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Preserving Indigenous culture in Morocco

Layan Suleiman

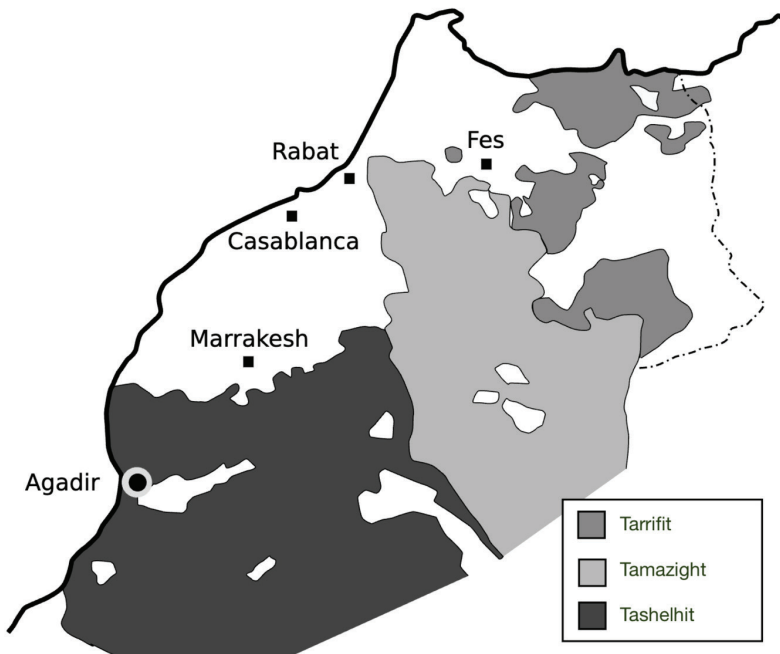
A majority of Moroccans today are genetically linked to the Indigenous Imazighen tribes of North Africa. Through centuries of intermixing and twentieth-century European colonization, Morocco moved toward a policy of Arabization. Today, state negligence and lack of investment in educational, health-care, and transportation infrastructure have left these primarily rural communities with little choice but to migrate to urban centers, effectively risking the loss of their language and culture over the course of time.

Introduction

Morocco's diverse ethnic demographics have raised difficult questions in terms of national recognition, unity, identity, and urbanization. The Amazigh, an ethnic group that constitutes the original population of much of North Africa, have long faced pressure to assimilate, especially in the postcolonial period. The majority of Morocco's Amazigh population resides in the mountainous and more rural regions, where the primary language consists of variations of Tamazight (Figure 1). In contrast, most of urban Morocco

has adopted Arabic as the primary language, putting the preservation of Tamazight low on the list of state priorities. Additionally, the rural areas have long been neglected in terms of education, health care, and infrastructure. Coupled with rural Morocco's history of uprisings and the state's tendency to stifle activists, the Amazigh of Morocco find themselves in a unique position in which their concrete demands for infrastructural change are unmet and urban migration for access to those resources dissipates tribal connection and community.

Figure 1
Distribution of languages in main Amazigh population regions



Source: Roettger, 2017.

The push to recognize Indigenous culture has persisted and progress has been made throughout the last half century. The Rif region, in northern Morocco, has seen a consistent heightened level of political action, which can be credited to its unique relationship with European colonial powers. Activists today are fighting for equal access to health care and education in rural regions, encouragement of investments to promote economic development, the right to fair trials, and demilitarization of the region (Masbah, 2017). These demands came to head in 2016 when protests erupted in the Rif region, signifying a new wave of activism that was influenced, but not defined, by the Arab Spring protests half a decade prior. Riffan demands made clear the difficult choices facing the local population: stay in their communities and suffer generational poverty, poor job prospects, and lack of access to services or move to the large urban centers, where these opportunities are more available but at the expense of the loss of their cultural identity. Many have chosen the latter as evidenced by the rapid urbanization during the second half of the twentieth century. Ties to Imazighen (plural of Amazigh) tribes and villages have therefore been severed or weakened, threatening the preservation of many facets of the rich Amazigh cultural and linguistic heritage.

