outlines some of the main issues involved rather than positing firm conclusions.⁴ I begin with a review of four general points important for understanding the significance of the *dahir*. These include the deep historical roots of Berber politics in Morocco, regional diversity among Moroccan Imazighen, the way notions of Berberness (or Amazighness) fit with other idioms of affiliation in Morocco, and the political-economic conditions in which the *dahir* will be deployed. This background suggests four areas of contemporary Amazigh politics likely to be impacted by the changes promised in the *dahir*.

First, I contend that Imazighen need not understand themselves as a unified group in order for their linguistic particularity to have political potential at the national level. Second, I note that political-economic factors are likely to influence any nascent cultural or ethnic politics – a fairly obvious point but one that sometimes goes unappreciated by scholars writing on Amazigh culture. Third, I note that whatever happens with the IRCAM *dahir*, the general rise in Amazigh political consciousness in Morocco is part of a much larger, global florescence of identity politics; indeed, such cultural politics are not *inherently* progressive nor reactionary, neither politically liberating nor dangerously nativistic. Finally, I maintain that the *dahir* will have multiple uses for many different actors and that its significance will

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Royal Interest in Local Culture: Amazigh Identity and the Moroccan State

DAVID CRAWFORD

INTRODUCTION

On 17 October 2001 King Mohammed VI of Morocco announced the creation of the Royal Institute of the Amazigh [Berber] Culture (l'Institut Royal de la culture amazighe, IRCAM), which had been promised in a speech in July. This royal edict, or *dahir*, indicates a dramatic reversal of legal discrimination against Imazighen (Berbers) and an attempt to reclaim Amazigh culture as part of the national community. Since Moroccan nationalist discourse has tended to emphasize links to the high culture of Arab Islamic civilization, particularly to the royal patriline leading back to the Prophet Muhammad, the IRCAM *dahir* indicates a shift in, or at least an amendment to, the officially imagined heritage of the nation. This new state-level embrace of the *volksgeist*, the local Amazigh/Berber culture,¹ provides a useful starting point for examining the much-debated status of Berbers in Moroccan society, particularly their potential for politicization as a corporate group. The *dahir* also brings into official Moroccan discourse an acknowledgment of Moroccan citizens who speak something other than the national language, perhaps suggesting a role for them in the national imagination.

Significantly, IRCAM has been empowered to pursue more than vague directives concerning the promotion of Amazigh art and culture.² The institute is charged with the important, concrete step

therefore be open to some manipulation. Changes promised by the *dahir* may on one level help some of Morocco's poorest and least educated people to better participate in the changing economy. At the same time, it may serve as a tool to manufacture political divisions useful to the central government for self-justification and political control.

AMAZIGH ROOTS AND MOROCCAN CULTURE

As others have pointed out, Berbers, or Imazighen, are significantly different from other "minorities" in the Middle East.⁵ Unlike Copts or Kurds, Berbers represent the most ancient known inhabitants of all of North Africa – an overwhelming majority in a huge territory – who were never driven entirely from their land or fully absorbed into a large, colonizing population. Imazighen endured the Roman invasion 2,000 years ago, as they did the French invaders less than a century past, by fighting at times but also by co-opting the power of the invaders, by collaborating with or profiting from them, or simply by ignoring outsiders when possible. From a certain Berberist perspective, the Arabs who arrived in the far West in the eighth century were in many respects no different from the Phoenicians before them and the Portuguese afterward. The significant difference lies in the religious basis of Arab authority. Although the Arabs were relatively few in actual number, they had a profound impact through religious conversion and, arguably, through acculturation of the locals.⁶ This grudging incorporation was a different style of rule from direct subjugation, indirect taxation, or genocidal extermination. The influence of the Arabs who settled in Morocco has far outweighed that of any other invading group, but Arabs arguably did not replace Imazighen so much as augment them, adding Arab overtones and some sense of Islamic unity to a diverse Amazigh country.

The main, obvious influence of the Arab invasion has been the Islamic faith, which has an important linguistic component. This is one reason so many Amazigh activists point to issues of language as vital to cultural survival. Unlike Iranians, Turks, or other distinct peoples Islamized by the expanding Arabs, the majority of Moroccans today – whether "originally" Berber or Arab – use Arabic as their everyday language. If many in the *mashreq* (Middle East) consider Arabic as spoken in Morocco to be fairly incomprehensible, Moroccans themselves are often adamant that it closely adheres to

the Arabic of the Qur'an. This conflation of Arabic language, Islamic legitimacy, and Arab ethnicity is notable at the popular level of Moroccan society, especially in urban centres like Fez, making it a bone of contention for Amazigh activists. At various times since the arrival of Islam, Berber dynasties have controlled Morocco (and much of the rest of North Africa and Spain), but at least until the IRCAM *dahir* a notion of a sophisticated, culturally and historically rich Muslim civilization had been conceptually grafted to Arab ethnicity in the mainstream Moroccan national identity. Identity is born of consciousness. As Salem Chaker has noted, it is the Arab *consciousness* of most Moroccans that has relegated Berber language and cultural identity to "minority" status.⁷

This does not mean, of course, that this minority status is homogeneous or easily graspable or that there have been no historical transformations. Stephanie Saad has noted that for a period scholars launched "vehement arguments that the Berbers *were* an ethnic group, and later ... equally vehement arguments as to why they were not."⁸ She concludes with the assertion that "Most ethnic identities are like that of the Berbers: nuanced, mutable, their boundaries and characteristics changing with time."⁹ Ernest Gellner has argued a slightly different case, saying that in the "traditional situation," Berber socio-political "notions intermediate between tribal and Islamic were hazy and of doubtful social significance." He goes on to assert that "Where a notion of being Berber did exist, it was roughly co-extensive with the regional linguistic block. Historians have dug up signs of Berber consciousness, a mediaeval heresy with a Koran in Berber, or a religious movement of the seventeenth century, opposed to all 'who did not speak Berber.' But on the whole, the striking thing about these signs is not their occurrence, but their rarity."¹⁰ Gellner's contention is that Berbers have been and were at the time of his fieldwork essentially "tribal" rather than broadly ethnic. By this he seems to mean that they reckon the social and political forms important to them through a genealogical framework (and little else) and that the variously sized groups formed this way do not extend to any Pan-Berber consciousness or even to a Moroccan-wide sense of being "a" people. Gellner sometimes restricts his assertions to the area in which he did research, while at other times he seems to claim something broadly "Berber" about the segmentary political organization he outlines. Gellner's scheme suggests something solid and distinctive about being Berber even if in his view

Berbers themselves attach little significance to the wider ethnic category. However, not everyone agrees with Gellner's reading of the historical record or with Saad's emphasis on the fluidity of identity.

The Amazigh writer Kateb Yacine, for instance, says that "They want to depict us as a minority isolated within an Arab people, when in fact it is the Arabs who are a minute minority within us, but they dominate us through religion ... We are a majority which quickly becomes aware now of the Arab-Islamic affliction throughout the world, in Palestine, Iraq, Iran, wherever people are alienated, betrayed, drowned in blood in the name of race and religion." When Kateb Yacine uses the word "we," presumably this refers to all Berbers, not merely to Algerians. "We" certainly does not refer to a "tribe." It is tempting to attribute this sort of consciousness to a literate and thoroughly international perspective, particularly as Yacine's plea centres on "language which is the vehicle for history."¹¹ Clearly, such a consciousness of language, and for that matter of an abstracted notion of "history," is most commonly found among multilingual, educated observers. Gabriel Ben-Dor has asserted that "the most relevant axis separating minorities from others in modern society is the ethnic one."¹² Yacine would seem to agree, locating his ethnic identity in Tamazight, the Berber language, and that of his "other," the Arabs, in both the Arabic language and the Islamic faith through which Arabs have dominated. The language Yacine extols is Tamazight; the language he writes *in* is French. This is the fate of much explicitly Berber cultural production: It has necessarily been inscribed in languages that became lexically coherent and politically dominant through religion (such as Arabic) or through the linked processes of "print capitalism" by which national tongues such as French and English became consolidated.¹³ The IRCAM project promotes something different: an attempt to self-consciously standardize and promulgate a new national language in a long-standing, politically coherent state.

