Amazigh Nationalism in the Maghreb

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ABSTRACT

While many inhabitants of the Maghreb (a cultural region of Northwest Africa) are ethnically Arab, the region is also home to a significant minority population. An indigenous population of the Maghreb, the Imazighen (singular: Amazigh) account for at least 13 percent of regional population. Imazighen exhibit a substantial level of ethnic consciousness and nationalist sentiment. This research investigates manifestations of Amazigh nationalism through political affiliations and cultural associations, focusing especially on Amazigh populations in Algeria and Morocco. Overall, this research finds that there are well-developed Amazigh nationalist ideologies and organizations in, and beyond, the Maghreb. These nationalist forces play significant roles in the politics of the region.

Key Words: Berber, Imazighen, Maghreb, nationalism, North Africa

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INTRODUCTION

The Maghreb is a cultural region of Northwestern Africa, generally defined as spanning from Morocco east to Libya, and as far south as Mauritania. The Arabic term *al-Maghrib* means "the west," and is also the official title of the Kingdom of Morocco. The Maghreb is unique in its location as a zone of intersection between Arab cultures to the east and "Western" systems of Europe to the north. However, the region is also unique in terms of indigenous population (Fig. 1). Before European, Arab, or even Roman colonization, the region was inhabited by the Imazighen (singular, Amazigh) (Crawford 2005). "Berber" is a more common label for the group. However, this has a derogatory connotation and many members of the group prefer the term Imazighen (El Addouli 2007). Population estimates are generally imprecise, ranging from 13 million to over 32 million (Gordon 2005, El Amraoui 2007a, US Dept. of State

2001, US Dept. of State 2007). Regardless of actual population statistics, this ethno-linguistic group is the largest ethnic minority in the Maghreb.

The Imazighen are a culturally diverse and geographically dispersed group. As a group, the Imazighen are primarily distinguished by language. The Berber language subfamily consists of 26 dialects (Gordon 2005), the largest of which are detailed in Table 1. Note that the term Amazigh is used to refer to Berber speakers in general, as well as to the Tamazight-speaking central Moroccan sub-group. Furthermore, the term "Tamazight" is sometimes used to refer to Berber languages in general.

As a group, the Imazighen exhibit substantial ethnic consciousness, despite over two millennia of colonial influence. Amazigh cultural organizations are common throughout the Maghreb, and several political institutions are influenced by Amazigh interests. Furthermore, certain elements of the Amazigh population exhibit a distinct sense of Amazigh nationalism. This research explores the political ramifications of this nationalism in the areas of political, social, and militant activism. While there is a substantial body of work on various Amazigh political issues, this research specifically analyzes manifestations of Amazigh nationalism. In particular, I focus on the relationship between Amazigh nationalist elements and their respective governments.

I examine Amazigh nationalist activism at local, state, and regional scales. While this
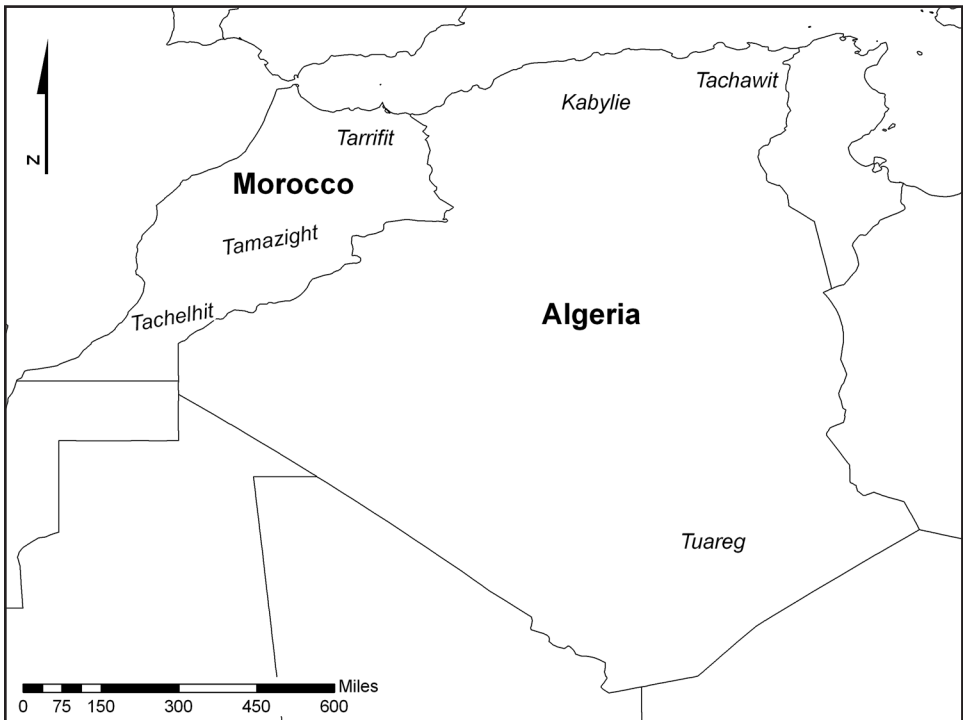

Figure 1: Approximate Locations of Selected Amazigh Groups. This map is a highly generalized attempt to show broad regions in which some major Amazigh subgroups are found.
Sources: Central Intelligence Agency 1971, Central Intelligence Agency 1973, Gordon 2005, United Nations Environmental Program 2000. Cartography by Author.

Table 1: Major Tamazight Dialect Groups. Source: Gordon 2005

Dialect Group	Estimated Population	Location
Tamazight	3,150,000	Middle and High Atlas Mountains, Central Morocco
Kabylie	3,123,000	Grand Kabylie Mountains, Northern Algeria
Tachelhit	3,000,000	Southwestern Morocco
Tarifit	1,700,000	Rif Mountains, Northern Morocco
Tachawit	1,400,000	Aurès Mountains, Northeast Algeria
Tamajaq	640,000	Central Niger

paper analyzes Amazigh nationalist interests throughout the Maghreb, it emphasizes communities within Algeria and Morocco, since these states are home to the largest and most politically active Amazigh populations. Amazigh nationalism is also an issue in various European communities, since there are substantial Amazigh populations in Western Europe. Gordon (2005) estimates that Belgium, France, and the Netherlands are home to at least 1.3 million speakers of Tamazight languages. At least 40 percent of the 1.5 million French nationals of Algerian origin are ethnically Amazigh (Silverstein 1996). This contributes to significant social tension between Arab and Amazigh members of the French immigrant community, as Imazighen seek to distance themselves from radical Islamist ideologies that Arab immigrants are sometimes accused of supporting (Silverstein 1996). Furthermore, Amazigh nationalist interests are growing with increased migration within traditional Amazigh territories and the Maghrebian states (Crawford 2001). I also explore the effect of extra-regional influences on Amazigh nationalist movements, specifically the influences of Europe and the Arab world, both colonial and post-colonial, on the Maghreb and on the Imazighen.

