CULTURAL HERITAGE, ARTISTIC INNOVATION, AND ACTIVISM ON AMAZIGH BERBER WEBSITES (Pre-publication) (publication: volume 32:1, 42-59)

Daniela Merolla

HAL Id: hal-03060595

https://inalco.hal.science/hal-03060595

Submitted on 14 Dec 2020

CULTURAL HERITAGE, ARTISTIC INNOVATION, AND ACTIVISM ON AMAZIGH BERBER WEBSITES

Abstract

New means of communication and networking have intensified the contact among the Amazigh (Berber) communities in North Africa and diasporic locations, reinforcing pre-existent forms of transnationalism and deterritorialisation. The Internet, however, reinforces local identities as well. This article claims that historical memory and visual and verbal art interact with the social and political discourses on Amazigh/ Berber websites, producing local, transregional, and transnational forms of identity. The issue is explored by examining Berber websites' production of 'heritage' and artistic innovation linked to the criticism of national historical constructions and of 'globalising' approaches to the Maghreb. The online reactions to the label "Arab Spring" and the artistic and political discourses of the online project "New World Embassy of Azawad" are appraised as examples of interrelating political, artistic and identity dynamics. A second issue concerns the interpretation of Amazigh cultural and political discourse. The question is whether Amazigh websites create contradictory discourses to be interpreted in terms of new 'mythologies' or of 'strategic essentialism'.

Keywords: Internet, literature, oral literature, memory, activism, Amazigh, Berber

Introduction

New means of communication and networking have intensified the contact among the Amazigh (Berber) communities in North Africa and diasporic locations, reinforcing pre-existent forms of transnationalism and deterritorialization.[1] The Internet reinforces local identities, through the creation and diffusion of a discourse of identification which underlines local linguistic variation and information on a specific region or diasporic group.[2] These developments are not limited to the Internet. Internet surfers participate in the discourse of identity of their local and transnational communities beyond digital platforms, and political and cultural actions offline find themselves amplified by virtual action.

This article innovatively focuses on the visual and artistic content of Amazigh/Berber websites and posits that historical memory and visual and verbal art interact with the social and political discourses on these websites, producing local, transregional, and transnational levels of identity. The issue is explored by examining Berber websites' production of 'heritage' and

---

[1] Both 'Amazigh' and 'Berber' are used because, since the end of the twentieth century, the terms Amazigh (singular) and Imazighen (plural) tend to stand out in society and in current studies, while the term 'Berber' remains inscribed historically in the discourse of the research domain. The geographical space of the communities using the Berber language extends from Morocco to the oasis of Siwa in Egypt and passes through Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya. It also includes the Berber-speaking populations in Mali, Niger, and the north of Burkina Faso.

[2] In this text, the term 'diaspora' in its general sense includes the individual and voluntary forms of migration.

artistic innovation linked to the criticism of national historical constructions and of 'globalising' approaches to the Maghreb. The online reactions to the label 'Arab Spring' and the artistic and political discourses of the online project 'New World Embassy: Azawad' are appraised as examples of interrelating political, artistic, and identity dynamics. We see how cultural discourses diffused by Amazigh websites—set up in the Maghreb and in the diaspora—engage with social and military uprisings in the field. From a methodological point of view, this article investigates websites as 'semiotic objects' (Stockinger 2005),[3] integrating an analysis of the multimediality, transmediality, and interactive characteristics of the Internet and taking into account their transient forms. As indicated by Shani Orgad (2009, 9), 'a need to enhance online data with offline data can arise at later stages of the research project', depending on 'the particular research contexts and the demands of the[ir] research goals'. In contrast to the idea that the Internet is a culture in itself and that this is the sole basis for Internet research, and in contrast to the idea that online data need to be triangularly interpreted from the outset in light of offline and online research—the point here is rather to focus on the research question and material. In this article's approach, we are not investigating 'online data' which need to be directly placed in relation to offline data, but websites as online 'artefacts'—starting from their semiotic characteristics, whose understanding is enriched by the knowledge (built from previous research) of online and offline contexts. This article's approach can be seen as a first step which responds to a specific question: whether and how the production of Internet-mediated oral, written, and visual art interact with Berber political discourses and identity construction. The question is approached through the observation, analysis, and interpretation of semiotic objects (websites), and the research is enhanced by adding knowledge of offline contexts and previous studies. In a second step, and in a further level of analysis of social links, other investigations and articles (may) add full-fledged offline data such as interviews with web producers and the web public 'to add context, to enhance information, and to yield insights into aspects that would [have] otherwise remained invisible' (Shani Orgad 2009, 9).

A second issue concerns the interpretation of Amazigh cultural and political discourse. The question is whether, while disrupting national dominant ideologies, Amazigh websites create contradictory discourses to be interpreted in terms of new 'mythologies' and new forms of 'acculturation'. This article questions whether it is too simplistic to interpret as 'myth making'

---

[3] According to Stockinger (2005), a website intended as a 'semiotic object' can be seen as an information unity, and its analysis includes the scenario (or model) organising it and its substructures (rubriques); the methods and strategies adopted to deliver the desired information in a given cultural, social, and economic context; and the website's position among similar or competing websites. The users' reception and appropriation are included in the analysis as a further step.

a much more complex process of appropriation and rejection. It also interrogates the unproblematised assumption in contemporary studies of the so-called Berber myth: the Berbers presented as the 'good savages' of North Africa and willing to be assimilated, as if this is the only form that French colonial construction of the Berbers has taken. In fact, this construction was just one of several, predominant at times but never exclusive. We need to see that proposing the 'good savages' representation as the only 'Berber myth' neglects a body of colonial texts much more virulent and not at all aimed at assimilating the Berbers, nor presenting them as 'favourable to being assimilated'. Acknowledging the diffusion of multiple and contrasting French colonial representations (myths) of the Berbers is fundamental when we intend to analyse the strategies of Berber intellectuals and activists in denying, appropriating, and subverting such representations. This article also calls attention to the fact that the alleged replication of 'the French colonial myth' by Berber activists was used as a weapon of repression by Algerian and Moroccan postcolonial governments against Berber activists; and therefore, this supposed replication must in turn be deconstructed. We reach, here, the controversial issue as to whether, when, and how groups in situation of minority have rights to construct and to demand an autonomous identity within a nation state.