Still, there is evidence that forms of Amazigh consciousness have long existed and are not purely the result of contemporary cultural sensitivities projected onto the historical record. Maya Shatzmiller, for instance, has argued:

The rise of the great Berber dynasties to political hegemony, beginning with the Almoravids in the 11th century, and continuing with the Almohads in the 12th and the Marinids in the 13th, enhanced the development of the

Berber-Islamic state, but also witnessed Berber alienation expressed by resistance to acculturation to Arabic and Islamic norms. The drive to bring the Berber populace into the mainstream of Islamic statehood, through intensified islamization, indoctrination in Islamic theology and expansion of the judicial system, deepened the awareness of Berber particularism, and refined and defined its expression *vis-à-vis* the Islamic state and its institutions.¹⁴

It is difficult to know what everyday people were thinking hundreds of years ago, and it is particularly tricky to determine their sense of identity. We do see, however, that when Imazighen have had political power, there have been indications of some scale of Berber identity in some official acts.

The rise of the Almohads in the twelfth century serves as one example of this. Inspired by a man named Ibn Tumart, the Almohads (from *al-muwahhidūn*, or unifiers) were the second great Berber Empire to rule North Africa and Spain. The first such empire was the Almoravid (*al-murābitūn*), which began as a tribe of Sanhaja Berbers from the desert beyond the Atlas who had controlled some part of the gold and salt trade with sub-Saharan Africa. They parlayed this position first into a small fiefdom and then into "the first Moroccan dynasty to achieve importance for Europe as well as North Africa."¹⁵ The Almoravids did not merely conquer through military prowess and economic domination, but also rose through a potent, revisionist brand of Islam. They preached moral reform and asceticism but opposed "over-exclusive ideologies and aimed at a communitarian consensus."¹⁶ One suspects, however, that their conservative "no new taxes" approach – a return to the fiscal policies of the original Islamic community – had as much to do with their success as anything else. As Abdallah Laroui puts it, "apart from legal alms (the *zakaat*), to be spent for specified purposes, the state's only sources of income were the head tax (*jizya*), the territorial tax (*kharaaj*) on nonconverts, and a fifth part of the spoils of war."¹⁷ This must have seemed a dramatic improvement upon the excessive ("non-Islamic") taxation of the rulers they replaced and had the advantage of being divinely sanctioned. It was, however, a fiscal policy better suited to expansion than governance and to offensive rather than defensive wars, particularly in the North, where Christian princes harassed them. In the long term, religious ideology seems to have failed to sufficiently unite tribal warriors and urban bureaucrats, much less Andalusians and Maghrebis, and the fiscal policy seems to have been unable to fund

the necessary armies of mercenaries. Tribesmen, after all, were keen to fight wars that would produce booty – not wars meant to defend state territory from others seeking booty. This ideologically potent, structurally shaky Almoravid Empire constituted the political environment that Ibn Tumart was eventually to transform.

A Tashelhit (Berber) speaker born in the Moroccan south sometime between 1076 and 1091, Ibn Tumart left home early for travels that took him to Cordoba, Tunisia, Alexandria, Baghdad, and perhaps Syria and Mecca.¹⁸ These were more than mere wanderings, however, as the future *mahdi*, or “rightly guided one,” sought out celebrated Islamic thinkers, including the scholar al-Ghazzali, whose works had been banned by the Almoravid elite.¹⁹ Although he began as a sort of public moral critic – a role difficult to suppress in a state based on moral revisionism – Ibn Tumart nonetheless did not take long to draw the wrath of authorities. He seems, in fact, to have incurred the wrath of many people. One story has it that sailors impatient with his teachings keelhailed Ibn Tumart en route to Tangiers, and the future leader was only plucked from the water when his failure to die expeditiously was seen to be divinely ordained.²⁰ However, once he found his way back to his natal village in the Souss and later among the tribes south of Marrakech in the mountain stronghold of Tin Mal, Ibn Tumart had the opportunity to deploy his eloquence and education in his native language and on culturally familiar territory. What followed was a radical social upheaval, an attempt to return to the sort of Islamic community exemplified by the Prophet.

Ibn Tumart’s political philosophy drew on diverse influences but emphasized personal moral reform and individual responsibility for communal standards – a notion that allegedly had him throwing the sultan’s sister from her horse for appearing in public without a veil.²¹ Perhaps more appealing to his mountain converts was Ibn Tumart’s message of social justice. Half a century after the Almoravids established Marrakech, the political philosophy and ascetic teachings they had developed in the desert no longer accorded with their wealthy, urbane lifestyle.²² Ibn Tumart seems to have convinced the mountain tribes that they – the poor, illiterate, non-Arabic-speaking “outsiders” – were destined to recapture and rejuvenate the vast House of Islam. How exactly he accomplished this remains a mystery, but the firebrand Ibn Tumart managed to galvanize the tribes of the Atlas and to turn the remote area around Tin Mal into the omphalos of Islam. As

Shatzmiller notes, the Almohads did not forget their Berber origins: “They were the first to implement Berber institutions in an Islamic garb and match them with a policy of accrediting the Berber language as equal to the Arabic, even in matters of worship. The Almohads appointed to the positions of preaching and leading the prayer, *khitaba* and *imama*, only individuals who could utter their unitarian credo, the *tawhid*, in the Berber language. To support this policy, they managed to get a *fatwa* which vouched that anyone who could not speak Arabic could say the prayer in Berber.”²³

Today, in the valleys around Tin Mal, the locals, who speak Tashelhit (Berber), still repeat tales of the coming of Ibn Tumart.²⁴ At least some families say that their ancestors came to the mountains with the *mahdi* and that those who had been Arabic speakers subsequently learned to speak Berber. Today Berber, specifically Tashelhit, is the only language that they speak. This suggests not only that many Berbers “became” Arab, as all scholars on the topic acknowledge, but also that *at least some Arabs became Berbers* through conversion, not just through marriage. This is evidence of the deep interrelatedness of Moroccans, whatever language they happen to speak today.²⁵

Space does not allow for a complete accounting of the role of Berbers in Morocco’s history or for discussion of the degree to which Amazigh culture is separable from, or capable of providing a base for, Moroccan national culture. Here I note that the discourse on Berbers has swung from a colonial-era perspective in which Berber issues took centre stage to a postcolonial period during which Berbers have had no place at all in Moroccan society.²⁶ The IRCAM *dahiri* seems to suggest that the pendulum has now reversed direction again.

Despite the claims and counterclaims of historical, ideological engineering, it seems undeniable that as long as there has been an entity identifiable as Morocco, Tamazight-speaking people have been fundamental to it. At some historical junctures, Imazighen have been self-conscious of an ethnic or linguistic identity, and this has had some political significance; indeed, the politicization of Berber identity has at times been quite compatible with a powerful, political Islamic consciousness even if the present eruption is generally opposed to an affiliation with Islam. The perdurability of Berber language is indisputable, and manifestations of Berber identity in different guises at different places and times indicates something of the resilient character of at least some aspects of Amazigh culture. However, this should

not cause us to ignore the many differences among Imazighen and the potential effects of these differences on contemporary cultural identity and on the Moroccan nationalist project.

REGIONAL DIVERSITY

To demand what have been defined as "human" rights, Amazigh activists in Morocco and elsewhere have necessarily asserted a unified cultural identity.²⁷ That is, to fight for much of what appears to have been granted in the IRCAM *dahir*, it has been necessary to aver that Imazighen have an essential culture that inheres in language and that members of this culture share certain disadvantageous social predicaments as a result of this culture. Part of this platform is irrefutable. Clearly, there is a unity to the language. The differences that exist within Tamazight are insignificant compared to the difference between all varieties of Tamazight and other languages, such as Arabic, French, or Spanish. It does not follow, however, that all Imazighen are equally discommoded by the oppression of their language and culture. Philosophers in Paris and Rabat experience their *amazighité*²⁸ differently than smugglers in the Rif, shepherds in the High Atlas, and shopkeepers in Fez and Casablanca. Such differences need careful attention. Regional historical differences bear on the contemporary subjective experience of being Amazigh, as do urban-rural variations and, perhaps most important, political-economic inequalities. The point I make in this section is that whatever Imazighen have in common, we cannot hope to understand the current social situation in Morocco, and the significance of the IRCAM *dahir*, without accounting for various forms of diversity that bear on linguistic affiliation, ethnic differentiation, and national consciousness.