THE QUESTION OF AMAZIGH NATIONALISM

There are diverse definitions of "nationalism," and also of "nation." Layachi argues that an ethnic group does not develop into a nation until it desires "self determination" (2005, 214). In this sense, the Imazighen probably cannot be defined as a nation. Despite criticisms of the state by the Imazighen, calls for Amazigh autonomy are rare. However, one radical Algerian nationalist group, the Movement for the Autonomy of Kabylie, openly calls for autonomy of the Kabylie Berber region (Layachi 2005). The Amazigh do, however, exhibit many of the other elements often seen as vital for the existence of a nation. They share a common history[1], language[2], religion[3], territory[4], and culture (Gunter 2005, 263). Ultimately, while not all Imazighen view themselves as part of a single Amazigh nation, elements of the population do espouse nationalist sentiments in their arguments for the promotion of an explicitly Amazigh culture, recognition of Tamazight language by the state, and limited self-determination, or "autonomy within the federal framework," in the words of one Amazigh scholar in Algeria (Maddy-Weitz-

man 1999, 48). In this paper, I employ this less restrictive view of nationalism: a belief in a distinctly Amazigh culture coupled with a desire for limited self-determination.

One of the strongest arguments against the existence of Amazigh nationalism is made by Gellner and Michaud (1972). They argue that "the Berber sees himself as a member of this or that tribe, within an Islamically-conceived and permeated world—and not as a member of a linguistically defined ethnic group" (13). The underlying implication of this argument is that Amazigh nationalism cannot exist, since Imazighen only function in tribes and not as a larger-scale nation. This argument has merit. Imazighen are a diverse group, speaking numerous dialects, some of which are mutually unintelligible. Furthermore, Amazigh dialect groups are divided spatially (for example, there are different Moroccan groups in various ranges of the Atlas Mountains).

However, the existence of Amazigh-oriented political parties (like Algeria's *Arouch* party) and Amazigh cultural groups, which operate at the state level (like Morocco's Amazigh Cultural Movement) or on an international scale (like the Berber Cultural Movement), indicates a broader unity. Moreover, arguments for a distinctly Amazigh sense of unity that crosses dialect boundaries are common. Roberts (2002, 112) has contested Gellner's argument, arguing that it oversimplifies Amazigh political organization. Specifically, he points out that this theory defines Imazighen in terms of kinship groups, but ignores the role of traditional parties or alliances known as *saff* in Algeria and *liff* in Morocco. Marais (1972a) has argued that hostility towards the Imazighen in post-independence Morocco reinforced the cohesion of the group. He also points out that, unlike the Berber revolutionaries during Moroccan independence conflicts of the 1950s, "Berber revolutionaries today [1972]… could achieve the strength and cohesion necessary for change" (Marais 1972b, 283).

More recently, Crawford (2005, 178) has argued that Amazigh activists are "disseminating strikingly modern notions of their identity," both in terms of mode (e.g. via the internet) and in terms of message. For example, the World Amazigh Congress (http://www.amazighworld.org/) uses its website to promote solidarity among Imazighen, with commentary on Amazigh language, news concerning Amazigh civil rights, and scathing essays on the limits of Arab culture. Other examples of internet-based cultural venues include the Amazigh Cultural Association in America (http://www.tamazgha.org/), which publishes *The Amazigh Voice*, a magazine written in Tamazight and English, and Kabyle.com (http://www.kabyle.com/), which is primarily focused on Algerian politics. More fundamentally, Crawford notes that Amazigh activists are expressing notions of their identity by espousing an explicitly "culturalist" message that attempts to strengthen Amazigh identity throughout the entire Amazigh population (2005). This entails creating transnational communities of Amazigh activists via websites (Crawford and Hoffman 2000) and portraying Amazigh culture as an ancient entity in the Maghreb which is under threat of degradation. For instance, an essay on *Amazighworld.org* argues confidently that "man of Northern Africa, called the Berber, was not only the source of all the white races but also that of civilizations. The Berber language, and the Tifinagh alphabet, were also the first of the history of humanity" (Hanouz 2002, translated from French by the author).

MANIFESTATIONS OF AMAZIGH NATIONALISM

Amazigh nationalism is embodied in several distinct ways. One of the most obvious forms of nationalist activism is the political party. While some Amazigh ethnic-based parties do exist, political representation of the Amazigh community is often in the form of a large party which represents the interests of rural and minority populations in general. Parties based explicitly on ethnic or linguistic grounds have been challenged by

Moroccan law (Cherkaoui 2007) and Algeria bans the formation of parties based on religion or ethnicity (US Dept. of State 2007). Historically, political parties have played a somewhat limited role in the political process of the Maghreb. Morocco, governed by a constitutional monarchy, did not hold a completely free election until 2002, and Algeria has fluctuated between a single-party system and a highly turbulent (and allegedly tainted) electoral process since the time of its independence in 1962 (US Dept. of State 2007). This lack of electoral stability has lead to a certain level of dissatisfaction with the electoral system. Only 37 percent of registered voters participated in Morocco's parliamentary elections of September 2007 (Ministry of the Interior 2007) due largely to dissatisfaction with existing political parties and "seasonal politics" in which politicians are only publicly visible during election seasons (El Amraoui 2007b).

In Morocco, several parties receive support from the Amazigh community. One of the largest parties to boast Amazigh support is the *Mouvement Populaire* (Popular Movement or MP). In the 2007 parliamentary elections, the MP claimed 9.2 percent of the vote, making it the third-largest party in parliament (Ministry of the Interior 2007). Founded in 1957 by two Amazigh tribal leaders of the Middle Atlas Mountains, the MP originally espoused two primary issues. The party pressed for the official recognition of Tamazight language and its use in public schools and mass media. The party also called for increases in the administrative power of Amazigh tribal councils, relative to the power of the Ministry of the Interior (Venema and Mguild 2003). Today, the MP courts a broader constituency, representing rural populations in general. However, the party still receives substantial support from the largely rural Amazigh population (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees 2000) and actively supports Amazigh issues such as fighting derogatory language against Imazighen, and calling for the constitutional recognition of Tamazight language and its

integration into the educational system (Mouvement Populaire 2008). In addition to MP, several small ethnic-based parties exist, although one Amazigh party, the Moroccan Amazigh Democratic Party, has been accused of violating a law restricting ethnic or linguistic based parties (Cherkaoui 2007). These regional parties often represent different dialect groups within the greater Amazigh population (El Addouli 2007).