Amazigh cultural and political discourses and identity construction online: Enlarging the 'Berber literary space'

There is a plethora of Amazigh association websites, musical websites, individual blogs, and Facebook pages, which vary enormously in content and activities. Among the dynamic and rich websites, there are the Algerian Kabyle websites *kabyle.com, depechedekabylie.com*, *taqbaylit.com*, *kabyles.net*, *tamurt.info* and *voix berbères (*http://amazigh.blog.lemonde.fr*)*; the Moroccan Riffian websites *amazigh.nl*, *amazighnews.net*, *agraw.com*, *bades.nl*, *dalil-rif.com, syphax.nl, tilelli.nl*, and *arifnews.com;* the Moroccan Souss website *souss.com*; the websites of the Canary Islands *izuran.blogspot.nl* and *azarug.org*;[4] the Libyan website *tawalt.com*; and the 'pan-Berber' websites *tamazgha.fr* (France), *monde-berbere.net* (Belgium), and *amazighworld.org* (North America). Most of the Amazigh sites are the expression of cultural associations, although often there is one member or editor who is more active than the others. Moreover, there are several sites managed by one editor/writer. For example, *Depechedekabylie.com* is the site of the homonymous newspaper edited by Idir Benyounes,

---

[4] These websites include Berber 'historical references' in their identity discourse.

while *Voix berbères* is the blog of the historian and journalist Yidir Plantade. Similarly, Dahraoui (2014, 154), who investigated Riffian websites, indicates that the site *Dalil-rif.com* 'is an initiative of an Information Communication Technology student […] in collaboration with a group of friends who call themselves amateur journalists'. Dahraoui (ibid. 155) adds that other Amazigh websites were 'created by a few enthusiastic individuals or groups in the Rif area'. Masin Ferkal, university teacher, activist, and driving force behind *tamazgha.fr*, said in an interview[5] that Tamazgha was born in 1993 as an association aiming to inform a broad public of Berbers and 'Berbérisants' (researchers and people interested in Berber topics) on the activities concerning Berber studies at the INALCO, the (French) National Institute of Oriental Languages and Civilisations in Paris. In the course of time, *Tamazgha* developed as an independent association and after 2000 as a website.

If some websites use one of the local variants of the Amazigh language (for example *taqbaylit.com*), the reference to that language is also highlighted by websites which resort to languages that are used in international exchanges—namely English, French, and Arabic (e.g. *tawalt.com* for the latter)—but also to other languages of the Amazigh diaspora such as Spanish, Dutch, and Italian (Lafkioui 2011). It seems that these linguistic choices are related, on the one hand, to the fact that the majority of these websites are organised via cultural activity in the diaspora and, on the other hand, to the wish to communicate with as many individuals as possible from 'here and there' and those from North Africa in particular. The growing and generalised diffusion of schooling and of places where one can use the Internet has also indirectly contributed to the propagation of Amazigh messages to the North African public (Najar 2013).

The Amazigh websites and blogs are a platform for interaction and dialogue for (oral/written) literary, musical, and visual genres. The visual form of the first websites was modelled on 'paper' bulletins, magazines, and newspapers. At the same time, it reproduced the standard model of web design programmes. Although we now have more and more variations, web design programmes define the visual and content-based structure of the sites: usually the website is structured by vertical and horizontal sections and a larger central section of the screen provides the main theme (or themes) of the website. Lateral sections contain indexes with hyperlinks to subpages and other websites. Within such a standard format, the analysis shows several shared elements concerning the presence of images and texts/audios referring to orality

---

[5] Personal communication, 26 June 2018.

and other artistic genres. What follows resumes the results of qualitative content analysis based on an interdisciplinary approach.

The reference to oral genres appears in the form of proverbs and idioms on the home pages, often represented in the form of icons or emblems that denote the interests, perceptions, and identity of the associations and communities.[6] The genres related to orality are translated and transcribed on the bilingual and multilingual websites. Furthermore, recordings—also in an audiovisual form and hence reproducing oral communication—of meetings and political demonstrations, festivals, concerts, and sometimes readings of tales are posted online.

An even larger number of songs by Amazigh bands and songwriters are diffused on the Internet. These songs help to establish a significant continuity in the process of identity construction and become a means to identify oneself with the local and global Berber community.[7]

The websites are also vehicles for diffusing another genre playing a prominent role in the construction of 'digital' identity, namely (video) films. The growth of cinematographic productions in Kabyle, Riffian, and Souss Berber variants is astonishing when we remember that, until recent times, the Berber language in the Maghreb was marginalised and that institutional and material means to produce and spread films failed. The Amazigh films, including the 'Amazighwood' video production with commercial aims (Merolla, 2018), are often accessible on YouTube, and hyperlinks that lead to the film productions are present on the majority of the Berber websites.

The website subpages promote prose and written poetry, as is illustrated by the websites of associations abroad which contain hyperlinks to the recent production of novels and poems written in either the vernacular or the language of the diaspora.

Many works published offline are disseminated by the Amazigh websites and blogs—sometimes accompanied by extracts, descriptions, and commentaries, and sometimes supplemented with videos of interviews. These websites therefore participate in the diffusion of literary productions coming from Amazigh communities in North Africa and from diasporic environments. The dense Internet circulation of works promoted by these websites has enhanced the exchanges and interactions between the productions of the Maghreb and those of

---

[6] See the description of the layout of two websites in Merolla (2005) and of three websites in Dahraoui (2014, 155–157).
[7] Dahraoui 2014.

the diaspora, thanks to publications that are easily accessible and stimulate numerous writers, actors, and directors who work on both sides of the Mediterranean.

Therefore, the Amazigh websites and blogs contribute to enlarging the 'Berber literary space' (Merolla 2006, 71–74), a notion useful to define a set of productions manifesting the tendency towards narrating a 'community' (Anderson 1983). Such a narration is constituted and constructed through the attention that Amazigh storytellers, writers, and artists pay to their local languages, places, histories, and diasporic experiences. The definition 'literary space' is preferred to the more common 'literary field' because, in the case a multilingual and creolised context, literary productions are not structured by the institutions of a single field according to the Bourdieuan definition (Bourdieu 1991). [8] The Amazigh case presents cleavages among the institutions (and the forms of habitus) belonging to multiple artistic fields related to different (oral, written, audiovisual) modes and to multiple languages. The situation is therefore more complex than a structured field where each text or author is directly related to the others. The Amazigh literary space is more of a floating continuum, devoid of the rigid autonomy conditioned by a coherent economic and intellectual structure, by a linguistically homogeneous readership, and by common and shared institutions. On the other hand, this space of artistic continuity presents the intertextual criss-crossing of oral, written, and visual expressions and evokes the 'Self' through references to the history, scene, and characters attached to a specific Berber variant which refers to a cultural region. Moreover, the relations among modes (orality, literacy, visuality) and languages (Arabic, Berber, French, English, etc.) determine multiple power dialectics among texts and authors.

Intersection of political and artistic dynamics: Amazigh websites' responses to the 'Arab Spring'

An example of the interconnectedness of cultural activism and political discourse is provided by the Amazigh online responses to the label 'Arab Spring'. As is known, a wave of demonstrations swept through Tunisia in December 2010, spreading violently to the east (Libya, Egypt, Syria, Yemen, and Bahrain) and more moderately to Morocco and Algeria. The international press quickly referred to all these movements as an 'Arab Spring'. [9] The

---

[8] On the challenges of applying the notion of a structured 'literary field' to African literatures and creolised contexts, see the discussion in the volume *Les champs littéraires africains* (edited by Fonkoua, Halen and Städtler, 2001..

[9] See Montané 2011.

denomination 'Arab', however, simplifies and unifies the diversity of millions of people and their identity demands (Oiry-Varacca (2012, 3; Pouessel 2012;Suárez Collado 2013).