It has long been understood that Moroccan Imazighen can be divided into three rough linguistic blocs centred in the Rif Mountains, the Middle Atlas, and the mountains of the South. While migration complicates the picture, large Berber-speaking communities remain a presence in rural Morocco today. Tarifit is spoken in the Rif Mountains of the North, Tamazight is the language of the Middle Atlas, and Tashelhit is spoken from the High Atlas south of Marrakech through the Anti Atlas. (In addition to its specific association with the Middle Atlas, Tamazight is also the general term for all of these language varieties.) There are sometimes sizable populations of Arabic speakers within these regions and sizable Berber-speaking migrant populations

outside of them, and many people are now bilingual, but the preponderance of monolingual, or Berber-dominant, communities exist in these regional groupings. Linguists cite the close affiliation of these language varieties, but rural Imazighen only sometimes claim that they can understand other people from other regions. Imazighen are more likely to understand other language varieties if they have travelled extensively in other areas or lived in a city for some time, but occasionally villagers insist that they cannot, for instance, understand Tarifit if they have grown up speaking Tashelhit.

The spatial discontinuity of Moroccan Imazighen, and their association in regional linguistic subgroups, has resulted in some important differences, especially recently.²⁹ The Rif, for example, has had much closer involvement with Europe than some other areas. The Rif abuts the Mediterranean, which may be seen as a conduit of people, goods, and ideas rather than as a barrier. Rifis are in this sense wedged between Algerians (and Algerian Imazighen), Europeans (especially Spaniards), and the rest of Morocco. Spain rather than France colonized the Rif; there remain Spanish enclaves in the North, such as Ceuta and Melilla, and Spanish remains better understood than French. As Nirna Sørensen has noted, General Franco recruited tens of thousands of Moroccans – primarily from the Rif – for the Spanish Civil War and for his personal guard.³⁰ Not all Rifis are Berbers, but they do represent a majority in the region. Spain has its own contentious linguistic communities – Basques and Catalonians, to start with – and it seems unlikely that the political implications of linguistic nationalism in Spain could be completely lost on migrating Rifis.

The Rif was precocious in attempting to liberate itself from the Christians, as Abd al-Krim led the Rif to attempt independence in 1921, fully thirty years before the rest of Morocco. Educated in Arabic and motivated by the notion of *jihad*, Abd al-Krim drew the forces operating under his command mostly from Berber tribes, particularly the Aith Waryaghar.³¹ Like the Almohads, Abd al-Krim found that Islamic discourse provided a better platform for political consolidation than Berber ethnic solidarity, but significantly the two seem to have worked together rather than to have opposed one another.

In short, when speaking of the colonial, or protectorate, period in Morocco, scholars generally refer implicitly to the experience of the French. Yet for the Berbers in the Rif, Spain is at least as important as France, and Spain remains but a relatively inexpensive boat ride

away. Today the Rif supports the vast majority of Morocco's thriving drug production and transport industry. Hashish alone has been estimated to be worth US\$2 billion a year,³² with even more wealth generated as cocaine and heroin move from South America into Europe through northern Moroccan smuggling networks. Rifi Berbers hold no monopoly on the drug trade in Morocco, but they do live in an area where marijuana production is a major commercial force and where smuggling of various sorts has long been part of the *modus vivendi*. These brute economic facts have cultural repercussions.

A comparison of the Rif to other regions of the country is revealing. Accounts of the Middle Atlas note that the economy remains centred on pastoralism and subsistence agriculture rather than on marijuana production and smuggling. There remain areas that are many hours from paved roads, not to mention electricity. Middle Atlas Berbers are famous for their segmentary tribal organization, a putatively egalitarian means of governance that eschews central authority and that seems to have endured until very recently. Vanessa Maher notes that "French penetration ... disrupted the traditional segmentary organization of the local tribes. It brought the imposition of strong and pervasive state control, and the creation of a labour market." However, this is seen as concerning men more than women, "whose relationship to the market and to the control of property barely changed. Their world is now still [as of 1974] structured largely according to the traditional criteria of status and segmentary alignments."³³ Wolfgang Kraus has gone further, suggesting that even for men the situation has not dramatically changed. He notes that "Hidduland," an area in the Central High Atlas, "failed to attract modern agricultural or industrial exploitation, [and thus] traditional economic structures did not undergo radical changes during the pro-tectorate period from 1933 until 1956 or the subsequent period of Moroccan national independence."³⁴ Surely, migration and the post-independence expansion of what Abdaslam Ben Kaddour calls the "neo-makhzen"³⁵ has had some effect on Tamazight-speaking people in the Middle Atlas, and Kraus does note that the expansion of the central government, or "neo-makhzen," has diminished genealogical "tribal" notions of political affinity while retaining other affective associations, something like "segmentary identities."³⁶ Bernhard Venema argues that local political institutions remain vital despite encroaching governmental structures.³⁷

The upshot of these analyses is that the political-economic reality in the Middle Atlas seems quite unlike that in the Rif, especially insofar as "traditional" social forms that disappeared in the Rif at the time of Abd al-Krim have proven rather durable in the Middle Atlas, both among women in Maher's study and across a broader spectrum of the population according to Kraus and Venema.³⁸ Octave Marais states flatly, "At independence, the Berber world was even more divided than in 1912."³⁹

This is not to say that in themselves "traditional forms" lacked regional differences. Settlements in the Rif, for instance, tended to comprise "widely dispersed" family compounds located "not less than 300 meters distant from the next."⁴⁰ In the Middle Atlas one might have seen this, but a concentrated village life is more likely, often combined with transhumance and, until recently, even pastoralists living in tents. The Berbers of the High Atlas most commonly live in very densely built villages of fewer than five hundred people located propitious distances from one another along rivers used for irrigation. Anti Atlas settlement also tended toward insular village construction, but defensible outcrops were favoured over riverside locations presumably because there are few reliable rivers in the region to use in irrigation and because the mountains themselves are not rugged enough to deter the depredations of outsiders.

Social and political organization also seems more variable than is sometimes assumed. Ernest Gellner wrote of the mountains east of Marrakech as a place where "equality and liberty go together" and argued that with the exception of religiously sanctioned arbiters, "saints," the tribes self-governed with a remarkable emphasis on equity.⁴¹ The areas south of Marrakech, however, were anything but egalitarian. By the time the French arrived, the western High Atlas was in the hands of three all-powerful lords, some of whom had been in control from the middle of the nineteenth century. Robert Montagne has described the political organization of the region as having been divided between two maximal *ifuf*, or moieties, before the rise of *grand caids*, but by the time Montagne himself arrived on the scene, these had long been supplanted.⁴² The three *grand caids*, or "Lords of the Atlas," remained in power until the departure of the French, with some family members playing active and important roles in the rule of the country during the colonial era and even still today. Gellner and David Hart have critiqued Montagne's model for traditional political organization, but here the point is that by the early twentieth

century, different Berber regions looked very different politically.⁴³ At least for the hundred years preceding the French withdrawal from Morocco, political life in the western High Atlas had an extremely authoritarian flavour, in strong contrast to nearby areas to the east and northeast, as indicated by ethnographic reports.