Historical context

The Amazigh, or *Berber*, as coined by the Romans, predate any Arabized civilization in North Africa and continue to maintain their culture. Since antiquity, the Amazigh of North Africa have, through trade, migration, and conquest, encountered numerous Eurasian and African peoples (e.g., Phoenicians, Greeks, Romans, Vandals, Arabs, Fulani, and Mandé). This mixing has resulted in a melting pot of languages, cultures, and identities in today's North African states, in which Arabic and Islam have become the dominant respective language and religion (Amai, 2019). Most of Morocco's Amazigh population adopted Islam around the eighth century, when the region was conquered by Muslim Arabs. They were certainly successful in spreading Islam among the Indigenous population, but they did not fully Arabize them (Crivello, 2003).

According to the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (2020), there are over 20 million Tamazight-speaking people in Morocco. For reference, in 2022, there were approximately 37.5 million people living in Morocco (World Bank, 2022). Despite the prevalence of Tamazight, Morocco has yet to recognize the Indigenous status of Imazighen

people (Congrès Mondial Amazigh, 2016) nor have they ratified the International Labour Organization (1989) Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, both of which would ensure the rights and fundamental freedoms for Indigenous populations and protect against discrimination. However, some Moroccans believe that this convention has yet to be accepted because there is little distinction between Indigenous and non-Indigenous in the country today (K. Lahsaini, personal communication, November 16, 2023). Some historians are also wary of making the distinction between "Arabness" and "Berberness" because these ethnic identities are pliable and have intermixed for centuries (Maddy-Weitzman, 2012). Additionally, although Amazigh nationalism certainly exists and is on the rise in North Africa, it is not equivalent to other ethnic nationalist issues, such as the Kurdish question. The Amazigh community is fragmented along social, ideological, and cultural lines, leading experts to heavily consider that the region's unrest may be attributed to sociopolitical issues as much as it is to "Berberism" (Lefèvre, 2016). Still, Morocco's lack of international recognition of its Indigenous community has set the stage for systemic marginalization of the Amazigh identity, generating increased pressure to assimilate and paving the way for loss of cultural identity over time.

Morocco's fight against their status as a French protectorate in the twentieth century plays a significant role in today's sentiment toward Amazigh culture. During the period of French colonization, there were attempts to divide and rule the Moroccan population by placing emphasis on the Amazigh population and their distinctiveness (Maddy-Weitzman, 2011). The French played on the weaknesses of the region and attempted to pit Arab against Amazigh (Crivello, 2003). In 1930, the French issued a royal edict excluding Imazighen populations from the implications of Islamic law. This ploy ignited a nationalistic reaction among the masses, and Arab nationalists became suspicious of collective Indigenous action, even though Imazighen communities had borne the brunt of the fight against French and Spanish armies in the Rif and Atlas Mountains (Maddy-Weitzman, 2012).

After Morocco independence in 1956, Morocco applied a strict Arabization policy that heavily influenced communication and education spaces across the country (Meskine & de Ruiter, 2015). This push trickled down from the Moroccan elite, who were determined to take the country in an Arab-Islamic direction by labeling themselves as "Arab" and joining the League of Arab States as well as declaring Ara-

bic the official language and Islam the state religion (Maddy-Weitzman, 2012). In doing so, Moroccan nationalists, compared to the French, implemented a complete antithetical policy of national integration and assimilation in the name of building a strong, united independent state at the expense of Amazigh culture. The ruling elite believed that this was the only way to be successful in state building and national integration. In 1968, 12 years after Moroccan Independence, the Kingdom's official historian, Abd al-Wahab Ben Mansour, had a vision of erasing Amazigh identity all together, facilitated by the natural path of modernization in Morocco. He expressed the sentiment that "Bringing an Arabized education system to the country... would result... in the disappearance of Berber within fifty years" (Maddy-Weitzman, 2012, p. 90). This sentiment was widely shared in Moroccan postindependence, and even if it was not explicitly stated, there were implicit efforts and calls to immerse the Imazighen population in a larger Arabized society.