The Amazigh websites reacted reluctantly and critically to the semantic and ideological implications of the metaphor 'Arab Spring' (Merolla and Dahraoui 2017). We find a series of paradigmatic titles online, such as 'The Amazigh people believe in their Spring' (Chibani 2011); 'From "Arab Spring" to "Amazigh Spring"?' (Plantade 2011); 'Arab Spring, Amazigh Spring, one spring may hide another';[10] and 'Berber views on the Springs called Arab'[11]— while numerous websites announce a 'Spring for Tripoli' in support of the Libyan Imazighen. The first title in this list appeared on the blog of the journalist and writer Ali Chibani in June 2011 and was republished on several websites.[12] Chibani does not use the term 'Arab Spring' at all. Such a label, however, is the implicit referent of the elements refuted by the Berber perspective represented in the article. The title focuses on 'their' spring (the Berber Spring), which introduces a notion of difference from the spring called 'Arab' and refers to the pre-existence of two periods of Berber protests in the region of Kabylia in North Algeria, respectively called 'Berber Spring' and 'Black Spring'.[13] In the other paradigmatic titles, we see the effort to highlight the imprecision and generality of the label 'Arab Spring' by the use in the texts of the indefinite article and the reference to the Berber Spring.[14] Since 2012, the seasonal metaphor of the titles develops from spring to winter to summer, the latter evoking a negative situation whereas Berber Spring and Summer symbolise the goals achieved by Amazigh activists—and even soldiers in the Libyan case. We find, for example, 'From the

---

[10]Article of Didier Le Saout, a sociologist from the University of Paris 8, reproduced by the websites *AmazighNews* http://www.amazighnews.net/20111027625/Printemps-arabe-printemps-amazigh.html.

[11] Conference of Lounès Belkacem (Biarritz 12 November 2011), appeared on the site *Espace Culturel Loire Amazigh* http://www.berbere42.com/magazine.htm.

[12] See http://blog.mondediplo.net/2011-07-28-Les-populations-amazighes-croient-en-leur, *Aymun* juillet 2012 http://www.aymun.com/Juillet2012.htm#Article and the blog *Voix berbères* of Yidir Plantade amazigh.blog.lemonde.fr/2011/08/04/du-printemps-arabe-au-printemps-amazigh/.

[13] The first is called 'Berber Spring' and refers to the demonstrations in the region of Kabylia in 1980 in favour of the acknowledgement of the Berber language in Algeria. The second movement is the 'Black Spring', referring to the series of extremely bloody events in Kabylia (2001 and 2002) which led to the acknowledgement of the Amazigh language as a national language of the Algerian state. The officialization of Amazigh in Morocco in 2011 also initiated the debate on the position of Arabic, which remains hegemonic; see Chaker 2013, republished on *tamazgha.fr* le 23 May 2013.

[14] See http://www.souss.com/un-printemps-pour-tripoli/5977, http://www.siwel.info/Le-Collectif-Un-Printemps-pour-Tripoli-organise-un-meeting-de-soutien-aux-Amazighs-de-Libye_a3375.html, https://www.kabyle.com/printemps-tripoli-15-avril-saint-denis-19276-21032012, http://www.rezki.net/Meeting-de-soutien-a-la-Libye.html, and http://www.amazighnews.net/20120412701/amazighs-Libyen.html.

North African spring to the Islamic winter', where the term 'North African' escapes the problems of the definition of the 'Arab Spring',[15] and 'Arab Spring, Berber Summer'.[16]

While the term 'Arab Spring' is absent or questioned on the Amazigh websites and blogs, their attention is primarily focused on the 'political irruption' of the Libyan Imazighen (Chaker and Ferkal 2012) and on the awakening of the Tunisian Imazighen. The case of Libya became emblematic as it showed the potential suddenly materialised from a heavily oppressed group and interacted with the developments in Tunisia (Gumbiner 2012). Dozens of articles and comments are published on the websites *agraw.com*, *amazigh.nl*, *amazighnews.net*, *amazigh-world.org*, *amazightimes.nl*, *rezki.net*, *souss.com*, *tamazgha.fr*, and *tamurt.info*. This enthusiasm is an echo of the unexpected concretization of *Tamazgha*, the name given by Berber activists to the 'imagined' territory—unified culturally and politically—where there are people speaking Berber and which stretches from the oasis of Siwa at the Libyan–Egyptian border to the Caribbean islands, and from the Mediterranean to the Sahel. Further discussion of this point is presented below in the section 'Art, politics and imagination'.

The information and comments on the Libyan political developments are combined online with the use of music and poetry that, as we have noted above, reinforce the discourse of socio-political construction and of identity and, in this specific case, of the participation of the Imazighen in several national movements. For example, *Voix berbères* and *tamazgha.fr* publish a video showing some Libyan fighters singing an adaptation of the song of Aït Menguellet, a Kabyle singer,[17] hence illustrating the role played by Kabyle music in the Amazigh cultural continuity. The website *souss.com* dedicates the poem 'But one can starve the corpses' to the Libyan 'brothers and sisters'.[18] The songs sung by Dania ben Sassi in honour of the Amazigh of Libya and of their resistance are diffused online—for example, the song 'Itri nnegh' (Our star), written by the singer's father, as well as 'Agrawli itrinney' (The revolutionary is our star). *Néoculture amazighe* and *actu décalée* (the website of Lhoussain Azergui) defined the singer

---

[15] Title of a conference reproduced on *amazigh.nl* at http://www.amazigh.nl/uncategorized/from-north-african-spring-to-islamic-winter-2/.

[16] Sequence of slides on YouTube by Anissa Berkani Rohmer, who borrows the title from an article of Chawki Amari (2011), journalist of the newspaper *El Watan*. See YouTube, 16 March 2014 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GtcudPw8HZw, also in https://booksofdream.wordpress.com/2014/02/12/printemps-arabe-ete-berbere-aux-confins-du-desert-de-la-tunisie-a-la-libye.

[17] amazigh.blog.lemonde.fr/2011/04/22/identite-amazighe-de-la-kabylie-au-nefoussa/ and tamazgha.fr/Tilelli.html published, respectively, on 22 and 23 April 2011. Yidir Plantade (*Voix berbères*) adds that we can listen to the melody of the song *A vava inouva* of another Kabylian icon, Idir, used as the ringtone of a Libyan refugee's mobile phone in Tunisia in an *Al Jazeera* documentary.

[18] http://www.souss.com/un-printemps-pour-tripoli/5977/.

as 'the swallow of the Libyan Amazigh Spring', and *agraw.com* has published a video of one of her songs with the title 'Dedicated to the Amazigh fighters in Libya'.[19] The list lengthens with *amazighworld.org*, which publishes 'Thamoukkes thallast: the new song of Dania ben Sassi'[20] (with video), and *tamazgha.fr*, which presents the song 'Numidia', named after the Berber reign established in North Africa between the third and the first century BC.[21] There are dozens of further videos of the singer on YouTube. 'The Amazigh American Initiative Community Organization' offers the song 'Abrid n Tilelli' (The road to liberty), subtitled in English.[22] The refrain and certain verses of this song clearly show the political expression and affirmation of the Amazigh groups in Libya.[23] The impetus created by the revolution and armed action finds itself expressed in the metaphors of spilled blood to designate the dead who sacrificed themselves for the creation of Libya and of the fraternal union that goes 'hand in hand' with the revolution. The new Libyan state is anchored in a transnational Amazigh space personified by a friendly feminine figure (*Tamazgha tudad ifassen-is,* literally translated as 'the Berber nation stretches out her hands'). [24] As indicated above, *Tamazgha* refers to the 'imagined' North African territory as the cultural space of people speaking one of the local Berber variants. The possible contradiction between a pluralistic nation-state and a transnational Amazigh unity is resolved in a verse of the song that demands the officialization of the Amazigh language in the Libyan Constitution.[25]