Algerian Amazigh nationalists are primarily represented by three political parties. Until 2001, two socialist parties, *Rassemblement pour la Culture et à Democratie* (Rally for Culture and Democracy, or RCD) and *Front des Forces Socialist* (Socialist Forces' Front, or FFS) represented Amazigh nationalist interests (Salih 2007). The "Black Spring" of 2001 brought massive protests throughout the Kabylia region in reaction to the killing of an Amazigh youth in government custody. During this period, a new party, the *Arouch* (named after the Tamazight word for a traditional gathering), gained dominance in the politics of Kabylia (Saleh 2001). *Arouch* has since pursued a more militant nationalist platform calling for the recognition of Tamazight language and for increased political rights for both Imazighen and Algerian citizens in general (Arouch 2001, Layachi 2005).

A second form of Amazigh nationalist activism in the Maghreb can be found in cultural associations. Prevalent throughout the Maghreb and within European communities of Maghrebian origin, cultural associations focus on the promotion of ethnic identity and often call for political recognition of Amazigh culture. These associations are theoretically apolitical, and instead focus on contributing to ethnic consciousness by printing newspapers, promoting culture, and lobbying for ethnic issues (Burton-Rose 1998). For example, the *Association Marocaine de la Rechercehe et des Echanges Culturels* began recording and distributing Amazigh oral folklore in the 1960s and the transnational Berber Cultural Movement publishes a journal, *Amazigh* (Silverstein and Crawford 2004).

The political significance of the cultural organizations is debatable, and not all Amazigh cultural groups are focused on nationalistic political ideals. However, they do contribute to Amazigh nationalist movements in the sense that they contribute to Amazigh ethnic consciousness (assuming a strong ethnic consciousness is a precursor to nationalism). Silverstein and Crawford (2004) point out that the establishment of the *Institut Royal de la Culture Amazighe* (Royal Institute for Amazigh Culture), a Moroccan government institute for the research and promotion of Amazigh culture, was in part a response to pressure from Amazigh cultural associations, most notably the Amazigh Cultural Movement. Amazigh cultural associations are also active in immigrant communities of Europe. For example, the Berber Cultural Movement has called for the French government to embrace Amazigh identity and acknowledge this identity in the French school system (Silverstein 1996).

Another aspect of many nationalist movements is militant activism. In Morocco, several Amazigh groups unsuccessfully attempted failed separatist movements for their respective regions during the colonial period. For instance, Tarifit groups of northern Morocco staged an unsuccessful revolt against Spanish colonial powers from 1909 to 1925 (Alvarez 1999). Since then, Amazigh separatist movements have been rare, but Imazighen have remained a substantial military factor in the region. During the French colonial period, Imazighen worked with other anticolonial entities and played substantial roles in resistance and independence conflicts. For example, from the 1860s until as late as 1956, rural Amazigh and Arab residents of Algeria utilized incendiarism to protest colonial expropriation of communal lands, setting fire to state-controlled forestland (which was a major resource for the colonial cork industry) (Kuhlken 1999). Amazigh leaders in Morocco played significant roles in the state's independence movement (Venema and Mguild 2003), and Kabylie militants were a substantial element of the Algerian revolutionary war (Ibrahim 1994). During these independence conflicts, Amazigh militants worked within the structure of Moroccan or Algerian independence movements. After the independence of Maghrebian states some Imazighen, dissatisfied with their position in newly formed societies, continued military struggles with their respective states. Amazigh members of the Moroccan military were heavily involved in a 1971 coup against the Moroccan monarchy, although this coup was not explicitly an "Amazigh" undertaking (Coram 1972). Most recently, the Kabylie played a role in Algeria's civil war (lasting from the early 1990s until 2002). Kabylie political groups played a somewhat defensive role in this war, opposing both major forces of the conflict, the Algerian government and Algerian Islamist forces (Ibrahim 1994).

STATE-NATION RELATIONS WITHIN THE MAGHREB

Relations between the Amazigh community and the state have historically been ambiguous, and vary geographically. Traditionally, state-nation relations have been better in Morocco than Algeria, but these relations remain strained in both states. In Morocco, the Imazighen played a significant role in the transition from French colonialism to independence. For example, many tribal chiefs of the Middle Atlas Mountains supported Moroccan monarch Mohammed V during his exile (1953-1955) during the French colonial period. After his return to power, and Morocco's acquisition of independence, these figures were awarded positions as officials within the Ministry of the Interior (Venema and Mguild 2003). However, despite early alliances between Amazigh communities and the Moroccan state, relations between these entities have been strained. In Algeria, state interactions with most minority political groups have been characterized by repression since independence in 1962. In the context of Amazigh politics, the ruling *Front de Libération Nationale* party (National Liberation Front) pursued Arab nationalist

policies from independence until 2001. For example, during much of this period, Arabic was the official and only permitted language in many contexts, despite the fact that as much as 26 percent of the Algerian population is ethnically and linguistically Amazigh (US Dept. of State 2007). However, since Amazigh nationalist rioting in 2001, the Algerian government has made efforts to accommodate Amazigh culture, acknowledging the Kabylian dialect as a national language (US Dept. of State 2007).

It is important to note that Amazigh and Arab communities have coexisted in the Maghreb for almost 1300 years, so substantial integration has occurred. For example, 60 percent (approximately 20 million people) of the Moroccan population claim Berber ancestry (US Dept. of State 2007). Despite this historic coexistence, Imazighen and Arabs have distinct identities, and exhibit a low level of mutual animosity. For instance, one study of communal land access in the Tamazight communities of Morocco's Middle Atlas Mountains found that Arab settlers from other regions of Morocco (increasingly common in post-independence Morocco, as individuals migrate to agricultural lands in the Atlas Mountains) generally do not integrate into these Amazigh communities. This is due to hostility of the local community, and unwillingness of the settlers to respect land use customs of local residents (Venema and Mguild 2003).