Resistance and reaction over time

Historically, the Amazigh population has always resisted attempts to dilute their cultural and linguistic heritage. The Amazigh movement has been vocal in the decades after Moroccan independence, demanding official linguistic and cultural recognition and challenging the push for full Arabization of Moroccan society. The recognition offered to Imazighen communities in the past decades, notably the 2011 constitutional amendment providing linguistic recognition, has given the Amazigh movement a sense of confidence to further press their demands (Maddy-Weitzman, 2012). Ultimately, the demands of this movement include recognizing the existence of the modern Amazigh people as a collective and acknowledging their historical and cultural impact in North Africa. Activists are adamant about making Tamazight equal to Arabic, elevating it to the modern status along with seeking a plan to address the marginalization of Amazigh people in educational, social, and economic spheres and policies (Maddy-Weitzman, 2012). In the Rif region specifically, demands are more concrete, including the establishment of a hospital and a university, royal-sanctioned investment in infrastructure projects, and demilitarization of the region (Wolf, 2019).

The often-neglected Rif region has a history of resistance and rebellion dating back to the colonial period in Africa (Masbah, 2017). The Rifans maintained independence briefly between 1921 and 1926 under the leadership of Muhammad ibn Abd al-

Karim al-Khattabi but were forced to surrender after a brutal Franco-Spanish campaign. The region was annexed by the Moroccan state after independence; however, this new status only served to heighten tensions between the central authorities and the local population. The Rif region was highly underrepresented in the first postindependence government and has often been referred to as *Bled es-Siba*, meaning land of dissidence and chaos (Crivello, 2003). Tensions came to a head in 1958 when locals stormed a branch of a prominent monarchy-aligned political party, along with a post office, assaulting the employees. The monarchy sent 20,000 troops to repress the rebellion, which proved to be a bloody operation in which 3000 locals died. After the suppression of this rebellion, the Rif was declared a military zone, establishing a deliberate marginalization of the region, both politically and economically (Wolf, 2019).

A critical moment for the Amazigh movement was the Berber Spring, a period of activism in the late 1980s that marked the most prominent challenge to the state-led push for hegemony. However, this movement lacked unity as the Amazigh population was spread across the Atlas Mountains and Rif regions, making it more difficult to promote a common identity. In 1994, Imazighen activists were arrested and convicted for promoting their identity. This event allegedly embarrassed King Hassan II and led him to partially embrace Amazigh heritage and pledge that Tamazight would begin to be taught in schools, which was actualized under his successor, Mohammed VI. To justify this about-face and maintain a united front, the King said in a speech in 1994, "there is not one of us who cannot be sure that there is in his dynasty, blood or body a small or large amount of cells which came from an origin which speaks one of Morocco's dialects" (Sater, 2007, p. 141). This pronouncement was largely figurative since no action was taken during the remaining five years of his reign. Still, it provided the stimulus for Imazighen movements to make an increasing impact on the Moroccan public sphere (Maddy-Weitzman, 2012).

Another notable movement was the Movement on the Road 96 in August 2011, a few months after the Arab Spring uprisings. It began when activists from the area of Imider climbed Mount Alebban in the High Atlas and shut down a pipeline that was diverting water from their region to a mine linked to a private company of the Moroccan royal family. Protestors had been voicing their concerns over damage to crops and the environment, food and water insecurity, dust storms, and loss of biodiversity for

two decades. Protests intensified in 2011, and over the next few years they occupied land and buildings, shut down water services, and organized across social media. Their demands included an independent environmental impact study, termination of government exploitation of their water resources, provision for local jobs, and the establishment of a school and a hospital, most of which are long-standing demands of the Amazigh people across rural Morocco. A negotiating committee was elected to meet with representatives of the royal family, but after 16 meetings, the negotiations came to a halt and the suppression of activists began again. Still, the movement managed to stop 3 million tons of water from reaching the mine by 2018 and had closed one of the main water valves (Mayet, 2022). This movement was classified as the longest sit-in in Africa's modern history.