Today the European appetite for illegal drugs has transformed the economy of the Rif. Subsistence farming continues, but marijuana's potential as a cash crop is evident and tempting. The High and Middle Atlas remain regions of desperately poor barley farmers with some pastoralism, arboiculture, and seasonal wage labour. Villages here may still function as economic units, particularly in terms of irrigation organization,⁴⁴ but they are insinuated into the larger economy through circular labour migration. The far South, on the other hand, has been utterly transformed by the more-or-less permanent emigration of men to the cities, particularly to work in the dry goods industry.⁴⁵ Today many parts of the Anti Atlas are almost totally supported rather than merely subsidized by remittances, and the permanent local population consists disproportionately of women, the very old, and the very young. Many Anti Atlas communities are nowhere close to being economically self-supporting, but this should not be taken to mean that they are any less culturally or affectively vital. Migrants in the cities wait all year to return to the Anti Atlas during Ramadan or at the 'Aid al-Adha. Migrants maintain village ties for emotional and cultural reasons; they hope to expose children to village mores and even to find brides appropriately uncorrupted by urban life. Some men invest significant sums in building overwrought versions of traditional village houses, including vast stables for sheep that quite evidently could not live on the meager herbage of the dry mountains. The women and relatively few men who remain in these villages still farm, tending almond trees or sowing fields of rain-fed barley when the weather cooperates, but they rely on the migrants' returns. The absence of these migrants from the Anti Atlas may in fact increase the self-conscious value of village life and with it Amazigh consciousness.

In sum, rural Berber communities take various forms, comprising relatively isolated homesteads in the North, densely populated and irrigation-dependent villages in the High Atlas, and economically enervated southern villages that subsist partially as consciously maintained cultural icons. Some of these differences have been exacerbated or even caused by recent political economic changes, but the

huge area inhabited by Morocco's Imazighen virtually ensures significant regional variation even in the "traditional" context. Important, too, is that large populations of Imazighen are now urban, with especially significant communities in Casablanca and Agadir. The interactions of urban Imazighen with their complexly different homelands evinces the rich tapestry of contemporary Amazigh society, which cannot be easily sketched or simply amalgamated and set in opposition to "Arab" or national culture. A discussion of Amazigh identity formation cannot ignore internal diversity. The policies of the IRCAM *dahir* are likely to be carried out differently in different regions and will certainly take different forms in cities than in the countryside. The effects on Imazighen, and their expressions of and interest in being Imazighen, are likely to be similarly diverse.

IDIOMS OF AFFILIATION AND PARADIGMS OF INCLUSION

Above I touched on the differences between an Amazigh activist vision of a unified Berber culture and nationalist, tribal, and other interpretations of who Berbers are and what matters to them. Some of these differences in interpretation surely have to do with the varying conditions in which contemporary Imazighen live – from urban Paris to suburban Rabat and from isolated Rif homesteads to dense, mud-walled High Atlas villages – and with the varying employment status of the Imazighen, from overworked subsistence farmers to unemployed college graduates. As real – and important – as these differences are, the *perception* of affiliation and difference constitutes the core of identity, whether local or national. The idioms and discursive frameworks deployed in the construction of social identity bear on the shape that such identity takes, and in Morocco there seems remarkably little scholarly agreement on which idioms and frameworks are regnant. The IRCAM *dahir* is meant in part to promote Amazigh culture. What exactly comprises this culture is an enduring and particularly fraught question in Moroccan social science.

Berber speakers are estimated to make up 40 per cent of the Moroccan population, so the question of their place in Moroccan society is of real concern, especially as Berber speakers are increasingly educated in Arabic and migrate to urban areas.⁴⁶ In urban conditions, notions of "tradition" and "culture" assume new, and newly meaningful, forms. As I have noted elsewhere, literate Amazigh scholars

and activists are now disseminating strikingly modern notions of their identity.⁴⁷ These notions are modern in their expression (websites, cultural organizations, Internet discussion groups, radio programs), in their location (cyberspace and urban centres rather than villages and small towns), and in their forms. The modern, activist form of Amazigh identity is explicitly culturalist, involving a meaningful essence seen to infuse Imazighen everywhere and to stretch back to the very origins of North African history.⁴⁸ Such activists forcefully argue not only that there is salience to the notion of a distinct, enduring Berber culture, but also that this culture is under threat. Salem Chaker states the position eloquently: "To be a Berber today, and to want to stay one, is to, necessarily commit an act that is at once military, cultural, possibly scientific, and always political."⁴⁹ Simply being Berber in North Africa is a political act – at least for some.

What has made Berberness political has been Arab resistance to seeing Berbers as a valid part of North African culture and society, but the Maghreb states and their Arabist ideologues have not been the only problem. Some Western scholars, most famously Ernest Gellner, seem to contradict the claims made by Chaker. Gellner writes that "Arab and Berber are not corporate groups; they are simply linguistic classifications."⁵⁰ It is hard to see how a mere "linguistic classification" evokes the political passion Chaker describes. Gellner's work on Berber tribal life does provide a view of Berbers as culturally inclined toward equality and liberty – a positive cultural valuation that contradicts some urban depictions of Berbers as ignorant bumpkins – but Gellner also portrays Berber society as "segmentary" and premodern and thus isolated from the Moroccan state and nation. This interpretation complicates activist efforts to develop a broad Berber/Amazigh consciousness necessary to fight for cultural and linguistic rights and a place in the national imagination. As Gellner's main interest is theoretical – the potential for "segmentary" stateless governance – the question of the nature of Berber identity couples arcane debates in social theory to real political concerns.⁵¹

I need not review all of what Gellner and his interlocutors have said about the "segmentary hypothesis," but it is useful to touch on the issue at least insofar as much contemporary scholarship in Morocco reacts to Gellner's vision. In Gellner's work on Berbers, the important entity is the tribe rather than the language (as it would be for activist Imazighen) or the state (as it is for most scholars today).

His main theoretical thrust is that tribes contain – or did contain – nested, isomorphic segments balanced against each other. Tribes themselves can combine to form larger entities that mirror the organization of the component units. Such a notion builds explicitly on Emile Durkheim's notion of "mechanical solidarity," such that, as Gellner puts it, "similarity is not merely lateral but also vertical: it is not simply that groups resemble their neighbors at the same level of size, but it is also the case that groups resemble, organizationally, the sub-groups of which they are composed, and the larger groups of which they are members. This is totally unlike the organisational principle on which our own society is based."⁵²

Durkheim himself initially drew from the early ethnography on Algerian Berbers, especially Kabyles, to develop the thesis of mechanical solidarity. In *De la division de travail social*, Durkheim defines the ideal terms of mechanical solidarity among extinct societies, citing Berbers as a living example of such a social type. He writes, "Thus, among the Kabyles the political unity is the clan, constituted in the form of a village (djemnaa or thaddart); several djemnaa form a tribe (arch'), and several tribes form the confederation (thak'ebilt), the highest political society that the Kabyles know. The same is true among the Hebrews ... These societies are such typical examples of mechanical solidarity that their principal physiological characteristics come from it."⁵³ This theory, and Gellner's elaboration of it, have been exhaustively debated and roundly criticized,⁵⁴ although some scholars continue to find segmentary theory illuminating of Moroccan social reality. In recent work Kraus, for instance, writes that "political relations are described by informants as a rather stable structural disposition of segmented groups."⁵⁵ According to Kraus, the "groups" are preeminently Berber and imbued with an "egalitarianism which (gender inequalities apart) is an important value in relations among tribespeople."⁵⁶ The implication of this perspective is that such "tribespeople" are not Moroccan in any very significant way. Rather, their principle locus of affiliation lies in their "contestable identities."⁵⁷ Kraus discusses a small part of the Moroccan population, but even so his is a minority viewpoint among scholars today.

In fact, most contemporary academics do not seem interested in Berber politics at all but in "power" as it is broadly understood and actualized in Morocco. "Power" was perhaps the most popular term in social theory for most of the 1990s. Interestingly, however, the type

of power preferred (at least by anthropologists) has tended to be actorless, dislocated "discourse" rather than anything vested in the historically situated social configurations that Michel Foucault, who inspired much of this work, might have wished to see. Interest in the power of culture has evolved into a fascination with the mostly elite, mostly state-centred concentration of power.

