Language and Conflict

Kabylia and the Algerian State

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Table of contents

December 2005 ... *i*
Table of contents ... *iii*
0.1 Table of Arabic transcription ... *v*
0.2 Abbreviations ... *vi*
0.3 Acknowledgements ... *vii*

1. INTRODUCTION ... 1

1.1 Research design ... *2*
1.2 Research traditions ... *4*
1.3 The context of language, nation-building and conflict in Algeria ... *5*
Map 1: Greater and Lesser Kabylia ... 6

2. THE LANGUAGE SITUATION IN ALGERIA ... 9

2.1 Arabic and arabicization ... *9*
2.2 Berber or Thamazight ... *16*
Map 2: Geographical dispersion of Berber groups ... 17
Map 3: Population density and Berberophone areas ... 19
2.3 Language repertoire in Algeria ... *21*
Figure 1: Linguistic composition in Algeria ... 24
2.3.1 The local and the Islamic ... 25

3. BERBERS AND THE BERBERIST MOVEMENT ... 26

3.1 Roots ... *26*
3.2 What lies in a name ... *28*
3.3 Colonial legacy ... *30*
3.4 First stirrings ... *32*
3.5 The post-war Berberist movement ... *34*
3.5.1 Football as a political arena ... 36
3.6. What is the 'Kabyle question'? ... *37*
3.6.1 Kabyle developments ... 40
3.6.2 The effect of national developments ... 43

4. 'PRINTEMPS NOIR': THE EVENTS IN 2001 ... 44

4.1 A word on the sources ... *45*
Table 1: Linguistic distribution of national media ... 47
4.2 The initial events ... *47*
4.3 The channelling and organization of the protests ... *49*
4.4 The riots spread ... *51*
4.4.1 Comments in the press 2001 ... 52

5. TAKING IT NATIONAL ... 55

5.1 The origin and role of les ʿArūš or the Coordination of the ʿArš, Daïras and Communes (CADC) ... *56*
5.2 The MAK ... *58*
5.3 High Commission for Amazighté (HCA): An organ for nationalizing the Amazigh concept? ... *62*
5.4 Thamazight in school ... *65*
Table 2: Number of Thamazight students by province (*wilāya*) and year ... 67
5.5 The Thamazight experience at the University of Tizi Ouzou ... *69*
5.6 Comments in the press 2001 ... *70*
5.7 The national project ... *75*

6. ETHNICITY AND CONFLICT ... 77

6.1 Language as a motivating role for ethnic identity ... *80*
6.2 What type of ethnicity for Algeria's Berbers? ... *82*
6.3 Ethnicity and internal political conflict ... *83*
6.3.1 Language as ethnic factor in internal political conflict ... 85
6.3.2 State use of ethnicity as legitimization in the Middle East and North Africa ... 85

7. CONCLUDING DISCUSSION: THE QUESTION OF IDENTITY AND POLITICAL LEGITIMACY IN ALGERIA ... 87

7.1 Nationalist agenda versus regionalist demands *90*
7.2 Whither the Berberist movement *93*

8. REFERENCES **95**

8.1 Arabic sources and references..................... *95*
8.2 References *96*
8.3 Interviews *100*

0.1 Table of Arabic transcription

ā	ا
b	ب
t	ت
ṯ	ث
ğ	ج
ḥ	ح
ẖ	خ
d	د
ḏ	ذ
r	ر
z	ز
s	س
š	ش
ṣ	ص
ḍ	ض
ṭ	ط
ẓ	ظ
ʿ	ع
ġ	غ
f	ف
q	ق
k	ك
l	ل
m	م
n	ن
h	ه
w, ū	و
y ,ī	ي
ʾ	ء

a) Long vowels will be written *ū, ā, ī*
b) Diphthongs will be written *aw, ay*
c) Assimilation of definite article with sun-letters will not be marked (e.g. *aš-šams*) rather it will be written as *al- šams*.
d) Personal names and names of newspapers will be written according to accepted English spelling norms, or as with *El Moudjahid*, as it is spelled by the publisher self.
e) I have marked Hamzatu l-qatʿ and not hamzatu l-wasl.
f) Words, single expressions and references are rendered in pausal form, while sentences are rendered in contextual form.