A new wave of protests, the HIRAK, erupted in the Rif region in 2016, in which the people mobilized against the government in an initially peaceful movement. Led by Nasser Zafzafi, the protests were sparked by the death of Muhsin Fikri, a fisherman who was crushed by a garbage truck after trying to retrieve his confiscated products (Masbah, 2017). Protestors made developmental and political demands and put pressure on the government to invest in improving the region's shortcomings: unemployment, poverty, and corruption. Rifans framed their activism in terms of regional identity and often flew the flag of the short-lived Rif Republic (1921–1926) alongside the Amazigh banner in place of the Moroccan flag, indicating a clear popular discontent with the Moroccan authorities. Compared to the Arab and Berber Spring uprisings, these protests were far more successful in garnering support and maintaining longevity. Part of this success can be attributed to the movement's ability to establish a shared identity among the community, one that was built on the themes of injustice, marginalization, and the common Amazigh identity. This common identity only burnt a stronger desire for justice when authorities continued to repress protests and hinder the implementation of these demands (Masbah, 2017).

In response to the isolation felt by Imazighen communities, The Moroccan Association for Research and Cultural Exchange emerged as the first Amazigh cultural association in Morocco. It was founded in 1967 by Imazighen activists who believed that their identity in Morocco was being reduced to an exotic relic of the country's ancient history (Maddy-Weitzman, 2012). The term *Amazigh* translates to "free people," indicating their desire for sovereignty that never came to fruition. Still, the sentiment of separa-

tion is prevalent, and Imazighen communities are often treated by observers as an ethnic group (Lefèvre, 2016).

Creating identity through education and language

Today, there are three Imazighen languages spoken in Morocco. The most prominent, Tashelhit, is spoken by 8 million people, and Tamazight and Tarrifit are each spoken by about three million people. The word, Tamazight, is often used as an umbrella term to generally denote languages spoken by the Imazighen population. These numbers reflect a modern, postcolonial population whose language was generationally stripped from them. The percentage of Tamazight-speaking Moroccans has dropped by approximately 50% since the French Protectorate was introduced roughly 100 years ago (Maddy-Weitzman, 2012). Additionally, the domains in which Tamazight is used have become limited to the household and among friends mostly in rural and mountainous areas (Ennaji, 1997).

Language has been one of the central factors in solidifying recognition for Imazighen communities and has been equally important in the establishment of national Arab identity (Maddy-Weitzman, 2012). These opposing ideologies came to a head in the Moroccan postcolonial era. After independence, acknowledgement of Tamazight as a widely spoken language in Morocco was rare. In 1994, King Hassan II announced the national recognition of three variations of Imazighen languages, which set the stage for an opportunity to create real legislative change. In 1999, Tamazight obtained the status of a school subject and went on to be implemented five years later into the educational curriculum of rural communities (Meskine & de Ruyter, 2015). Beginning in September 2004, for the first time ever, Imazighen students were required to study Tamazight in public schools in parts of rural Morocco. These regions included the Rif, Middle Atlas, High Atlas, and Sous Valley. Such study was made possible by King Mohammed VI's establishment of the Royal Institute of Amazigh Culture in 2001, which indicated a clear shift in popular sentiment towards the Amazigh language and culture. The masses no longer viewed Amazigh culture as a threat to national identity or a hindrance to Moroccan unity; rather, the promotion of it became a sign of progress in embracing and promoting social diversity in the country (Silverstein & Crawford, 2004). The king took this a step further in 2011, when he made amendments to the Moroccan Constitution, in reaction to the rising tensions and protests during the

Arab spring, and included Tamazight as an official language, alongside Arabic.