To a certain extent, the relationship between Amazigh groups and their respective state governments embodies the broader ethnic relationship between the Amazigh and Arab communities. Historically, French colonial powers attempted to separate the communities by isolating Imazighen from Arab schools and Islamic law (*sharia*) courts. Since these French "Berberist" policies were in part designed to weaken the religious link between Imazighen and Arabs, "the French presented [Maghrebians] with a ready-made religious issue" (Halstead 1969, 93). The effect of these policies was unifying in nature: Amazigh and Arab communities ultimately resisted colonial powers based on a common religion, rather than on ethnic commonality. However, since independence, the governments of the Maghreb have at times pursued "Arabization" policies: policies which promote Arab culture as the official culture of the state. State-sponsored Arabization was most prevalent in Algeria. During the mid-1970s, Algeria's government under Houari Boumedienne outlawed the literary use of Tamazight, eliminated courses on Berber language and culture from the state's university system, and established a large number of Arabic-speaking Islamic institutes in Tamazight-speaking regions (Silverstein 1996). In Morocco, Arabization was most striking within the educational system, where many teachers were Arab, and were unable to use local language while teaching in Amazigh areas (Crawford 2001). Some other examples of Moroccan Arabization policy have included government refusal to register traditional Amazigh names on birth certificates, and attempts to "Arabize" Tamazight place names (US Dept. of State 2001).

One of the primary grievances of many Amazigh nationalist activists involves dissatisfaction with Arabization policies and the resulting dominance of Arab language and culture. Al-Aly has pointed out that "fear of extinction" is a motivating factor behind Amazigh ethnic movements in Algeria (2001). However, this is not the only factor driving Amazigh nationalists. In a 2001 study of Amazigh identity in southern Morocco, Crawford notes that increased migration is also increasing Amazigh ethnic consciousness, as more Imazighen migrate to urban areas for employment. Crawford found that Amazigh migrant workers are more likely than non-migrants to see their specific dialect as only one variety of the broader Tamazight language, and to claim to understand other Tamazight dialects (2001). This increase in awareness of ethnic identity serves to create a heightened sense of unity among Imazighen of the region: a phenomenon which Amazigh nationalists can utilize for support. Another major grievance among

all political movements of the Maghreb is state control of political associations. In the context of Amazigh nationalism, this censorship has involved limiting the speech of Berber political parties and cultural associations in both Morocco and Algeria. In Morocco, these entities are relatively free to publish independent press, but spontaneous demonstrations have been quelled in the past (Burton-Rose 1998). In Algeria, Amazigh political activism has occasionally been met with government violence, most recently in 2001 (US Dept. of State 2003).

Despite historical problems, relations between Amazigh communities and their respective governments have improved substantially. One major accommodation made by governments of the Maghreb has been their acceptance of cultural associations. Morocco has tolerated these associations since 1958 (Burton-Rose 1998). Algeria has allowed the formation of non-political associations since 1987. This has allowed rapid growth in the number of Amazigh cultural associations within the state: from 1987 to 1996, 1000 such organizations were founded in the Kabylia region alone (Goodman 1996). Another recent development in Amazigh-state relations involves more active state recognition of Tamazight languages. For example, Algeria recognized Tamazight as a national language in 2001 (US Dept. of State 2007). Morocco also recognizes Tamazight as a national language, and has established approximately 350 Tamazight-speaking primary schools throughout the country (US Dept. of State 2007). Finally in 2001 Morocco's monarch, Mohammed VI, created the Royal Institute of Amazigh Culture, an institute for the study of Amazigh culture (Institut Royal de la Culture Amazighe 2003). This institute is also charged with overseeing the implementation of Tamazight in the Moroccan school system (Crawford 2005). While these changes in government policy (especially increased freedom for cultural associations) are in response to pressure from various political entities, government recognition of Tamazight language and culture, and increased political freedoms have been central themes of protest for many Amazigh nationalists (Venema and Mguild 2007, Arouch 2001).

AMAZIGH NATIONALISM AND EXTERNAL INFLUENCES

Historically, the Maghreb has experienced numerous forms of outside control. Two regions have had especially strong influence on the Maghreb, and on its Amazigh inhabitants: Western Europe and the greater "Arab" region. Colonialism has been a significant issue in the Maghreb for at least two millennia. The coastal regions of Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia composed much of the Roman Empire's provinces of *Mauretania*, *Africa*, and *Numidia* (Shepherd 1911, Sherwin-White 1944). However, the influence of Arab colonialists on the region arguably left the most indelible mark on the Maghreb. This is most notably demonstrated by the presence of Islam in the region, which today is the declared religion of 99 percent of Algerians, 98.7 percent of Moroccans, and 98 percent of Tunisians (Central Intelligence Agency 2007). Throughout the Maghreb, Arab colonialists integrated with Amazigh communities, as evidenced by the formation of several Islamic Berber dynasties in Morocco and Algeria. For example, in the Central and High Atlas Mountains numerous Amazigh bloodlines claim to have descended from the Prophet Mohammed, due to their affiliation with the Idrisid Dynasty (780-974 AD) and its founder, purportedly a descendent of the Prophet (Gellner 1969).

More recently, French colonialism in the Maghreb left a strong impact on the region. French colonialists actively pursued a policy of "divide and conquer" in their dealings with the Arab and Amazigh residents of the region (Halstead 1969). The French viewed their Berber constituents as "almost European" and far superior to Arab counterparts. French colonists argued that Berbers tolerated but did not embrace Islam, were commercially wise in nature, and exhibited

democratic beliefs, as evidenced by the use of democratic tribal councils (Silverstein 1996, 12). Ultimately, the French pursued several policies attempting to assimilate the Amazigh population into the French system. However, these policies were relatively unsuccessful, as the Imazighen later played substantial roles in anti-colonial conflicts.

Despite today's lack of direct colonialism, Europe continues to hold substantial influence over the Maghreb, as evidenced by the dominance of European economic interests. In 2000, 84 percent of foreign direct investment in Morocco, and 39 percent in Algeria, originated from the European Union, with France as the leading source (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development 2006). Even more significant for the Amazigh population is the phenomenon of emigration to Western Europe. Today, at least 2.1 million Tamazight speakers reside in France, Spain, Belgium, and the Netherlands (Gordon 2005). Europe is also a source of Amazigh nationalist ideology. For example, when the public and literary use of Tamazight was outlawed in Algeria in 1973, Kabylie immigrant communities founded the Berber Academy of Paris and the Berber Studies Center at the University of Paris-VII-Vincennes. These institutes have been instrumental in the resurrection of the traditional Tamazight alphabet, *tifinagh* (Silverstein 1996), thereby providing a mechanism for Amazigh writers to further differentiate themselves as Imazighen. A more recent example of Amazigh ideology in Europe is *Berbère TV*, a Paris-based television station broadcasting in Tamazight and French, which has approximately 7 million viewers in Algeria and Morocco (Berbère TV 2008).