In Morocco this is exemplified by Abdellah Hammoudi's work on the "master and disciple" *diagramme*, or cultural model, which is thought to lock Moroccans into a ramifying field of "dominating/dominated" dyads that ultimately serve the dominance of the state.⁵⁸ This work builds on the Geertzian "interpretivist" approach but assumes asymmetrical power relations not as easily "negotiated" as scholars such as Lawrence Rosen imply.⁵⁹ In fact, Hammoudi seems to draw on Anthony Giddens's version of practice theory when he examines the "structuration of power relations."⁶⁰ Hammoudi is concerned not merely with culture, but with the "the exact ways in which ... abstract principles of legitimation are vested with an emotional impact sufficient to foster action" and the means by which "unfolding configurations ... [come] into existence through a dynamic of confrontation, efforts, disputes, compromises, and mere chance."⁶¹ Whether they accept Hammoudi's cultural explanation of power operations, most scholars agree that the state is the preeminent level of analysis. Rahma Bourqia and Susan Gilson Miller write, "What do we mean by power in Morocco? Where is it located, how does it work its way through society, bending people to its will? A conceptualization of power begins with the state."⁶² Here the issue of power is clearly Moroccan rather than Berber or Arab and thus hierarchically organized rather than diffuse. This is the most prevalent viewpoint today concerning power and politics in Morocco.

It is difficult to disagree with much of this perspective. Certainly, the Moroccan monarchy has successfully maintained itself through many crises, and today state power seems at least as important as at any time since independence. This partly has to do with fairly old-fashioned methods – censorship, patronage, secret police, and not-so-secret prisons – but governance is rarely accomplished only through force.⁶³ Hammoudi is almost certainly right that a cultural model exists that supports the legitimacy of the regime. The problem is that other cultural models also exist in Morocco – for instance, genealogically ordered segments (in some areas, as noted by some scholars)⁶⁴ and a general notion of Amazigh affinity preferred by

many Berber activists. Even if Hammoudi is right, his *diagramme* is far from unitary, and it can be called "hegemonic" only if we ignore the visceral technologies that allow Morocco's masters to assert control over their putative disciples. As Elaine Combs-Schilling has shown, the existence of a particular cultural frame (in her example, the notion of segmentarity) does not preclude the simultaneous existence of other frameworks for meaning.⁶⁵ Culture is not a zero sum game. Anyone is capable of holding logically and substantively contradictory notions without any subjective sense of incongruity whatsoever. The question is why one idiom or framework for meaning takes precedence or how particular discourses are vested with power. At present there is no entirely convincing model for the murky relationship between culture and action, much less for the relation between action and the panoply of cultural models available for deployment in any given place and time. In terms of the Amazighen, this means that actual, historically relevant manifestations of Berber or Amazigh consciousness must rely on more than the existence of people who happen to speak Tamazight. What else "more" varies through time and across space.

Finally, in discussing the power of the Moroccan state, the salience of national culture, and the role of Berbers in both, we cannot ignore religion.⁶⁶ Islam has provided a consistent idiom of affiliation for Moroccans for over a millennium, and its significance does not appear to be declining with any evident rapidity. Without delving into the complex bases for, or the many forms of, political Islam, it is worth mentioning that the message of equality before God resonates powerfully among politically oppressed and economically dispossessed people. If the universalistic discourse of some Islamic activists has opposed the particularistic vision of some Amazigh activists, it is worth remembering that this need not be so. Historically, it has not been *despite* but *through* Islam that Amazighen have achieved significant political power. The Qur'an has been enduringly useful for men (far more than women) bent on forging isolated individuals into cohesive social bodies – and on inspiring these bodies to action.

This success is undoubtedly due in part both to the poetic force of the Holy Book and to historical happenstance. Many have suggested, however, that some portion of the current surge of political Islam in Morocco and elsewhere must come from its position as one of the few alternatives to a "new world order" in which the poor are

assured yet more time at the bottom of the social ladder. Even in Latin America some are crying "seamos moros!" ("let us be Moors!"),⁶⁷ declaring solidarity with the Muslim world in the face of "a new imperial age" and the so-called "war" on terror.⁶⁸ Promises that the global tide of structural adjustment will lift all boats are no longer credible, as the standard of living continues to decline for many who already endure pitiable conditions. As Azzadine Layachi writes, in Morocco "it is feared that as the social and economic exclusion touches more people, the ensuing situation may mobilize greater numbers, under the religious banner, to press for a radical change."⁶⁹ The Qur'an pronounces all believers equal before God, which means that Bill Gates, King Mohammed VI, and both George Bushes will stand in judgment alongside unemployable young men from the *bidonvilles* of Casablanca and shepherds from the High Atlas too poor to buy shoes. For the pious and materially impoverished of the world, this has to be a satisfying vision.

Some ethnographers have asserted that there is a specifically Berber cultural emphasis on equality that seems to complement the Islamic ideal. Of the High Atlas, Gellner writes that "Here, at least, equality and liberty go together."⁷⁰ Hart has noted of some Rif Berbers that "Aith Waryaghar society is characterized by a fierce and highly competitive egalitarianism ... hence the only workable political system or arrangement is that of superimposed representative councils - a system of organized acephaly. Egalitarianism is the keynote."⁷¹ Elsewhere Hart writes that "a constant preoccupation of all Berbers is never to let one head rise above the rest."⁷² John Chiapuris notes that in the Middle Atlas, "Berber tribal organization stressed equality of male members and open recruitment, both of which served to maintain flexible and viable social entities in an environment of political and ecological hazards."⁷³ I have already noted Kraus's assertion of a certain Berber "egalitarianism which (gender inequalities apart) is an important value in relations among tribespeople."⁷⁴

Not everyone entirely agrees with this assessment. Early last century Robert Montagne noted that "The egalitarianism which exists within a council of notables in a Berber republic is purely nominal. Despite the respect paid to egalitarian institutions - to such an extent that the rich have houses that are no finer than those of the poor - one finds that it is the rich who exercise power behind the scenes."⁷⁵ This recalls Amartya Sen's observation that "The central question in

the analysis and assessment of equality is ... 'equality of what?'"⁷⁶ Based on my own work among villagers in the High Atlas, I make the case that culturally elaborated norms of deference and domination coexist with the value placed on some kinds of egalitarianism. In concert with these cultural frameworks, local social organization mitigates inequality in some respects but exacerbates differences in others.⁷⁷ Still, most observers agree that at least the notional value placed on some forms of equality is a notable feature of Berber culture. This notion seems consonant with the rhetoric of much of political Islam today and suggests that in some ways Islamic paradigms of affiliation and inclusion are (or have become) compatible with "traditional" Amazigh culture.

RURAL POVERTY AND AMAZIGH IDENTITY

The role of economic factors in shaping social identity in Morocco should be taken seriously. This is not to reduce eruptions of self-conscious cultural identity to a straightforward case of ideology, but it is not possible to understand manifestations of cultural consciousness without reference to the material contexts in which they happen. For instance, if the IRCAM *dahir* is primarily aimed at issues of cultural identity, the changes the *dahir* demands of the education system will affect variously positioned Moroccans differently. I have already discussed significant variation in the economic organization of different regions; there are also differences that cut across regions.

The classic, preeminent trope is that of a rural-urban cleavage mapped on to a Berber-Arab divide. This is wrong in at least one important sense: Morocco's cities are full of Imazighen, and the countryside has large areas where Arabic is the dominant language. Frustration over the too-easy equation "rural = Berber" has caused some scholars to disavow or disregard any rural connection for Berber culture. However, this seems as wrong as treating all Berbers as rural and all Arabs as urban. Surely, the experience of being Berber in urban Arabic-, French-, and Spanish-speaking society is as important to "the" Amazigh culture as the experience of being Amazigh in a monolingual, Tamazight-speaking milieu. Of course, neither condition is more or less authentically Berber; both are part of the contemporary Amazigh social reality. To discuss differences within Amazigh culture and political economy does not undercut the notion that a general *amazighité* exists.