Activists are careful not to praise King Mohammad VI too effusively for his implementation of Tamazight in rural schools or for his 2011 constitutional amendment (Maddy-Weitzman, 2012). The *Congrès Mondial Amazigh* (World Amazigh Congress) (2016) established that this constitutional amendment has brought no fruitful change to the country as the law lacked any plan to implement it. At the time the report was written, five years had passed since the constitutional amendment, which many people regard as profound. However, they emphasize that the ideological repository of the state is unchanged, and anti-Amazigh discrimination can still be seen at all levels of the institution, resulting in a significant decrease of the language over time (Maddy-Weitzman, 2011). There seems to be a vast disconnect between the promises of the Moroccan government and the implementation of that policy. Tamazight was introduced, first in the rural school system, with the hopes of integrating it into all Moroccan schools by 2010. But the reality today is almost the complete opposite; Tamazight is taught in only 5% of Moroccan schools (Ichou & Fathi, 2022). As of 2015, only about 45,000 students benefited from the Tamazight classes, out of four million pupils countrywide (*Despite promises...*, 2015).

A dichotomy of choices

The demand for Amazigh linguistic representation is often at the core of the social movement that focuses on cultural preservation; however, linguistics, although often regarded as the gateway to cultural understanding, is not the only way in which Imazighen activists are fighting for protection of their rights. The demands of the rural Amazigh sociopolitical movement, specifically in the Rif, are simple: access to a university, hospital, and cancer treatment center; encouragement of investment and infrastructure; demilitarization; and the right to a fair trial. Currently, urban residents enjoy all these rights (Masbah, 2017). The contrast in development efforts between rural and urban areas in Morocco can be traced back to its colonial era when the French deemed it necessary to divide the country, not only by Arab and Amazigh but also subsequently as “useful” and “useless” Morocco (urban and rural). This “useless” area was neglected by French colonizers and continues to be overlooked today, resulting in these regions ruled by a mixture of official rules and unofficial customs. This twofold system emphasizes the lack of thought applied to integrating these regions with the state in

a way that maintains tribal rule and avoids juxtaposition with state rule. In addition to political neglect, much of rural Morocco has been deprived of the infrastructure necessary to improve their harsh living conditions and develop in the scope of their own cultural and tribal margins (Chtatou, 2023). Thus, a dichotomy between maintaining cultural identity, in which language and tradition is valued and preserved but sacrificing the resources that are unavailable in rural settings, and migrating to urban centers, in which the dilution of culture over generations is likely, has emerged.

Imazighen communities have long depended on migration to overcome these challenges that are unique to the region, such as drought, soil erosion, and poor infrastructure, all of which are exacerbated severely by government neglect and political marginalization (Crivello, 2003). During the mid-nineteenth century, the first stream of mass migration from the region began in which men left their families in the Rif region to go work in the neighboring country of Algeria during the harvest season. When the border was closed between Morocco and Algeria, more than 40% of Rifian men were reliant on international work to support their families, with the result that their migration was redirected to Europe (mainly the Netherlands, Italy, France, and Spain). The region became dependent on money earned abroad, but migration policies in Europe made it difficult for workers to see their families, thereby effectively severing ties between migrants and their roots (Crivello, 2003). One current driver of migration, especially for youth, is the lack of universities in the rural regions. In one interview, conducted with youth who had migrated from the rural areas to the city of Agadir for university, a student indicated that he believed the government aimed to maintain poverty in the rural region. Government failure to facilitate the proper resources to develop an educated population in rural Morocco has obligated many such citizens to move to the cities, where unfortunately they still struggle to climb the ranks of affluence (Lima, 2011). Such dichotomous marginalization cries out for resolution on both sides.

The Congrès Mondial Amazigh, an international NGO aimed at being the voice on behalf of Imazighen communities in North Africa and the diaspora for social and cultural development as well as environmental protection, presented their case at the 2016 UN Committee for Human Rights. The core of their argument was the deeply held sentiment of political marginalization: “The Amazigh people have so far been victims of massive and systematic discrimina-

tion policies, conducted by a nation-state based on the dogma of ‘Arab-Islamism’” (Congrès Mondial Amazigh, 2016, p. 2), in which the government actively neglects the ethnic diversity of its population by denying the contribution of Imazighen people: its history, language, and civilizational values. Residents in the Rifan region of Al Hoceima describe the feeling of being trapped, both by physical boundaries and by rampant unemployment and the symbolic inferiority of being Amazigh within an Arab-identified nation state. According to various interviews with the Moroccan diaspora community, the division between Amazigh and Arab Moroccans is noteworthy. Government officials reinforce this attitude of indifference regarding the preservation of Tamazight, claiming that incorporating it in urban education would be of “no use” or an obstacle to academic and social success. Moreover, the Congrès Mondial Amazigh (2016) further asserts that the Imazighen, particularly in rural areas, are left at the margins of society, neglected by the government, while Arabist ideology in power and marginalization of Amazigh in the negative light of “poverty and backwardness” are rampant in urban centers.