Arab regions have historically had substantial influence in the Maghreb as well. The region's overwhelmingly Muslim and Arabic-speaking population is a manifestation of this phenomenon. This cultural dominance is itself a contributor to Amazigh nationalist sentiment, as Amazigh nationalist interests contest Arab dominance. However, contemporary Arab culture also influences the region

and its Amazigh inhabitants. The Arabic film industry is based in Egypt, thus Egyptian colloquial Arabic, *Masri*, is becoming more prevalent in the Maghreb and throughout the Arab world (Haeri 2003). Modern Standard Arabic, the standard academic and professional dialect, is also increasing in prevalence throughout the Maghreb since it is the language of mainstream news media (like *Al Jazeera* television) and many government communications (Crawford 2001). Overall, these language trends may affect Imazighen, since they serve to increase homogeneity among Arabic speakers. Many Imazighen are also Arabic speakers, so these phenomena require them to learn new Arabic dialects (as opposed to *Derija*, the Maghrebian colloquial dialect). Furthermore Amazigh migrant workers bring new Arabic vocabulary to Amazigh communities when they visit their hometowns (Crawford 2001).

ISLAMISM AND AMAZIGH NATIONALISM

Political Islamism is another external influence in the Maghreb originating in the greater Arab region. Western scholars have often defined Islamism as an attempt to create a political entity unified by Islam, whereas many Islamic scholars have defined Islamism as a reaction to colonialism and other external influences (Karpat 2001). Islamism as a political and social force involves several factions, but in general all of these rally support under the pretext of the religion. Zubaida has identified three main "types" of Islamism. Conservative Islamism, epitomized by the Salafi Wahhabis of Saudi Arabia, calls for "traditional" Islamic practices and norms. Radical Islamism, embodied by ideologies in line with Ruhollah Khomeini's Iranian populist movement, draws from leftist principles while seeking to overthrow "infidel" governments and establish states based in Sharia law (2001, 23). Finally, a more moderate brand of political Islam is found in the works of Moshen Kadivar in Iran and Ali Bulac of Turkey. This ideology

stresses that Islam focuses on the community (*umma*) and not the state, thus, the tenets of Islam should be a source of guidance rather than absolute rule (Zubaida 2001, 24). One example of moderate Islam was found in the Egyptian People's Party (*Hizb al-Umma*), a major player in the Egyptian independence movement (Halstead 1969).

Political Islamism is a significant force throughout the Muslim world, and the Maghreb is no exception. Morocco's banned *Parti de la Justice et Bienfaisance* (Justice and Charity Party or PJB) is an example of conservative and radical Islamism in the region. The primary manifestation of moderate Islamism in Morocco is the *Parti de la Justice et du Développement* (Justice and Development Party or PJD). In the 2007 elections the party won 14.15 percent of votes, although support is rumored to be much more substantial (Ministry of the Interior 2007, Al Jazeera 2007). Islamism takes a more militant form in Algeria, where conflict between secularist government forces and several Islamist militias claimed between 100,000 and 150,000 lives from 1991 to 2002 (Al Jazeera 2005). Katel (2005) has identified two major militant Islamist organizations within the Maghreb: *Salifiya Jihadiya* of Morocco, responsible for several 2003 suicide attacks in Casablanca which killed 43, and the Salifist Group for Preaching and Combat in Algeria, an active participant in this state's recent civil war.

The relationship between Islamism and the Amazigh nationalist movement is somewhat ambiguous. El Adnani points out that ideologically the movements face a common enemy: Arab nationalism (2007). Islamists, espousing a religious, anti-modern ideology, reject the secular aspects of Arab nationalism. A history of political oppression and inept governance by some Arab nationalist regimes (like those of Syria and Egypt) also alienate Islamists (Demant 2006). In contrast, the ire of Amazigh nationalists is focused upon Arabization policies of governments

within the Maghreb (El Adnani 2007). The Islamist movement in the Maghreb is deferential toward the politics of Amazigh nationalism; this is evidenced by the conciliatory literature published by Maghrebian Islamist thinkers. Hassan al-Banna, the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood (an Islamist organization and a banned political party in Egypt) was one of the first Islamists to comment on Amazigh issues, and ultimately inspired Moroccan Islamist Absdselam Yassine (founder of the PJB) to publish *Dialogue with an Amazigh Friend* in 1997 (El Adnani 2007). Amazigh nationalist attitudes toward Islamism are less clear. The most militant Imazighen reject the "colonialist" influence of Islam. For example Algeria's RCD party espouses an explicitly secular stance, and politically supported the Algerian government in its struggle against Islamists during the civil war (Maddy-Weitzman 1999). However more moderate nationalists acknowledge the significance of Islam within the community, and the usefulness of the Islamist political machine.

SOCIALISM AND AMAZIGH NATIONALISM

Finally, the relationship between socialist and Amazigh nationalist movements is fairly strong, but varies geographically. In Morocco, Amazigh leaders were traditionally allied with the non-socialist government, both within the confines of an alliance with the ruling *Istiqlal* party and, after 1958, in the form of the MP, which has traditionally supported the monarchy (Venema and Mguild 2003). However, the forerunner of Morocco's largest socialist party (today known as the Socialist Union of Popular Forces, or USFP) broke from Istiqlal in the 1960s with heavy support of Imazighen in southern Morocco (Marais 1972b). The Kabylie of northern Algeria have a strong affiliation with socialist movements within the state. Kabylia is the origin and support base of the FFS and RCD, both major Algerian socialist parties (US Dept. of State 2003).

EVIDENCE OF NATIONALIST VOTING PATTERNS IN MOROCCO

In 2007, the Kingdom of Morocco held parliamentary elections. An analysis of the results of these elections provides insight into the geography of Amazigh nationalist activism. This case study examines electoral support for four of Morocco's largest parties. These parties were chosen for analysis as they are representative of the major political ideologies of the region, thus their analysis highlights relationships between Amazigh nationalist interests and other regional political movements. These parties include: MP, Morocco's main Amazigh-oriented party; Istiqlal, the party of the Moroccan independence movement which traditionally received strong support from Imazighen (Venema and Mguild 2003); the PJD, the state's largest Islamist party; and the USFP, the largest Moroccan socialist party. Support for these parties is compared (by correlation analysis) with demographic variables from the Moroccan *Haut Commissariate au Plan* (High Commission Plan or HCP). These include urban and rural population characteristics (since many Imazighen reside in rural settings) and language trends as an indication of ethnicity (i.e. Arab or Imazighen). Unfortunately, official statistics on ethnicity in the Maghreb are rare, so this analysis uses language proficiency data from the HCP census. This data set does not include actual statistics on Tamazight speakers, but instead counts individuals that are fluent neither in Arabic nor French. Given that the only other major languages spoken in Morocco are Tamazight and Spanish (and it is unlikely that a Moroccan would learn Spanish but not French or Arabic), these "other language" speakers are probably Imazighen.