Intersection of political and artistic dynamics: 'New World Embassy: Azawad' online and offline

Another example of the interconnectedness of cultural activism and political discourse is the artistic and political project 'New World Embassy: Azawad'. The creation of the state of Azawad in north Mali was unilaterally declared in April 2012 by a heterogeneous ensemble of various Berber Tuareg groups, with the initial support of Islamist groups (in which Tuaregs were also present, but which had a majority of international fighters). [26] Azawad was not

---

[19] http://www.agraw.com/2011/08/dania-ben-sassi-dedicated-amazigh-fighters-libya/.
[20] http://www.amazighworld.org/video/video.php?id=1027.
[21] http://www.tamazgha.fr/Numdya-une-chanson-de-Dania-une.html.
[22] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zy1bn0BncEw.
[23] See http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zy1bn0BncEw.
[24] A female figure is a recurring metaphor of the national imagination, expressing the gendered division of roles in the nationalist movements (Stratton 1994).
[25] On the Libyan revolution, see Cole and McQuinn 2015.
[26] Tuaregs speak Amazigh, found broadly in three main variants, and live in the Saharan area approximately spanning Mali, Niger, Algeria, and Libya.

recognised internationally and was short-lived because of internal political and military division and opposition, although it is still claimed as being active by the MLNA (National Liberation Movement of Azawad).[27] International intervention—aimed at patrolling northern Mali and containing 'Islamist' groups—is represented by MINUSMA [28] (United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali), which took over responsibility from France and ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) with the African-led AFISMA (International Support Mission to Mali).[29] This section examines the interaction of cultural and political discourses of the 'New World Embassy: Azawad' and the reactions that such a project stirred.

'New World Embassy: Azawad' is an online and offline project realised thanks to the cooperation between a Dutch artist, Jonas Staal, and Moussa ag Assarid, who is a writer, comedian, journalist, and spokesperson for Malian Tuareg military organisations.[30] Online, 'New World Embassy: Azawad' is on Facebook, on the website *e-flux.com*, and on the website of the organization BAK ('Basis for Current Art'), an organisation founded in 2003 and financially supported by Dutch national cultural funds.[31] BAK is an institute for contemporary art and presents itself as a platform for "art, knowledge, and activism", 'dedicated to thinking, researching, producing, presenting, and analysing contemporary art'. The offline project—that is, the artistic remodelling of the BAK building into a temporary embassy of Azawad—was open from 6 September to 12 October 2014.

Information on the 'Azawad Embassy' is delivered on the New World Summit website, from which Internet users can further access the online report on the workshops called 'New World Academy #4: The Art of Creating a State', focusing on the unrecognised state Azawad. [32] The workshops took place in the building of the organization BAK on 17–19 October 2014 at the end of the exhibition of the 'New World Embassy: Azawad'. During the workshops, students were invited to position 'art at the centre of political struggle' and to collaborate with members

---

[27] http://mnlamov.net/
[28] https://minusma.unmissions.org/en
[29] On this difficult and complex crisis in Mali, see Lecocq and Klute 2013.
[30] Assarid was spokesperson for the political overarching Tuareg organization CMA (Azawad Movements Organisation, Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad) and before that for the MLNA (Azawad National Liberation Movement)—the main secular Tuareg separatist group belonging to the CMA. See Ag Assarid's blog at http://moussa-blog.azawadunion.com/. Jonas Staal's political artistic projects, including 'New World Embassy: Azawad', have been exhibited in international museums and in the Netherlands. See for example the recent 'Freedom of Movement Municipal Art Acquisitions 2018' Exhibition — 25 November 2018 until 17 March 2019 at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam.
[31] See the *e-flux* website.
[32] See http://newworldsummit.org/about/

of the 'New World Embassy: Azawad' team and with artist, calligrapher, comedian on Azawad Radio, and podcast recorder Mazou Ibrahim Touré, [33] responsible for creating slogans and murals for the MLNA.[34] One of the outcomes of the workshops is the new media platform called *Azawad Alhawa*, created 'in support of its [Azawad] multiethnic people struggling for freedom and dignity […] in *our* New World Embassy of Azawad' (emphasis mine). The use of the possessive 'our' indicates a collective action and the expected merging of perspectives of team members and students with the will of Azawadian 'people', represented somehow by Touré and Ag Agarid.

The 'New World Embassy: Azawad' project is presented as follows (Facebook, BAK, and *e-flux.com* websites):

> *New World Embassy: Azawad* explores the intersection of art, theory, and activism through the proposition of temporarily instituting an operational Azawadian embassy as an extraterritorial space of representation, negotiation, and international exchange.
>
> The project includes an intervention on BAK's facade [of the building where the organization is located] and an interior installation, which functions as an embassy workspace for Azawadian representatives to establish international relations and seek cultural acknowledgement. At the heart of this endeavor is the conviction that the state as a cultural expression precedes the state as an administrative and military structure. A stateless state is maintained through language, poetry, music, and literature, as well as through visual signs and imagery. It is art that carries the history of a people, and with it, the promise of a new world.

We recognise here the fusion of ideas about artistic engagement and art as political action with the discourse discussed above on the central role of language, oral and written literature, music, and visual art in forging Amazigh identity and historical consciousness. The reference to the stateless state as a cultural expression may suggest the idea of an essentialist cultural continuity. In the mixed form of installation (the banner of the 'Azawad Embassy' on the BAK building, interior design, and decoration), performative arts (poems and photos), round tables, and political speeches, the 'New World Embassy: Azawad' informs the international public as well as the Malian public about Tuareg perspectives on Azawad. The project has, even more, the ambition to affect reality by questioning international legal and military power and legitimising both the existence of Azawad as a state and the demands of its makers. Slogans and poems of

---

[33] See Touré, Staal and ag Assarid 2014, 94–95 and https://soundcloud.com/mazou-ibrahim-toure.
[34] See http://newworldsummit.org/locations/new-world-embassy-azawad/. Quotation is from: http://newworldsummit.org/academy-year/the-art-of-creating-a-state/ See also New World Academy #4: Mazou Ibrahim Touré on https://vimeo.com/127140394 [accessed 29 June 2015]

the artist Mazou Ibrahim Touré were distributed, while Moussa ag Assarid exhibited his photos documenting the creation of Azawad, delivered speeches during round tables, and gave interviews on the background context, and history of the Tuareg rebellion leading to the creation of Azawad.

The visual and discursive information concerning 'New World Embassy: Azawad' on *e-flux.com* and the BAK website is compact and focused: against a white background, we see a large colour photo immediately under the banner with the location and title of the project. The photo, titled 'The Revolution is Without Frontiers', was taken by Moussa ag Assarid. We see a desert landscape traversed by an unpaved route and the yellow, green, red, and black flag, marking Azawad's border and its very existence. Below the photo, Internet visitors read the text of the project from which the quotation above is taken. At least until 2015, on the programme page of the BAK website, a large box covered the photo and part of the text, presenting audio–video fragments of the debate held on 9 September.