Translation of other languages
Only the longer citations in French will be translated, not single words or short phrases. All words and phrases in Thamazight will be translated.

0.2 Abbreviations

ALN	Armée de Libération National (Algerian Liberation Army)
APN	Assemblée Populaire National (National Popular Assembly)
CADC	Coordination des ʻaarchs, daïras et communes (Coordination of ʿArš, Daïras and Communes)
CCCWB	Coordination des comités citoyens de la Wilaya de Bouïra (Coordination of Citizen Committees of Bouira)
CIADC	Coordination Inter-wilayas des aarchs, daïras et communes (Inter-*wilāya* Coordination of ʿArš, Daïras and Communes)
CICB	Coordination Inter-communal de Bejaïa (Inter-Commune Coordination of Bejaïa)
CPWB	Comité populaire de la Wilaya de Bejaïa (Popular Committée of the *wilāya* of Bejaïa)
AD	Algerian Dinar
FFS	Front des Forces Socialistes (Socialist Forces Front)
FIS	Front Islamique du Salut (Islamic Salvation Front)
FLN	Front Libération National (National Liberation Front)
GPRA	Gouvernement Provisoire de la République Algérienne (Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic)
GSPC	Groupe Salafiste pour la Prière et Combat (Salafist Group for Prayer and Combat)
HCA	Haut Commisariat à l'Amazighté (High Commission for Amazighté)
JSK	Jeunesse Sportive de Kabylie (Sporting Youth of Kabylia). Later Jeunesse Sportive Kawkabī (Sporting Youth Stars)
MAK	Mouvement pour l'Autonomie en Kabylie (Movement for Autonomy in Kabylia)
MCB	Mouvement Culturel Berbère (Berber Culture Movement)
MTLD	Mouvement pour les Triomphe des Libertés Démocratiques (Movement for the Triumph of Democratic Freedoms)
ONS	Office National des Statistiques (National Bureau of Statistics)
RCD	Rassemblée pour la Culture et Démocratie (Rally for Culture and Democracy
RND	Rassemblée Nationale pour la Démocratie (National Rally for Democracy)

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Oslo, 14 December 2005

1. Introduction

In April 2001, the Berber region of Kabylia exploded in a series of violent riots that led to the death of 123 civilians and the withdrawal of all the Algerian Gendarmerie forces from the region (ICG, 2003). Algerian society seemed on the verge of a new destabilizing conflict only shortly after the disarmament of the majority of the armed Islamist groups. The riots began in Kabylia, but spread to Eastern and Western Algerian cities in June 2001. What initially was viewed as an ethnic uprising suddenly took on a socio-political agenda. To what degree was the uprising motivated by ethnic or socio-political concerns?

In this thesis, I will analyze *how Kabyle political activists have used the demand for an official status for the Berber language, Thamazight, equal to Arabic, within a broader agenda of political change and democratization but also in an effort to influence the concept of 'Algerian-ness' defined by the state as associated closely with Arabic culture and language*. Demands for cultural-linguistic recognition and democracy have never been far apart in the Berberist movement (*al-ḥaraka al-barbariyya*)[1]. I will discuss *how Berberists and sections of the national media in 2001 emphasized these different demands.* I will also discuss *to what degree the Berberist movement succeeded in nationalizing their cause.*

The 'Kabyle project' has represented a quest for cultural and linguistic rights in the Kabylia region and among the Berber groups of Algeria, but also for the recognition of the Berber identity as the basis for a new and more *authentic Algerian identity* to replace the state-sanctioned national Arab identity. Yussuf Merahi, Secretary-General of the HCA (High Commission for Amazighté), implied this when he commented, "some believe we are all Arabs and that is a problem, and some of us believe we are all Berbers and that is also a problem" (interview in Algiers, 28 May 2005).