Table 2 displays the results of a correlation analysis between voter support for the studied political parties in Morocco's 61 provinces. Most of these correlations are positive and significant, and some are strong, like the correlations between support for PJD and USFP. Positive correlations are not surprising since the parties are all quite large and receive support in all of Morocco's 61 provinces. However, voter support for Istiqlal, PJD, and USFP have stronger correlations than voter support for MP and any of the other parties. This suggests that MP receives support from a different population (most likely Imazighen) than the other major parties.

Table 3 shows the result of a correlation analysis between electoral results and demographic variables in the 61 Moroccan provinces. This analysis revealed few significant correlations. This general lack of correlation may be due to the fact that all four parties are large (Istiqlal, PJD, MP, and USFP are the

Table 2: Correlation Coefficients: Percent of Votes Cast for Various Parties at the Provincial Level. Level of significance in parentheses, n = 61. Source: Ministry of the Interior 2007

	Mouvement Populaire	Istiqlal	PJD	USFP
Mouvement Populaire	-	0.338 (0.008)	0.359 (0.004)	-0.003 (0.98)
Istiqlal	0.338 (0.008)	-	0.753 (0.000)	0.8 (0.000)
PJD	0.359 (0.004)	0.753 (0.000)	-	0.409 (0.001)
USFP	-0.003 (0.98)	0.8 (0.000)	0.409 (0.001)	-

Table 3: Correlation Coefficients: Percentage of Votes Cast for Various Parties and Demographic Variables, at the Provincial Level. Level of significance in parentheses, n = 61. Sources: Ministry of the Interior 2007, Haut Commissariat au Plan 2004 (a) and (b)

	Urban Population	Rural Population	Monolingual Arabic, pct. of population	Monolingual Tamazight, pct. of population
Mouvement Populaire	-0.102 (0.432)	0.102 (0.432)	0.073 (0.578)	-0.024 (0.852)
Istiqlal	0.001 (0.995)	-0.001 (0.995)	0.030 (0.821)	-0.012 (0.928)
PJD	0.232 (0.072)	-0.232 (0.072)	0.040 (0.761)	0.255 (0.047)
USFP	0.072 (0.582)	-0.072 (0.582)	-0.069 (0.649)	0.058 (0.657)
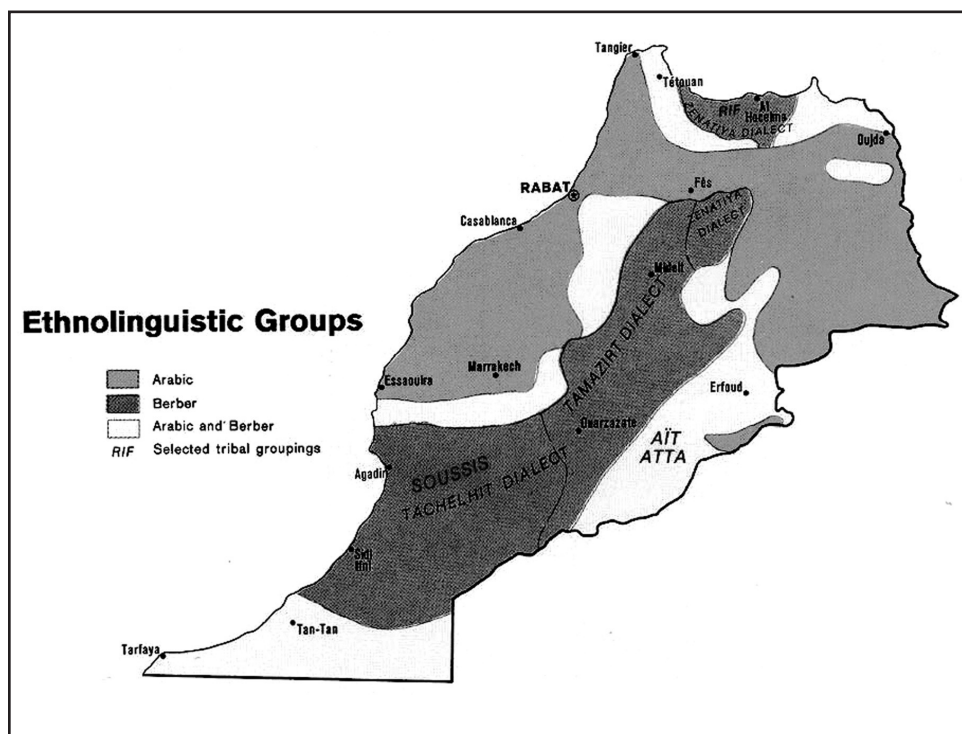
Figure 2a: Ethnolinguistic Territories in Morocco. This 1973 Central Intelligence Agency map is highly generalized, but is useful in identifying general patterns in Moroccan ethnic geography. Source: Central Intelligence Agency 1973.

first-, second-, third-, and fifth-largest parties in the Moroccan parliament, respectively) and court broad constituencies. Furthermore, voter turnout for this election was only 37 percent (Ministry of the Interior 2007). Amazigh activists have boycotted elections in Algeria in the past (Maddy-Weitzman 1999), as did a small Amazigh party, the Amazigh Democratic Party, during this election (Touahri 2007). However, there is little evidence to suggest widespread Amazigh boycotts of this election (Touahri 2007).

Voting patterns do show some similarities in the context of the distribution of the Imazighen (Figs. 2a and 2b). While Figure 2a is an overly simple representation of the ethnic landscape and Figure 2b underestimates the size of the Amazigh speaking population (since it is based on linguistic data that does not include multilingual Imazighen), these maps highlight general patterns in the ethnic landscape of Morocco. Specifically, these maps suggest that the Oriental and Meknes-Tafilalet regions (corresponding to Amazigh populations in the Rif, Middle, and High Atlas Mountains, respectively) have high proportions of Tamazight speakers. The Souss-Massa-Draa region likely has high Amazigh populations as well even though this is not apparent in the map, since at least three million Tamazight speakers reside in southwestern Morocco (Gordon 2005). It is possible that Imazighen of this region are more likely to be multi-lingual, in which case Moroccan census data would classify them as Arabic or French speakers.