The Facebook page is titled 'New World Embassy of Azawad' and its banner shows people in action during an assembly on a desert background, men using megaphones to address women colourfully dressed and photographed from behind, and many Azawadian flags. The logo 'Azawad'—written in Latin alphabet, in Tifinagh (the Tuareg alphabet), and in Arabic— appears above a box on the left magnifying the mural 'Vive Azawad' written in French, which adds a fourth current language and another historical layer (the legacies of French colonisation) to the trilingualism indicated by the logo. On the Facebook page, which appears to have been last updated in 2016, there are several photos of the building and the interiors of 'New World Embassy: Azawad', pictures of the stay of Mazou Ibrahim Touré in Utrecht, and images of the documentary *Azawad, the Art of Creating a State* made by by Gabrielle Provaas and Rob Schröder (2015, 60 min.) in cooperation with Jonas Staal. The documentary and other video material on public debates on Azawad held in Europe are available on Vimeo.

The 'New World Embassy: Azawad' on the New World Summit website is richer in photos and hyperlinks. Against a black background, the rotating banner allows the display of images from the various New World Summit meetings and installations in several cities, including a photo of the debate held at the 'New World Embassy: Azawad' on 9 September 2014. On the left side of the banner, there is the Azawad flag. Directly under it, we see the general project's title ('New World Embassy') and the specific installation 'Azawad' written in Latin alphabet, in Tifinagh, and in Arabic. The central space of the homepage explains the aim of the project (similar to the text on the other websites), while in the right hand column we find the project

team members' names, their various roles, and their responsibilities. Clicking the name of Moussa ag Assarid, users access the recording of the debate on Vimeo, which is introduced by shots of the 'Azawad Embassy' installation in Utrecht. The trilingual logo with the Azawad flag is reproduced on the top of the left column, where we find a hyperlink to 17 photos taken during the debate. Immediately below it, it is possible to see and to download the publication *The Art of Creating a State,* produced by the organisation BAK 'with the National Liberation Movement of Azawad'.

Looking at the three websites that present the 'New World Embassy: Azawad', we can recognise the development of a semantic universe provided by a select number of objects, such as the Awazadian flag, the desert, the book derived from the project, and the photos of collective debates in installation rooms suggestive of the reality of Azawad (participants seated around a table in the form of Azawad, banners of the Azawad Embassy, and maps and artistic photos of Azawad on the walls).[35] The objects are presented from the specific perspective of the right of stateless peoples to be heard and to act (what Stockinger calls 'thematic space', 2005) and included in the discursive component on art and politics. The hyperlinks allow the thematic space to be further developed. The video of the debate shows the participants' reflections on political imagination, while the publication *The Art of Creating a State* offers extensive information and discusses points of critical theory.

In the interview with Staal and Ag Agarid published in *The Art of Creating a State*, Mazou Ibrahim Touré explains how he sees his role as artist and militant for Azawad:

> Artistic work did not go hand-in-hand very easily in the beginning. As an artist, I was not considered a part of real politics, but when public manifestations and protests began to take shape in favor of independence, I joined each of them, and observed them carefully […] I realized that I could develop banners and forms of calligraphy that were far more beautiful and effective than the ones the MNLA had been working with. Eventually they said, okay, let us try, and we did […] These slogans of the day express the poetry of the revolution. I also helped the protestors who were too timid to express themselves with ease. (Staal 2014, 90–91)

Examples of the slogans created by Mazou Ibrahim Touré are 'Azawad! Mali No!' and, in Tamasheq, '*Matarhan, Matarhan* (What Do You Want?), *Azawad A Narha* (Azawad Is What We Want!' (Staal 2014, 98–99). Touré further explains that 'not only visual art, the written word, or music, but also the art of satire' is important, and that he also performs as a comedian on the Azawadian radio (Staal 2014, 94–95). The direct link between artistic expression and

---

[35] The table and the participants are also 'located' on a map of North and West Africa reproduced on the floor in a large format(http://www.jonasstaal.nl/projects/new-world-embassy-azawad/)..

political and military action articulated by Touré resonates with Staal's presentation of Azawad in the introduction:

> Throughout the new state of Azawad, one also sees the emergence of visual arts in the form of murals covering the territory in control of the MNLA. Arts and crafts are used to develop the new imagery of Azawadian independence in the form of insignias, bracelets, flags, and carpets. […] Songs of insurgency first travelled from mouth-to-mouth, and later from hand-to-hand through cassette tapes, and today they travel through the mobile phones of soldiers[…]Azawad exists first as art, and then as politics, hence this reader's title, The Art of Creating a New State. (Staal 2014, 23–24)

In her dissertation, Runette Kruger (2017, 192) interprets the photo taken by Ag Assarid of the desert borders reproduced on the BAK and *e-flux.com* websites as 'an act of geo-political re-inscription, the mobile image of which enables the margin to gain representation in the centre of the Empire'. During the debate held at the 'Azawad Embassy'/BAK, political scientist Jolle Demmers observed that this photo and the other state 'paraphernalia' displayed, as well as the Embassy in itself, tended to make Azawad 'real' by 'disciplining' the public into recognising the 'routines of statehood', which (may/should) lead to affirm its legitimacy. Such a photo is indeed symptomatic of the Tuareg soldiers' will to mark the state borders of the looked-for Azawad. If this is a 'stateless state', as indicated in the Azawad Embassy project, in its makers' artefacts and declarations it seems to aspire to become a 'full' state—which could engender a contradiction with the project's artistic criticism of contemporaneous state power and its lack of transparency and democracy. As indicated by Kruger (2017, 205–206), 'Any aspiration towards universalising or finalising the position of the Tuareg and their allies would make the project of a piece with the totalising framework against which it is pitted.' However, this is not among the finalities attributed to the new state by the 'New World Embassy: Azawad' installation. In Kruger's interpretation, the refusal to recreate new minorities and stateless entities makes of Azawad an utopianist (non-totaliz\sing utopia) project, existing 'as a paradoxical "permanent revolution"'. In the introduction to the online and offline publication *The Art of Creating a State* (Staal 2014, 24–25), the contradiction is resolved by interpreting Azawad as a new form of state, which however seems to be a programme that has yet to be developed rather than its existent concretization:

> The [Azawadian] state is conceived not as a structure forcibly imposed onto the social body, as many so-called Western democracies have attempted to do in the past decades in order to secure their own military and economic interest, but as the result of a people's movement, a people's revolution, and a people's army—which includes the artist-soldier—that are collectively redefining the art of creating a state.

Another complex issue is the difficulty in disentangling the intricate layers of the Azawadian discursive strategies from each other, such as the demand for political rights for the Malian Tuaregs and other Amazigh speakers in North Africa and the emphasis placed on multi-ethnicity. Multi-ethnicity is a partial offline reality of the MLNA, but it is strategically endorsed and activated to legitimise their nationalist demand in the eyes of an international (progressive) public.

A final point to be mentioned concerns the position of the 'artists' in their society: Touré explains that it is children who usually help him in making banners and graffiti (Staal 2014, 94–95), which seems to imply that other adults have more serious and urgent (military or not) tasks to fulfil. Touré's interest in art as such and his position as artist–soldier (Staal 2014, 22–23) appears to be unique and unusual.