Despite these caveats, it remains the case that many parts of the Moroccan mountains are nearly exclusively Amazigh, with all socioeconomic indicators in these areas being significantly worse than the national average. I have argued elsewhere that the failure to address the overlap between Berber-speaking areas and impoverished areas threatens to inject a material urgency into questions of linguistic distinctiveness.⁷⁸ I have also noted that the assignment of monolingual, Arabic-speaking teachers to rural Tamazight-speaking areas virtually ensures frustration on the part of teachers and students alike.⁷⁹ The IRCAM *dahir* seems to address the latter issue, but the former remains intractable.

In fact, the economic situation of the poorest Moroccans is bad and seems to be getting worse. Quoting a 1989 publication by David Seddon, Mark Tessler writes, "the structural adjustment policies being pursued by the government hurt the poorest categories of the population while benefiting others."⁸⁰ Abdeslam Maghraoui writes, "Four decades after independence more than half of Morocco's 29 million people are illiterate. Nineteen percent of Moroccans live in abject poverty and 21 percent of the working-age urban population is unemployed, including some 100,000 university graduates."⁸¹ He goes on to note that a woman dies every six hours giving birth in Morocco and that "in Casablanca, a city of three million people, some 10,000 homeless children fall prey to drug and prostitution rings. By comparison, Sao Paulo, Brazil, a city of more than 10 million people, has 5,000 homeless children."⁸² World Bank data show that the number of Moroccans living on less than a dollar a day, what the Bank calls "below the absolute poverty line," has increased 50 percent since 1991.⁸³ Remy Leveau writes that "in 1998 [Morocco] ranked 125th in the world on the United Nations Human Development Index. It comes a long way behind Algeria and Tunisia, and even behind Egypt and Syria, looking at the statistics for schooling, health care and per capita GDP."⁸⁴ There have been some improvements in some aspects of the Moroccan infrastructure and economy over the past decade. Unfortunately, these have not percolated down to the most vulnerable strata of society. As Layachi writes, "Morocco was the first country in North Africa to engage in structural adjustment. The program, which began in 1983, is credited with a major overhaul of the national economy. At the aggregate level, Morocco succeeded in stabilizing a deteriorating situation and in restructuring its economy, notably through privatization and stringent fiscal policies.

However, success at the macro-level did not improve the lot of most people."⁸⁵

If the situation in Morocco is bad overall, it is worse in the countryside. Maghraoui states flatly that "Women and rural populations are the most afflicted by poverty in Morocco ... Eighty percent of villages have no access to paved roads, running water or electricity, and 93 percent have yet to obtain basic health care facilities."⁸⁶ A World Bank report on Moroccan education estimates that while 52 per cent of the country live in rural areas, only 10 per cent of the education budget was spent in those rural areas during the 1980s.⁸⁷ It is impossible to get data on Berber-speaking areas specifically, but to the degree that the Moroccan mountains remain significantly Amazigh, rural Imazighen are significantly disadvantaged vis-à-vis their urban cousins, whether these are Arab or Berber. As Layachi points out, "Disparities between rural and urban incomes and living standards are critical. Among the rural population, 63 per cent have no water, 87 per cent are without electricity, 93 per cent have no access to health services and 65 per cent are illiterate. The health system, which receives only one per cent of the GDP, is deteriorating and corruption has become an institution."⁸⁸

For the purposes of this chapter, what is significant about material inequality and regional differences in Morocco is the implications for the politicization of Morocco's Amazigh population. My contention is that material inequality has been underappreciated as a factor in Moroccan social and cultural life. This is not to say that class consciousness lurks beneath Amazigh consciousness but that material factors work in tandem with social and cultural forces to amplify politicized forms of identity. Hugh Roberts has written convincingly of the material basis of the "Kabyle question" among Algerian Berbers.⁸⁹ Without transmuting cultural activism into political-economic equations, we still must deal with the impact of political and economic inequality on ethnic and national consciousness. We must attend to the social predicaments of variously situated Berbers in order to understand what being Berber means today. This is too rarely done in my own discipline of anthropology, where the pursuit of "culture" blinds us to the multivalent significance of poverty and political disenfranchisement.

In Morocco it is the rural poor in particular who are likely to be affected by the education changes promised in the IRCAM *dahir*. Since much of the Moroccan countryside remains Berber-speaking and

since the countryside is far worse off economically than the cities, the poorest Imazighen are likely the first to be educated in the new Tamazight language curriculum. In the countryside, poverty suffuses daily life. This is the context in which discourse – whether nationalist, socialist, Islamist, Amazigh, or some combination – will be deployed. These discourses are not mutually exclusive, and the way they articulate the urgent material concerns of Morocco's masses will determine the saliency of the discourse itself – and part of Morocco's political future.

CONCLUSIONS AND POSSIBILITIES

Clearly Berber speakers have existed in North Africa since time immemorial; they have reproduced their language, and arguably their culture, across a long period of time against what would seem fairly daunting odds. I have tried to suggest that the political significance of the linguistic fact of Berber particularity has varied across time and space. The IRCAM *dahir* is but one act in this long history, and its relevance will depend on how it interacts with other cultural, social, and political forces. Despite much progress since this chapter was originally drafted in 2001, there is not yet a full sense of how the *dahir* will be implemented, what sorts of changes it will really make in the education system, or what sorts of actors it will empower and/or inspire. I can, however, make some preliminary observations of how it is likely to affect both the enduring Berber/Amazigh question in Morocco and Morocco's national identity.

First, it has been shown that "the" Berber issue in Algeria is far more complicated than a binary ethnic cleavage.⁹⁰ Other ideological factors play a role – for instance, the socialist or Islamist inclinations of particular Berbers – as do the differing material conditions of Imazighen coming of age in different generations and living in different regions of the country. The same is true in Morocco, except that unlike its neighbour, Morocco has no Kabylia, no single, dominant subgroup of Berbers that have come to be taken as a *synecdoche*. Still, I would argue that there need not be a single, concentrated, overarching or even widely shared sense of Amazigh consciousness for Amazighness to prove politically salient in some ways. Amazigh distinctiveness can merge with other social affiliations to play a role in a variety of social groups and movements, from Islamists and socialists to royalists and secular liberal democrats. In the complex social and political geography of Morocco, convergences matter.

Interest groups are temporally fluid and strategically reconstituted. If we look for a homogeneous Amazigh perspective, we are bound to be disappointed. This does not preclude "being Amazigh" as an important *part* of the perspective of the many millions of Moroccans who speak some version of Tamazight as their first or only language. If it cannot be said a priori what influence *amazighité* will have on a particular issue, group, or action, neither should one assume that it will have no influence.

Second, political-economic factors should not be underestimated. Morocco's poor have always suffered, but the combination of rising expectations with disintegrating conditions can prove explosive. Scholars and government officials have worried over the plight and political potential of unemployed college graduates. In searching for an idiom of protest, these literate urbanites have articulated their grievances in many ways but rarely ethnically as Berbers or Arabs. Now, however, the rural poor are coming to share some of the expectations that have left urban Moroccans disgruntled, and many thousands – perhaps millions – of these rural poor are Tamazight speakers. The promise of a new king, and the expanding ambit of World Bank and other development projects, have injected more hope into rural communities than can be met by the pace of change. The slow spread of literacy and the more rapid proliferation of radios, cassette decks, and satellite television have meant that rural Berbers are coming to understand the larger world more immediately. The juxtaposition of hopeful (Arabic and French) words and images from "outside" with the daily drudgery of rural poverty leads, at least in the mountains, to a consciousness of being both poor and Berber. Whatever the statistical reality, if rural Berbers come to see themselves as a group that is disproportionately impoverished, there will emerge real potential for a distinctly radical Berber politics.⁹¹ The IRCAM *dahir* seems aimed at eliminating some of the main forms of linguistic discrimination in Morocco – in the legal and education systems. This is an important step, but if the expanding younger generation finds it impossible to work, marry, and raise families as their parents did, they are likely to organize resistance. The government clearly hopes that this will take some form other than Islamic radicalism, but Islam's message of equality and justice resonates powerfully among disaffected Berbers as well as Arabs.