A map of voter support for the Mouvement Populaire, the largest Moroccan party
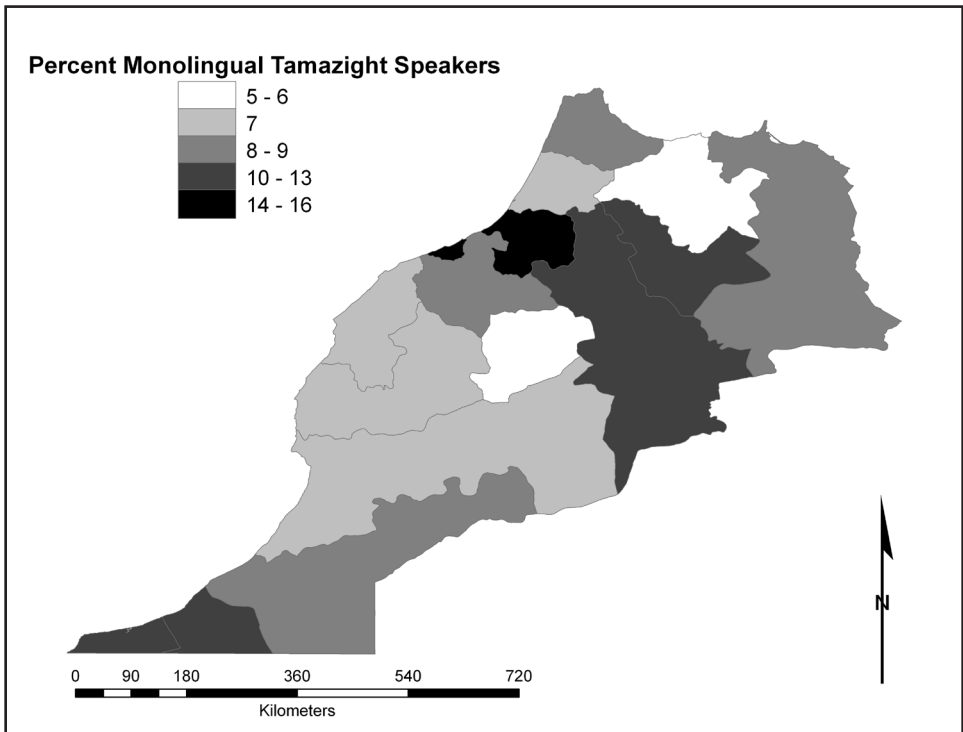

Figure 2b: Monolingual Tamazight Speakers as a Percent of Population, by Moroccan Region[5.] Source: Haut Commissariate au Plan 2004a, Hijams et al. 2007.

to claim Amazigh support, reveals that support for the party is higher in "Amazigh" regions, especially in the Oriental region (Fig. 3). The MP is often viewed as a party representing rural interests in general, which by default represents the largely rural Amazigh population (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees 2000). However, Table 3 reveals that at the provincial level, there is no significant correlation between either rural or urban population percentages and support for any of the four parties studied. A map of voter support for *Istiqlal*, the main Moroccan nationalist party, indicates that the heavily Amazigh regions of Oriental and Souss-Massa-Draa support this party (Fig. 4). This is not surprising, since some Amazigh leaders supported the mainstream nationalist movement during the early years of Moroccan independence of the 1950s (Venema and

Mguild 2003). As Table 2 reveals, there is a significant correlation between voter support for Istiqlal and for MP, suggesting that these parties share some common ground.

Ultimately this case study is limited by the lack of reliable data on ethnicity in Morocco (as it relies on language ability as a proxy for ethnic identity). This weakness is apparent in the correlation analysis of Table 3, which reveals few significant correlations between language groups and voting patterns. More refined data on ethnicity would likely reveal stronger correlations between ethnicity and political affiliation. Moreover, parties based on Amazigh ethnicity have received legal challenges in Morocco (Cherkaoui 2007) so explicit relationships between political party and ethnicity are difficult to determine. Finally, the study focuses not on Amazigh nationalists specifically but on the voting pat-
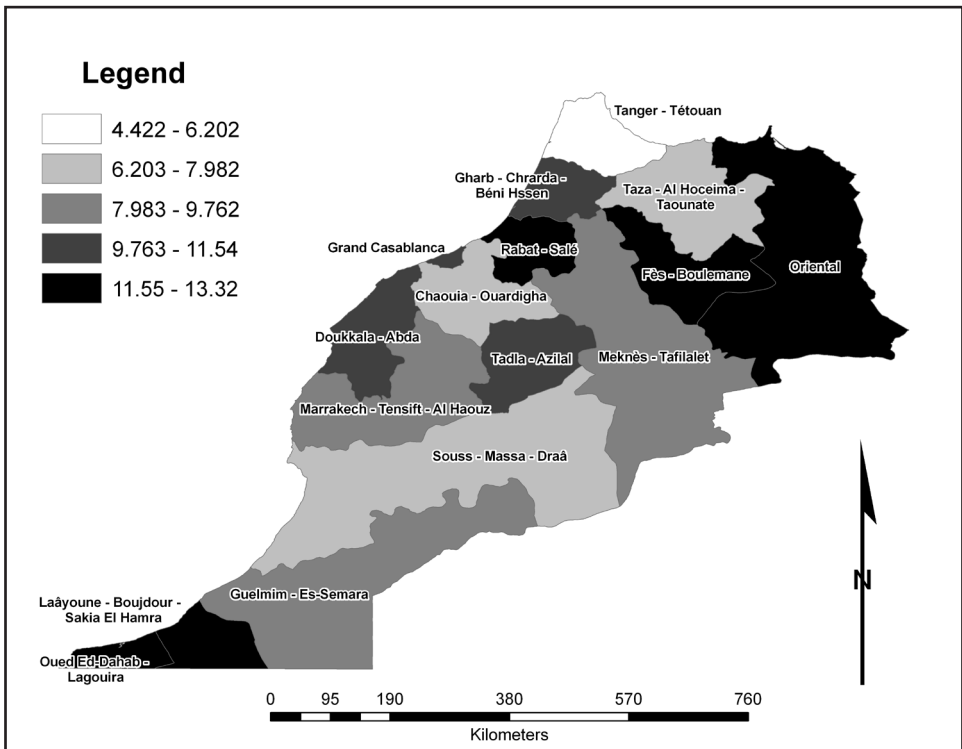

Figure 3: Percent of Votes Cast for *Mouvement Populaire*, by Moroccan Province (2007). Source: Ministry of the Interior 2007; Hijams et al. 2007.

terns of Imazighen in general. Despite these limitations this case study reveals a distinctly Amazigh political consciousness. While not all Moroccan Imazighen espouse Amazigh nationalism, this indicates a propensity within the population towards nationalism and other explicitly Amazigh philosophies.