While the professed and practised interconnectedness of art and politics is crystal-clear in the case of 'New World Embassy: Azawad'—and in the practice of MNLA and other Tuareg militant groups—possible ambiguities and contradictions also appear to persist.

The idea of creating a virtual 'Embassy of Azawad' in the Dutch town of Utrecht—and thus being 'real' online while also 'acting' offline—has been effective. The news of such an embassy spread online and offline, and from this point of view the project was successful. The reactions ranged from approval on Amazigh websites such as *TamazighTime* and *tamoudre.org,* to relatively 'neutral'—for example, on the sites of *BBC Afrique* and *Jeune Afrique*. The article on *Jeune Afrique*, titled 'Ag Assarid ou l'art de la com' (Ag Assarid or the art of communication), emphasises the communicative power of Ag Assarid's action. There have also been very critical reactions, such as those on the Malian sites *Afribone*, *Niarela.net*, and *Nord Mali*—the latter speaking of '*trahison des alliés*' (betrayal of allies). The media unrest created by the project led the Embassy of the Netherlands in Mali to issue a statement re-affirming the Dutch support for the 'national unity and territorial integrity of Mali'. It is possible to read it on the Dutch Embassy's Facebook page:

> Suite aux interpellations publiques en réaction aux photos du 'New World Embassy Azawad' à Utrecht qui circulent sur les réseaux sociaux, les Pays-Bas tiennent à préciser qu'il s'agit d'une initiative politico-culturelle privée, et non d'une ambassade officielle et accréditée. Les Pays-Bas souscrivent à l'unité nationale et à l'intégrité territoriale du Mali, dont les relations extérieures avec les Pays-Bas sont dûment représentées par son Ambassade à Bruxelles.
>
> (Following public inquiries in response to pictures of the 'New World Embassy Azawad' in Utrecht circulating on social networks, the Netherlands would like to clarify that this is a private cultural–political initiative, not an official and accredited embassy. The Netherlands is committed

to the national unity and territorial integrity of Mali, whose external relations with the Netherlands are duly represented by its embassy in Brussels). (my translation)[36]

Art, politics, and imagination

From the above, we can understand that the Amazigh online cultural discourse is structured along two axes that mutually reinforce each other online and offline. The first axis concerns the activation of collective memory and the revitalisation of oral and cultural heritage. The mediatised oral genres, presented on the websites as cultural heritage appreciated within the community, contribute to the preservation of Amazigh heritage in the diaspora and in the Maghreb, and they participate in the construction of historical and cultural continuity by becoming a form of resistance against cultural marginalization and global homogenization. The second axis is provided by artistic innovation. The websites introduce Amazigh culture into global communication and help to diffuse the idea that a contemporary creation in Amazigh exists beyond the oral creation. The written literature and the musical, pictorial, and film productions oppose past and present clichés about the exclusive orality of Berber culture. Artistic innovation and activism come about through the acquisition of other (new and 'old') media, which stimulate the emergence of a community that aspires to be simultaneously local, national, and transnational.[37] The online diffusion of mediatised orality, new written literature, and audiovisual production across a public beyond the borders of the regional linguistic community contribute to the enlargement of the 'Berber literary space' mentioned above. This mediatised literary and artistic production facilitates the creation of a discourse beneficial to 'the Self': the websites display (and construct) what Amazigh individuals and communities can offer, online and offline. This leads to participation in the construction of the identity of a local and transnational community, one which will serve as a favourable basis for intracommunal and intercultural dialogue and discussion.

But the importance of websites and blogs in the negotiation and construction of identity online goes further. Literary and artistic productions contribute to the processes of construction and renegotiation of the community's 'digital imagination' locally and transnationally, both online and offline. Moreover, these productions interact with and strengthen Amazigh socio-political discourses, as in the case of the online responses to the demonstrations that have spread in North Africa since 2010 and of the 'New World Embassy: Azawad' project, discussed above.

---

[36] www.facebook.com/AmbassadePaysBasMali, 8 September 2014.
[37] Merolla 2002.

Amazigh virtual spaces responded to the offline demonstrations, bringing attention to the internal plurality of the so-called 'Arab Spring', a definition that several Amazigh sites help to criticise or renegotiate.

Previous studies have noticed a shift from cultural action towards one that is more politically oriented, both online and offline, which some scholars view as a historical transition and a generational passage (Silverstein 2010, 88; Oiry-Varacca 2012;). The political discourse has structured the cultural movement of Amazigh activism and in the current context—characterised, thanks to geopolitical changes, by a greater freedom of speech in the field as well as in digital activism—the political discourse is situated in the foreground. The two fields, however, are not less intertwined. If the cultural approach can be regarded as an initial defensive strategy in the face of an unfavourable situation due to repression and censorship, it is nevertheless not a matter of a purely strategic choice. The creation of dictionaries, the collection of linguistic and literary material of the past and of the present, and the success of certain literary genres and of mass communication media constitute efficient and necessary means to establish links of solidarity that allow the community to imagine itself (Anderson [1983] 1991, 42–46, 75–77). The cultural activism on the Internet, related to 'the feeling of being at home' that the artistic and literary productions help to evoke (Dahraoui 2014), plays also an essential role in the portrayal of Amazigh identity and in its perpetual renegotiations in the face of globalisation and the national post-colonial states (Algerian, Moroccan, Tunisian, Libyan, Malian, etc.). This cultural activism continues to sustain Amazigh political discourse concerning plurality, democracy, and territorial and economic rights, as studied by Oiry-Varacca (2012, 12). The modification of the relationship between cultural discourse and political engagement online concerns the intensification of the politically explicit discourse in relation to a number of major events, such as the recognition of the Amazigh language in Morocco and in Algeria since the 2000s, the 'plural Springs'—including the re-emergence of Imazighen in Tunisia and Libya—and the Tuareg rebellion with the creation of Azawad in Mali.

In its political and artistic interactions, Amazigh cultural discourse is not without contradictions. As indicated in the above sections, a widespread idea among Amazigh activists is the affiliation to a North African cultural space that is politically and territorially unified, *Tamazgha*, a political union which otherwise has no historical existence. Oiry-Varacca (2012) sagaciously analyses the contradiction around *Tamazgha* in the Moroccan case. The activists tend to dismiss or ignore the conflicts between the national pluralistic model maintained by the Amazigh associations and the idea of an autochthony of Imazighen (in respect to other groups)

justifying the existence of *Tamazgha* as a unified nation (Oiry-Varacca 2012, 12). According to Oiry-Varacca's research, however, most of the Amazigh associations and trends 'consider Amazighity as a basis of identity common to all Moroccans and not as a substrate that devaluates that which would come afterwards or as a perquisite of an ethnical or cultural group' (Oiry-Varacca 2012, 12). This means that the cultural continuity does not always impose the political and territorial approach to *Tamazgha*.