Third, it is worth remembering that the general issues raised by IRCAM are not restricted to Morocco or even North Africa more generally. Scholars around the world have noted the political saliency

of "culture" of late, particularly the use of culture in national projects and even the conceptualization of nations as cultural projects. Culture has become political material,⁹² whether employed by indigenous people in Brazil pressing their demands at the United Nations or by the far right in France excoriating "Arabs" for their inassimilable, non-French "culture" – rather than their non-French "race."⁹³ There is no guarantee that Berber culture will become a significant idiom of political expression in Morocco, but it would hardly be out of line with a worldwide explosion in identity politics and projects.

Finally, the IRCAM *dahir* stands to have many uses for many different actors. To start with, the establishment of IRCAM seems intended to please Amazigh rights activists and will serve as a visible symbol of an emerging civil society. Some groups are already contesting such measures, which they regard as cultural cooptation by the state, while others embrace the potential to gain at least some education in the native tongue of rural children and to see Amazigh art and culture openly produced in the cities. This will satisfy some international observers, too, but there would seem to be more to the story. What does the handling of Amazigh demands in Morocco have to do with the upheaval in Algeria, particularly the huge protests by Kabyle-based Amazigh political parties in May 2001? What does it have to do with the emerging Islamist challenge within Morocco, such as the March 2000 demonstrations in Casablanca, which are estimated to have drawn 200,000 people into the streets? Critics will note that the IRCAM *dahir* seems to value Berber particularity in a way that is reminiscent of the ill-fated, French-sponsored "Berber *dahir*" that inflamed Moroccan nationalist passion in 1930. While the new *dahir* does not outline separate Islamic laws for urban people (understood to be Arabs) and customary, "tribal" laws for rural people (understood to be Berbers), it does pave the way for different educational formats in different parts of the Kingdom. The areas where Berber is to be the language of instruction are likely to be in the countryside rather than in the city, which could easily beget a situation in which rural and urban education become even more separate – and even less equal.

Many have noted that the Moroccan monarchy bases its practical relevance partly on its ability to manipulate sectarian politics. Hamoudi states that "the authoritarian government must have diversity in order to appear as the mediator,"⁹⁴ while Edward Thomas notes

that the present king's father "proved himself to be remarkably skillful in playing different factions off against one another, thereby gathering decisive power into his own hands."⁹⁵

The point seems to be that the Moroccan monarchy requires sectarian politics in order to function and thus that there will be those who view IRCAM as a tool to turn the political energies of activist Amazighen against Islamists – on university campuses and in the streets. This is conjectural, of course, and is complicated by the strong Muslim faith of many Amazighen and their overrepresentation in Morocco's religious schools.

The promotion of Amazigh culture seems laudable to anyone who believes that cultural and linguistic expression is a fundamental human right; the *dahir* is sure to please most Western observers. However, what IRCAM will mean in Morocco, how the edict will be implemented, and a full sense of why it is being promulgated is not yet clear. The promotion of Amazigh culture in the IRCAM *dahir* may be simultaneously the product of a genuine desire to improve the plight of Morocco's linguistic minorities *and* a means of extending royal control over a diverse nation. It may be at once co-optation and a kind of liberation. From a scholarly perspective, the IRCAM *dahir* represents an experiment in constituting a multicultural national identity that includes Imazighen – a first for North Africa and a project worthy of continued attention.

NOTES

¹ Herein I use "Berber" and "Amazigh" interchangeably. While some activists object to the use of the non-Amazigh term "Berber," many activists and scholars do use it. I do not believe Berber carries any negative connotation in English, as pointed out by Fatima Sadiqi, "The Place of Berbers in Morocco."

² See the many publications and activities sponsored by the Centre Tarik Ibn Ziyad at <http://www.centretarik.org.ma>.

³ A. Allouche, "Arabization and Linguistic Politics in Maghreb"; Ahmed Boukous, "La langue berbère: Maintien et changement," and "L'amazighe dans l'éducation et la formation"; Salem Chaker, *Berbères aujourd'hui*; David Crawford and Katherine Hoffman, "Essentially Amazigh: Urban Berbers and the Global Village"; Lahcen Oulhaj, "Possibilité et nécessité d'intégrer Tamazight à l'université marocaine"; Fatima Sadiqi, "The Place

of Berbers in Morocco"; and Jilali Saib, "Pour une intégration effective de l'enseignement de l'amazighe à l'université marocaine."

4 Since the original drafting of this chapter just after the IRCAM *dahir* was announced, there has been a flurry of intellectual activity on the topic. See, for instance, Aziz Kich, ed., *L'Amazighité*; and Moha Enanji, "Reflections on Arabization and Education in Morocco."

5 Bruce Maddy-Weitzman, "The Berber Question in Algeria."

6 While actual treatment of Berbers by Arabs continued Roman discrimination, converts were within the bounds of faith; thus "North Africa in its entirety was for the first time embraced by the philosophy of the dominant culture and brought within its scope." Michael Brett and Elizabeth Fentress, "The Berbers," 83.

7 Chaker, *Berbères aujourd'hui*, 11.

8 Stephanie S. Saad, "Interpreting Ethnic Quiescence: A Brief History of the Berbers of Morocco," 167, emphasis in the original.

9 *Ibid.*, 177.

10 Ernest Gellner, *Saints of the Atlas*, 15.

11 Maya Shatzmiller, *The Berbers and the Islamic State*, xi.

12 Gabriel Ben-Dor, "Minorities in the Middle East," 1. This is not to say that I necessarily agree with Ben-Dor on the centrality of ethnic distinctions. Jack Goody, "Bitter Icons," 8, has written that "The term 'ethnic' has become a cant word in the social sciences and often in everyday speech, where it is frequently used in a blanket fashion to refer to any collective grouping with a semblance of homogeneity, in situations of conflict or positions of subordination. The concept of ethnicity has been so widely taken up because it gets around the problem of defining what it is that makes a people – that is, an ethnos – distinctive. Is the unity it possesses based on language, faith, descent, or culture in some vague sense? Ethnicity covers all as well as covering up all."

13 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.

14 Shatzmiller, *The Berbers and the Islamic State*, xii.

15 (al 'Arawi) Abdallah Laroui, *The History of the Maghreb*, 157.

16 *Ibid.*, 164–5.

17 *Ibid.*, 165.

18 Rachid Bourouiba, *Ibn Tumart*, 11–13.

19 Laroui, *The History of the Maghreb*, 175.

20 See H.T. Norris, *The Berbers in Arabic Literature*, 161, for one version of this tale.

21 See Vincent I. Cornell, "Understanding is the Mother of Ability: Responsibility and Action in the Doctrine of Ibn Tumart," for a review of Ibn Tumart's "doctrine of responsibility."

22 This represents exactly the sort of dynastic cycle that Ibn Khaldun outlines in his classic works of political sociology.

23 Shatzmiller, *The Berbers and the Islamic State*, 10.

24 See David Crawford, *Work and Identity in the Moroccan High Atlas*, 179.

25 Of course, it may also be a purely ideological claim to Arab ancestry and the associated prestige.

26 See David Crawford, "Morocco's Invisible Imazighen."

27 For instance, see Paul Silverstein, "Of Rooting and Uprooting: Kabyle Habitus, Domesticity, and Structural Nostalgia," for an account of how social theory and social activism conspired to produce a sense of precolonial Amazigh cultural unity in Kabylia.