CONCLUSION

Internal diversity, centuries of colonialist influence, and centuries of coexistence and amalgamation with other groups have made the Imazighen a complex group. Some scholars have argued that this complexity discourages any form of Amazigh nationalism (Gellner and Michaud 1972). However, others have pointed out that government pressure (Marais 1972a) and contemporary ideas of culture (Crawford 2005) are aid-

ing the formation of a distinctly Amazigh nationalist sentiment. This research specifically examines Amazigh nationalism in the Maghrebian cultural and political landscapes. Amazigh nationalist movements are complex phenomena and broad claims about Amazigh nationalism are untenable. As with any ethnic population or large social movement, broad characterizations ignore the finer undercurrents of social interaction. However, some findings of this research hold for many Imazighen. Amazigh nationalist activism is, in many ways, a reaction to greater social problems in the region. Decades of Arabization policy within states of the Maghreb, coupled with increased migration, have instilled a fear of cultural degradation among minority groups in the Maghreb. This fear is one motivation for Amazigh nationalist movements (Al Aly 2001). This fear may
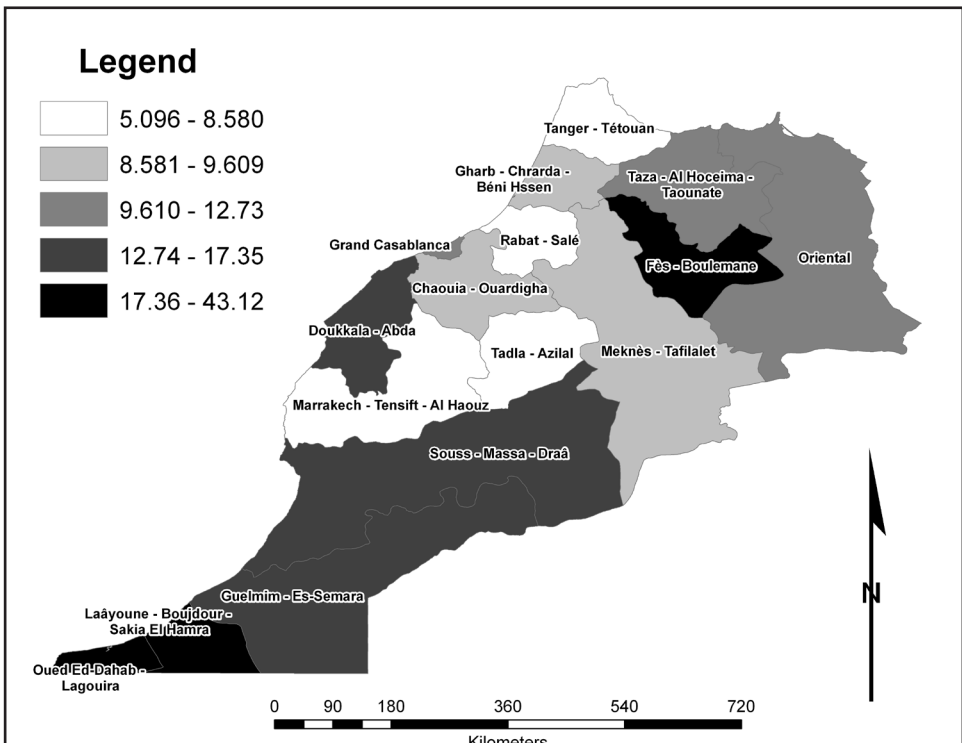

Figure 4: Percent of Votes Cast for *Istiqlal*, by Moroccan Province (2007). Source: Ministry of the Interior 2007; Hijams et al. 2007.

be justified: for example, of the twenty-six languages in the Berber language subfamily, four are extinct and nine have fewer than 10,000 speakers (Gordon 2005).

Political movements are the most visible expressions of Amazigh nationalism. During the French colonial period, the Imazighen played a vital role in independence movements of the Maghreb. Today, the group remains a significant element of regional politics, supporting several major parties, such as the *Mouvement Populaire* of Morocco. However, political parties have traditionally been marginalized in the Maghreb, and as a result, activists have adopted other means of expression. Cultural associations are also a force in political movements of the Maghreb, including Amazigh nationalism. While these associations are theoretically apolitical in nature, they have gained concessions from governments of the Maghreb. For example, the Moroccan Royal Institute of Amazigh Culture was formed in part due to pressure from Amazigh cultural associations (Silverstein and Crawford 2004). While political and social activism is strong, Amazigh nationalists generally eschew military action. In Morocco, the government has generally accommodated the Imazighen, thus averting conflict since the 1970s. The Amazigh community in Algeria is more militant, but this may simply be a reaction to a more repressive government. In fact, many Algerian political movements (e.g. Islamist movements) are more militant than their Moroccan counterparts.

The status of the Amazigh population, and any nationalist movements thereof, will exhibit spatial variations in the future. The Moroccan government seems generally willing to make concessions toward Imazighen, as it has done to various extents since independence in 1956. The Algerian government is less accommodating in its relations with constituents, and future Amazigh-state relations in Algeria may prove to be more volatile. The Imazighen, numbering as many as 32 million, are a significant population in the Maghreb. Nationalist sentiments of any

minority have significant implications for governance. Given that Imazighen account for at least 13 percent of the Maghrebian population, nationalism within this group has significant ramifications for state policy, and for the political landscape of the region. The Imazighen have been a substantial political force in the Maghreb for millennia, and this trend will continue in the future.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

NOTES

1. Many Imazighen of the Maghreb share a common history in the form of Berber dynasties dating to the 11th century (Crawford 2005).
2. Some Tamazight dialects are mutually unintelligible but Amazigh activists have attempted to reconcile linguistic differences by reintroducing *tifinagh*, the traditional Tamazight script (Silverstein 1996) and through programs at Morocco's Royal Institute of the Amazigh Culture (Crawford 2005).
3. Islam is the stated religion of most North Africans (Central Intelligence Agency 2007).
4. Traditional Amazigh territory is primarily in the Atlas Mountains, specifically the Rif, Central, High, and the Kabyle Mountains.
5. The Kingdom of Morocco recently changed the official borders of several southern regions to incorporate portions of the Western Sahara. The author was unable to locate boundary data for these expanded regions, and thus, data used in mapping the southern regions of Laâyoune and

Guelmim in Figures 2b, 3, and 4 includes populations outside of the mapped area.

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