Do the notion of the unified *Tamazgha* and the artistic and literary effervescence propose a contradictory discourse that can be interpreted as a 'mythology' descending from French colonialism? We come here to the second issue concerning the interpretation of Amazigh activism and cultural discourse. This issue is raised in Cynthia Becker's interpretation of Amazigh artists and activists' approaches to art and identity. Becker, who produced compelling and pioneering ethnographical research on Amazigh visual arts of the Aït Khabbash (Morocco) , wrote in a later article (2010, 200): "Amazigh activists and artists cling to a belief that an original, authentic pre-Islamic and pre-Arab Berber aesthetic and culture continue into the present, replicating the French mythology used to legitimate the colonial system." We should first consider that, as indicated by previous studies (Claudot-Hawad 2011; Oiry-Varacca 2012), colonial stereotyping of the Berbers as 'traditional and dissidents' and the opposition 'between Arabs and Berbers' have also been assumed by the post-colonial nationalist discourse. The nationalist discourse used such elements to reiterate that Berbers seeking an autonomous identity (vis-à-vis the Arab-Islamic fundamentals of independent Maghrebian states) were 'acculturated', an old reproach raised in both the colonial period and the 'post-colony'. Such a nationalist discourse privileged the Arabs as the only valid component of the Maghreb and stigmatised the Berbers as a risk to national unity. The accusation of (French) acculturation has been directed at Berber associations and Berbers in general by nationalist politics and propaganda, and it was used to censure and repress their requests for linguistic, cultural, economic, and geographical rights. It is important to consider that the influence of French colonial discourse in the formation of Amazigh identity was not homogenous and linear; it was much more complex than the term 'acculturation' suggests. Some elements were acquired,[38] but others were rejected.[39] The colonial models stimulated original creations by local Berber intellectuals and prompted them to call into question the representation of Berber societies in

---

[38] An example is the awareness of the autonomous nature of Berber regions and Berbers on the basis of linguistic and ethnographic description and the concomitant awareness that Berber (oral) culture was at risk of dying out in the 'modern' world.

[39] The 'primitivity' – colonial primitivisation – of the Berber language, culture, and society and the folklorisation of Berber oral literature became central areas of contestation.

and by colonial ethnographic writings (Merolla 2006, 26-34, 154-170. The acquisition, discussion, and reconstruction of ethnographical knowledge has been undertaken by Berber writers who produced literary works in French and later on in Amazigh. A few professional and semi-professional linguists and a number of 'amateurs' participated in such a process, focusing on writing in Berber. Amazigh activists contributed reflections and spread ideas among larger mass movements. These activities, in synergy with the overall social changes, have constituted a productive framework for the renewal of Amazigh identity. In the long run, the process of self-reflection produced in the discussion and appropriation of ethnographic knowledge stimulated the construction of a shared identity transcending the traditional limits of villages and confederations. Central to such an identity was the Berber language and the shift to writing.

Instead of considering Berber intellectuals, artists, and activists as reproducing the 'mythologies' of colonial discourse, other concepts such as re-appropriation and strategic essentialism may be more appropriate to understand Amazigh discourses online and offline. As Jean-Loup Amselle and Elikia M'Bokolo (1999) noted, the re-appropriation of colonial knowledge is possible when there is a cultural basis with characteristics that are similar to or can be merged with the elements that are appropriated. This means that colonial knowledge does not just invent but organises existing elements in an interpretative framework favourable to the colonial project. With more or with less success, the re-appropriation process set in motion by the local agents attempts to disentangle such existing elements from the colonial framework in which they are constituted by selecting and re-utilising some of them. This is the case of the cultural discourse on the Amazigh websites. The concept of 'strategic essentialism' developed by Gayatri Spivak (1987, 206–7) is adopted for Amazigh identity by Ghambou (2010, 156), who indicates that, as other minorities also do, Berbers develop an essentialist notion of identity as a strategy to forge a strong collective feeling of the self and to advance their demands in contexts, we can add, of rude oppression in the past and of present paternalist and manipulative policies that can easily become violent again to oppose popular demonstrations.[40]

Once created, however, identity tends to impose models of behaviour and self-definition, which explains contradictions and tensions that are also present in Amazigh cultural and political discourses. We have seen, for instance, the tension between the pluralist model of the nation supported by Amazigh associations and the ideas of Berber autochthony (with respect to other

---

[40] As in the case of the revolt in the Rif in Norther Morocco in 2016-2019.

components of the North African population) and of the transnational territory of *Tamazgha*, which can develop 'into an ethnic vision of society' (Oiry-Varacca 2012, 12). The post-colonial nationalist re-use of the colonial opposition between Arabs and Berbers, accusing the latter of acculturation, may further strengthen such internal tensions of the Amazigh cultural and political approaches. There is a back-and-forth movement provided by multiple voices in the Amazigh cultural and political discourse. If the unifying discourse on the past and the cultural heritage is simplified and simplifying, such a simplification is 'strategic' because it functions to get people 'moving' and to engage in cultural and political forms of activism online and offline. Re-appropriation and strategic essentialism imply that the historical agents have a much more active role than notions of 'acculturation' and 'mythology' (in the sense of false narrative) would lead us to believe and are more adequate conceptual instruments to understand what is happening in the Amazigh field online and offline. If the Amazigh websites face contradictions within their own discourse, their functioning as artistic and activist forums will remain significant by allowing their users to interact and to position themselves in the world.

Conclusion

In summary, the cultural discourse on Amazigh websites focuses on Berber language, Berber artistic (literary and visual) productions, and the reconstruction of the past in a historical narrative from the perspective of the Imazighen (Berbers). Memory and artistic innovation are not opposed, however, as they both participate in the construction of Amazigh identity by forming a reference point within the cultural and political discourse on both a local and a global level. Examples of such identity dynamics are the online reactions to the label 'Arab Spring' and the online artistic/political project 'New World Embassy: Azawad'. Internal discursive contradictions are at the same time perceptible when we consider the desire for respect for subaltern languages and groups in multilingual North Africa and the notion of the politically and territorially unified *Tamazgha*, a Berber political union which otherwise has no historical existence but which is affirmed and recreated in songs, poems, and narrative and political texts. The present article suggests that such a unifying discourse, albeit simplifying in nature, is a form of 'strategic' re-appropriation of colonial and post-colonial constructions. We reach, here, the controversial issue as to whether, when, and how minorities have rights to construct and to demand an autonomous identity within a nation state. This issue, moreover, is intrinsically linked to ideas about the homogeneity of minorities, and to the questioning of these ideas.

References

Amari, Chawki. 2011. "Printemps arabe, été berbère." *Slate Afrique,* August 11. http://www.slateafrique.com/23607/printemps-arabe-ete-berbere-tunisie-tamazight-maroc-kabyle-algerie.

Amselle, Jean-Loup, and Elikia M'Bokolo. [1985] 1999. *Au cœur de l'ethnie. Ethnie, tribalisme et État en Afrique*. Paris: La Découverte.

Anderson, Benedict. [1983] 1991. *Imagined Communities*. London/New York: Verso.

Becker, Cynthia J. 2010. "Deconstructing the History of Berber Arts: Tribalism, Matriarchy, and a Primitive Neolithic Past." In *Berbers and Others: Beyond the Tribe and Nation in the Maghreb,* edited by Katherine E. Hoffman and Susan G. Miller, 195–220. Indiana: Indiana University.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1991. "Le champ littéraire. " *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*. 89 : 3-46.