Solutions

The conscious preservation of Amazigh culture in Morocco is a two-pronged approach that should include heightened efforts both to celebrate and preserve aspects of Amazigh culture nationally, especially in urban centers, and to improve the public infrastructure and services in rural areas where the culture is already thriving. To achieve the first, the state must meet with Imazighen community leaders and attend to their specific concerns and demands regarding cultural appreciation and preservation. The second can only be achieved by a state commitment to fulfill its existing promises to rural areas by allocating funding and setting milestones for specific projects, including transportation, health care, and education. To be successful, this twofold approach will require a cultural shift in the sentiment around Amazigh culture and language that can be achieved only through media and state facilitation of social and cultural influence on the institutional level.

To achieve widespread Amazigh recognition and appreciation, the government should first ratify the International Labour Organization Convention on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples’ Rights in Practice (2009) to ensure that the rights of the Indigenous Peoples, who make up the majority of the population, are protected. In implementation, this would ensure that the government develops, maintains, and respects

Indigenous institutions for the purpose of preserving customs and traditions. Mohammed VI’s government founded the Royal Institute of Amazigh Culture in 2001 for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting Amazigh culture and languages. Ratifying the International Labour Organization convention would further entrench the importance of this institution at the government level. The convention also protects the Indigenous Peoples’ right to education, enforces the quality of that education, and ensures equality and adequacy of health services and social security. It also outlines the rights to natural resources and compensation for governmental resource use, the right to development, the concept of tribal land and its use, application of tribal law, providing equitable access to the justice system, and cross-border contact and collaboration. Ratifying this convention would add a layer of protection for Indigenous Peoples’ rights and cultural preservation as well as accountability for the state in following through with its promises to improve the development of rural Morocco.

Additionally, while the recognition of Tamazight in the constitution following the 2011 Arab Spring was a much-needed advancement, it was essentially a move to silence the activists and quell the uprisings without invoking violence. The Moroccan government has a habit of creating macro plans and setting goals without outlining the specific channels via which they will get done, as highlighted by the plan to integrate Tamazight in the education system. There need to be amendments to this constitutional clause that outline concrete ways of implementing Tamazight into society and upholding it to the same status as Arabic in all regions of Morocco, rather than limiting these implementations to the rural regions. Since a majority of the population is of Amazigh descent, there should be efforts to preserve the culture in different facets of life.

Resolving specific development shortcomings is equally as important as cultural recognition for rural Imazighen citizens. The Moroccan Parliament has already recognized its shortcomings with regard to rural infrastructure. In December 2023, Prime Minister Aziz Akhannouch emphasized that road and path projects, as well as the program for reducing territorial and social disparities, are endeavors that will be prioritized in Morocco, especially after the 2023 earthquake highlighted the lacking infrastructure. The goals of these projects are to reduce the spatial and social disparities and build an infrastructure that puts rural communities on a real path of sustainable development. Improving roads and transportation systems will have contributed to raising the level

of accessibility in the rural areas to 90% by the end of 2024. According to Akhannouch, similar efforts would also be directed at establishing institutions of higher education accessible in every region, building well-functioning medical centers and hospitals that would allow rural Moroccans to obtain equal access to health care, and facilitating better access to drinking water (Ministère de la Jeunesse..., 2023). Together these efforts would help eliminate the quandary facing many Amazigh youth of needing to decide between leaving their home and having access to better resources. The agenda outlined by Akhannouch aligns with Amazigh demands and provides hope for an equitable future that does not require urban migration for access to basic needs; however, it is difficult to say if it will be actualized without consistent pressure from Imazighen movements.