28 See Kich, ed., *L'Amazighité*.

29 See David A. McMurray, *In and Out of Morocco*.

30 Ninna Nyberg Sørensen, "Crossing the Spanish-Moroccan Border with Migrants, New Islamists, and Riff-Raif," 89.

31 David Hart, *The Aith Waryaghar of the Moroccan Rif*.

32 James Ketterer, "Networks of Discontent in Northern Morocco," 31.

33 Vanessa Maher, *Women and Property in Morocco*, 31.

34 Wolfgang Kraus, "Contestable Identities: Tribal Structures in the Moroccan High Atlas," 6.

35 Abdaslam Ben Kaddour, "The Neo-Makhzen and the Berbers."

36 Kraus, "Contestable Identities."

37 Bernhard Venema, "The Vitality of Local Political Institutions in the Middle Atlas, Morocco."

38 Kraus, "Contestable Identities"; Venema, "The Vitality."

39 Octave Marais, "The Political Evolution of the Berbers in Independent Morocco," 277.

40 Hart, *The Aith Waryaghar of the Moroccan Rif*, 29.

41 Gellner, *Saints of the Atlas*, 64.

42 Robert Montagne, *The Berbers*.

43 See Gellner, *Saints of the Atlas*, 65–7; and Hart, *The Aith Waryaghar of the Moroccan Rif*.

44 David Crawford, "Arranging the Bones: Culture, Time and In/equality in Berber Labor Organization," 465.

45 John Waterbury, *North for the Trade: The Life and Times of a Berber Merchant*.

46 See Chaker, *Berbères aujourd'hui*, 9, for statistics on estimated numbers of Berber speakers in North Africa. See also Brett and Fentress, "The Berbers," 276; Boukous, "La langue berbère," and *Société, langues et cultures au Maroc*; and Sadiqi, "The Place of Berbers in Morocco."

47 Crawford, *Work and Identity*; and "Morocco's Invisible Imazighen."

- 48 See Crawford and Hoffman, "Essentially Amazigh," for a discussion of this rhetoric and the communicative practices associated with the movement. See Hugh Roberts, "The Economics of Berberism: The Material Basis of the Kabyle Question in Contemporary Algeria," for a historical account of Berber-consciousness groups and activism; see Chaker, *Berbéres aujourd'hui*, for a scholarly account of the cultural-historical significance of Berbers and for resources on contemporary journals and organizations interested in Berber cultural and linguistic rights. Brett and Fentress, "The Berbers," offers a combined archeological and historical account of Berber history.
- 49 Chaker, *Berbéres aujourd'hui*, 7, my translation. Chaker begins his account with a quote from Ibn Khaldun: "The Berbers have always been a powerful, formidable, brave, and numerous people; a real people like so many others in this world, like the Arabs, Persians, Greeks, and Romans" (my translation). This explains Chaker's position in a nutshell: Berbers are a people in the same sense as the Persians, the Greeks, and the Romans. For other activist views on Amazigh identity, see any issue in the list of activist newsletters and publications that Professor Chaker lists (143-4) or websites such as www.mondeberbere.com, www.waac.org, and www.tinghir.org. For more history of the rise of Berber-identity activism, see Hugh Roberts, "The Unforeseen Development of the Kabyle Question in Contemporary Algeria," and "The Economics of Berberism"; and Brett and Fentress, "The Berbers," chapter 8.
- 50 Gellner, *Saints of the Atlas*, 73.
- 51 Again, see Silverstein, "Of Rooting and Uprooting," for more on the confluence of social theory and social activism.
- 52 Ernest Gellner, *Culture, Identity, and Politics*, 31.
- 53 Émile Durkheim, *The Division of Labor in Society*, 178.
- 54 See M.E. Combs-Schilling, "Segmentarity, Social Stratification, Political Power, and Sainthood"; David Hart, *Dadda 'Atta and his Forty Grandsons*, and "Rejoinder to Henry Munson Jr"; Henry Munson, Jr, "On the Irrelevance of the Segmentary Lineage Model in the Moroccan Rif," "The Segmentary Lineage Model in the Jebalan Highlands of Morocco," and *Religion and Power in Morocco*; Hugh Roberts, "Perspectives on Berber Politics"; and John Waterbury, "Bargaining for Segmentarity."
- 55 Kraus, "Contestable Identities," 10.
- 56 *Ibid.*, 17.
- 57 See Crawford, "Arranging the Bones," for a very different analysis of how genealogical ties are used in the High Atlas and for an account of how complicated the notion of "equality" can be in a rural context.

- 58 Abdellah Hammoudi, *Master and Disciple: The Cultural Foundations of Moroccan Authoritarianism*.
- 59 Lawrence Rosen, *Bargaining for Reality: The Construction of Social Relations in a Muslim Community*.
- 60 Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society*; and Hammoudi, *Master and Disciple*, 3.
- 61 Hammoudi, *Master and Disciple*, 2, 3.
- 62 Rahma Bourqia and Susan Gilson Miller, eds, *In the Shadow of the Sultan: Culture, Power and Politics in Morocco*, 5.
- 63 See Susan Slyomovics, "A Truth Commission for Morocco," and "No Buying Off the Past: Moroccan Indemnities and the Opposition"; for a candid appraisal of political repression in Morocco, see Abdeslam Maghraoui, "Political Authority in Crisis."
- 64 See Gellner, *Saints of the Atlas*.
- 65 Combs-Schilling, "Family and Friend in a Moroccan Boom Town."
- 66 Goody, "Bitter Icons," 15, argues that "European historians, sociologists and political scientists reared in skeptical traditions dismiss the power of religion in the modern world at their peril," but arguably, religion is if anything overemphasized in North Africa and the Middle East, serving as a default explanation for nearly everything people do.
- 67 According to Hisham Aidi, "Let Us Be Moors," 43, this was uttered by the Cuban poet José Martí in 1893 "in support of the Berber uprising against Spanish rule in Northern Morocco."
- 68 *Ibid.*
- 69 Azzadine Layachi, "Reform and the Politics of Inclusion in the Maghrib," 31.
- 70 Gellner, *Saints of the Atlas*, 64.
- 71 Hart, *The Ait Waryaghar of the Moroccan Rif*, 279.
- 72 Hart, *Dadda 'Atta and his Forty Grandsons*, 77.
- 73 John Chiapuris, *The Ait Ayash of the High Moulouya Plain*, 161.
- 74 Kraus, "Contestable Identities," 17.
- 75 Montagne, *The Berbers*, 59.
- 76 Amartya Sen, *Inequality Reexamined*, viii.
- 77 Crawford, *Work and Identity*, 358, and "Arranging the Bones."
- 78 Crawford, "Morocco's Invisible Imazighen."
- 79 Crawford and Hoffman, "Essentially Amazigh."
- 80 Mark Tessler, "Morocco's Next Political Generation," 8.
- 81 Maghraoui, "Political Authority in Crisis," 14.
- 82 *Ibid.*, 16.
- 83 This statistic was found on the World Bank website in a report entitled "Morocco in Brief," <http://wbinfo018.worldbank.org/mna/mena.nsf/>

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- 84 Remy Leveau, "A Democratic Transition in Morocco?"
- 85 Layachi, "Reform and the Politics of Inclusion in the Maghrib," 25-6.
- 86 Maghraoui, "Political Authority in Crisis," 14.
- 87 This information is quoted in Crawford, "Morocco's Invisible Imazighen," 64-6. The statistics come from the World Bank website, World Bank Discussion Paper No. 264, Shahidur R. Khandker, Victor Lavy, and Deon Filmer, "Schooling and Cognitive Achievements of Children in Morocco: Can the Government Improve Outcomes?" <http://www.worldbank.org/html/extpb/abshtml/13046.htm>, 1 November 1994.
- 88 Layachi, "Reform and the Politics of Inclusion in the Maghrib," 27.
- 89 Roberts, "The Economics of Berberism."
- 90 Roberts, "The Unforeseen Development," "The Economics of Berberism," and "Perspectives on Berber Politics"; Heba Saleh, "Algerian Insurrection"; and Azzadine Layachi, chapter 8 herein.
- 91 Azzadine Layachi, *The United States and North Africa*, among others, has made the point that in this context what is true is sometimes less important than what is perceived to be true.
- 92 Marshall Sahlins, "Two or Three Things That I Know about Culture."
- 93 Kevin Dwyer, "The Uses and Misuses of 'Culture.'"
- 94 Hammoudi, *Master and Disciple*, 154.
- 95 Edward H. Thomas, "The Politics of Language in Former Colonial Lands," 26-7.