Chaker, Salem. 2013. "L'officialisation de Tamazight (Maroc/Algérie): quelques réflexions et interrogations sur une dynamique aux incidences potentielles considérables." *Asinag* 8: 35–50. Republished on *tamazgha.fr*, 23 May 2013. http://www.tamazgha.fr/Salem-Chaker-analyse-l.html.

Chaker, Salem, and Masin Ferkal. 2012. "Berbères de Libye: un paramètre méconnu, une irruption politique inattendue." *Politique africaine* 125 (1): 105–126 , republished on *tamazgha.fr*, 9 July 2012. http://tamazgha.fr/Berberes-de-Libye-un-parametre.html.

Chibani, Ali. 2011. "Les populations amazighes croient en leur Printemps." Blog, July 28 http://blog.mondediplo.net/2011-07-28-Les-populations-amazighes-croient-en-leur.

Cole, Peter, and Brian McQuinn, eds. 2015. *The Libyan Revolution and its Aftermath*. Oxford: Oxford University.

Dahraoui, Abdelbasset. 2014. *Amazigh Culture and Media: Migration and Identity in Songs, Films and Websites*. ASCA/University of Amsterdam. Dissertation.

Ferkal, Masin. 2011. "Un voyage de rêve en pays amazigh libye." *Tamazgha.fr*, July 31 http://www.tamazgha.fr/un-voyage-de-reve-en-pays-amazigh.html.

Fonkoua, Romuald, Pierre Halen, and Katharina Städtler, eds. 2001. *Les champs littéraires africains*. Paris: Karthala.

Ghambou, Mokhtar. 2010. "The 'Numidian' Origins of North Africa." In *Berbers and Others: Beyond the Tribe and Nation in the Maghreb,* edited by Katherine E. Hoffman and Susan G. Miller, 153–170. Indiana: Indiana University.

Gumbiner, Daniel, ed. 2012. *Now That We Have Tasted Hope: Voices from the Arab Spring*. San Francisco: McSweeney's / Byliner.

Kruger, Runette. 2017. *Distopia: The utopia of dissidence and cultural pluralism in three generations of Dutch artists*. PhD diss., University of Pretoria, SA.

Lafkioui, Mena. 2011. "Interactions digitales et construction identitaire sur les sites Web berbères." *Études et Documents Berbères* 29–30: 233–253.

Lecocq, Baz, and Georg Klute. 2013. "Tuareg Separatism in Mali." *International Journal: Canada's Journal of Global Policy Analysis* 68: 424–434 (DOI: 10.1177/0020702013505431).

Le Saout, Didier. 2011. "Printemps arabe, printemps amazigh, Un printemps peut en cacher un autre." *amazighnews*. http://www.amazighnews.net/20111027625/Printemps-arabe-printemps-amazigh.html.

Loh. July, 9, 2005. "Les jeunes berbères et la cyber-résistance." [izi n Imnayen June 2005] *Tamazgha.fr*. http://tamazgha.fr/Les-jeunes-berberes-et-la-cyber-resistance,1377.html.

Lounès, Saâd. February, 11, 2014. "L'impasse idéologique du printemps arabe." *amazigh-world.org*. http://www.amazighworld.org/news/index_show.php?id=641750.

Lynch, Marc. 6 January 2011. "Obama's Arab Spring." *Foreign Policy*. http://foreignpolicy.com/2011/01/06/obamas-arab-spring/.

Merolla, Daniela. 2006. *De l'art de la narration tamazight (berbère). 200 ans d'études: état des lieux et perspectives*. Paris/Louvain: Peeters.

Merolla, Daniela. 2018. "Le Cinéma amazigh, entre le film 'grand écran' et 'Amazighwood'. *Langues O'*, 3, 46–47.

Merolla Daniela and Abdelbasset Dahraoui. 2017. [2018] "'Le sentiment d'être chez soi' sur les sites amazighs et le 'printemps arabe': déconstructions et renégociations sur le Web." In *Les revendications amazighes dans la tourmente des « printemps arabes » : Trajectoires historiques et évolutions récentes des mouvements identitaires en Afrique du Nord*, edited by Mohand Tilmatine and Thierry Desrues, 289–322. Rabat: Centre Jacques-Berque..

Montané, Nina. 22 February 2011. "Pourquoi parle-t-on de printemps des peuples arabes?" *Slate.fr*. http://www.slate.fr/story/34563/printemps-peuples-revolutions-arabes.

Najar, Sihem, ed. 2013. *Le cyberactivisme au Maghreb et dans le monde arabe*. Paris: Khartala.

Oiry-Varacca, Mari. 2012–3. "Le 'printemps arabe' à l'épreuve des revendications amazighes au Maroc. Analyse des enjeux territoriaux et politiques des discours sur l'identité." *L'Espace Politique*, 18. http://espacepolitique.rev. ues.org/2504.

Orgad, Shani. 2009. "How can researchers make sense of the issues involved in collecting and interpreting online and offline data?" In *Internet inquiry: conversations about method*, edited by Markham, Annette and Nancy Baym, 33–53. Thousand Oaks CA: SAGE.

Plantade, Yidir. June 27, 2011. "Maroc, identité amazighe et Constitution: questions à Lahoucine Bouyaakoubi." *Voix Berbère* (Blog). http://amazigh.blog.lemonde.fr/2011/06/27/maroc-identite-amazighe-et-constitution.

Pouessel, Stéphanie. December 7, 2012. "Premiers pas d'une 'renaissance' amazighe en Tunisie. Entre pression panamazighe, réalités locales et gouvernement islamiste." *Le carnet de l'IRMC*, 1–7. http://irmc.hypotheses.org/646.

Ramos-Martín, Josué. 2014. "L'identité amazighe aux Canaries: l'historiographie des origines." *L'Année du Maghreb* 10: 143–162.

Silverstein, Paul A. 2010. "The Local Dimension of Transnational Berberism: Racial Policies, Land rights, and Cultural Activism in Southeastern Morocco." In *Berbers and Others: Beyond the Tribe and Nation in the Maghreb*, edited by Hoffman, Katherine. E., and Susan G. Miller, 83–102. Indiana: Indiana University.

Spivak, Gayatri. 1987. *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics*. New York: Methuen.

Staal, Jonas, in dialogue with Moussa ag Assarid, eds. 2014. *The Art of Creating a State*. Utrecht: BAK, basis voor actuele kunst.

Stockinger, Peter. 2005. *Les sites web*. Paris: Hermes.

Stratton, Frances. 1994. *Contemporary African Literature and the Politics of Gender*. London and New York: Routledge.

Suárez Collado, Àngela. 2013. "À la recherche d'une place dans le 'Printemps Arabe': le TIC et la contestation amazighe pendant les émeutes en Afrique du Nord." In *Les réseaux sociaux sur Internet à l'heure des transitions démocratiques*, edited by Sihem Najar, 379–397. Paris: Khartala.

Touré, Mazou Ibrahim, Staal, Jonas with remarks by Moussa Ag Assarid. 2014. "I Was Needed, so I Became an Artist." Interview. In *The Art of Creating a State*, edited by Jonas Staal in dialogue with Moussa ag Assarid, 94-95. Utrecht: BAK, basis voor actuele kunst.