Ultimately, to achieve widespread acceptance of Amazigh culture and rights, a societally deeper recognition of their value will be necessary. Achieving such a shift in the twenty-first century can be channeled through public and social media. To that end, Imazighen cultural institutions, such as the Royal Institute of Amazigh Culture, that operate out of urban centers should make greater effort to recognize Imazighen holidays. This segment of the movement has made significant strides recently, with King Mohammed VI adding the Amazigh New Year to the list of national holidays in Morocco in the first half of 2023. Activists have been campaigning for this move for a long time, arguing that it would be a significant step toward recognizing and celebrating the country's Indigenous population and culture (Rahhou, 2023). Encouraging cultural organizations to promote the preservation and celebration of Amazigh culture throughout the country is certainly a step toward solidifying the nation's commitment to do so. While the step of recognizing the Amazigh New Year is but one stride, there are still countless tribal traditions that are inevitably lost with urban migration, as there is no longer a surrounding community in which these traditions are practiced, that should be similarly encouraged (Z. Hsain, personal communication, January 7, 2023). Another aspect of cultural recognition is the acknowledgement of the Amazighi contribution to fighting colonial powers, especially during the twentieth century. In the same way that Martin Luther King Jr. is commemorated for his fight for civil rights in the United States with a day and a month dedicated to him and the movement, these Moroccan institutions should launch campaigns aimed at recognizing such public figures who aided in the resistance against colonial powers and highlighting their Im-

zighen identities. These institutions are the backbone of cultural preservation in urban centers and allow for the centralized activism that more effectively pushes demands and ultimately creates change. Increasing funding for these organizations would begin the social shift of prioritizing Amazigh culture or, at the very least, remove the sense of hierarchy that elevates Arab culture and language.

The pressure to internalize Imazighen values needs to outgrow the sphere of domestic politics and to connect with Moroccans abroad through social media, film, and private press campaigns. The Moroccan government values popular satisfaction, and while part of this is maintained through authoritarian force, the top-down push for democratization has manifested itself in a government that is somewhat responsive to popular demands. Documentaries highlighting the activism that takes place in rural Morocco may be pivotal in bringing increased awareness to urban centers in Morocco, Europe, Asia, and America. For example, a documentary featuring the Movement on Road 96 struggle was played and recognized at the Agadir International Documentary Film Festival (Mayet, 2022). Community members from Imider, the affected area, have organized documentary screenings across various libraries and academic and cultural institutions. Additionally, Moroccans took to social media after the country's historic win in the 2022 World Cup to clarify that, although this is a win for Arab and African peoples, it was first and foremost a win for the Amazigh of Morocco, especially after they defeated three former colonial powers (Belgium, Spain, and Portugal). Many of the team's star players are of Amazigh descent and grew up speaking Imazighen languages and Darija, the Moroccan dialect of Arabic. Some even required English translators when being interviewed by Arabic-speaking journalists. Having this type of representation is critical as it pushes people to further embrace their heritage. Moroccans on social media circulated lists of players who are Amazigh and appealed to the beIN Sports network's Arabic commentators to stop referring to Morocco as an Arab team (Aidi, 2022). Collectively, these sorts of cultural promotion can go a long way toward promoting the significance of Amazigh history and contemporary contributions.

Conclusion

There has been a recent revival of interest in accepting and preserving Amazigh culture and language. The Moroccan government is on track to make advancements in both cultural preservation and rural infrastructure improvement, if they uphold the

promises made by the current head of parliament. Additionally, people of Amazigh descent have taken to social media and developed other progressive media campaigns that have begun to effectively sensitize Moroccans and close the gap between linguistic and cultural identities and embrace the diversity it may offer. Implementing measures for cultural preservation in urban centers, allowing for the interconnectivity between urban and rural areas, and investing in the development of rural Morocco will establish the physical and social infrastructure that will effectively preserve indigenous culture while addressing the factors that aid its erasure.

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