A constitutional amendment from 1996 defined Amazigh culture as "one of the fundamental structures of Algerian national identity" إحدى المكونات الأساسية للهوية الوطنية and (optional) classes for Thamazight were introduced in schools. In 2002, Thamazight became a "national language" لغة وطنية. However, Thamazight was not accorded status as a "national and official language" such as Arabic اللّغة الوطنية و الرسمية.[2] Still, the Berberist movement is no less active. Cultural and linguistic recognition have apparently not been sufficient to meet the movement's demands. This suggests that the Kabyle Berberist movement is not primarily

[1] This is the term given in Arabic by ʿAbd al-Rizāq al-Dūrārī (2004: 8).
[2] The quotes are taken from the Algerian government website http://www.conseilconstitutionnel-dz.org/Arabe/IndexArab.htm, accessed 24 November 2005.

concerned about the culture or ethnicity of the Berbers in Algeria as a *minority*. Rather, Berberists seek recognition for Berber culture as equal to Arab culture, in terms of its significance for the national culture of Algeria.

1.1 Research design

This study focuses on representations of the Kabyle conflict. In order to contextualize these representations I will provide two background chapters. One of those is on the language situation in Algeria and the state arabicization project. In this chapter, I rely on socio-linguistic literature and different sources on the arabicization campaigns, such as Gilbert Grandguillaume (1983), who is an authority on the linguistic politics of Algeria. The following chapter presents a historical background to the Berberist movement and an introduction to the historical understanding of the Berbers as an ethnic group or civilization. In this chapter, I will use different historical sources, such Benjamin Stora and Ibn Khaldoun.

In trying to analyze the relationship between ethnic mobilization and demands for democracy, I will take a closer look at the Berberist movement as it emerged in the Black Spring of 2001. Chapter four of the thesis deals with the turbulent events of that year. The *International Crisis Group* conducted in 2003 a series of interviews and assessed the conflict that broke out in Kabylia in April 2001. Hugh Roberts, who has studied Algeria for many years, led the work on the report. I will rely on this report for the actual events of 2001.

The fact that the riots in 2001 spread outside of Kabylia suggests a new situation where there was a certain convergence on the issues and grievances of Kabyles and Algerians at large although the limits to this convergence soon became apparent. The new realities were most importantly an increased freedom to organize politically, and a worsened economic and social situation. Since 2000, when the Islamist violence abated, security measures have been reduced. At the same time, political reforms, first introduced in 1989 have become increasingly applied. There is a more independent national press. There are regular elections. There is to some degree a new political reality, albeit not enough to justify calling Algeria a democratic state. Nevertheless, there are new opportunities for political participation for most Algerians. On the other hand, the entire country is suffering from the aftermaths of the Islamist violence in the 1990s, and a worsened economic situation with high unemployment rates (15.3 percent in November 2005, of which 75 percent of the unemployed were below the age of 30)[3]. In addition, the country has a youth bulge with up to 70 percent of the population below the age of thirty. This young generation bears the largest impact of both violence and unemployment. This may have had implications for the political aspirations of the Berberist

movement as well as the popularity of the movement among the youth. This I will discuss in chapter five. My focus is not on testing a theoretical model or traditional text analysis. Rather, I will discuss how language has been a political tool for the government and the Berberist movement, and how the language conflict in Algeria covers issues regarding nation-building and political participation.

The conflict between the Berberist activists and the state is often portrayed as a conflict based on ethnic differences or ethnic grievances. I will discuss the problems connected to the casting of ethnicity in such terms, in reference to theories regarding ethno-political conflict as described in the *Minorities at Risk* project (Gurr, 2000). The theoretical questions of ethnic conflict will be discussed in chapter six. In general, I understand 'ethnicity' as it is defined by Gurr (2000: 5); "ethnic identities are enduring social constructions that matter to the people who share them. How much they matter depends on people's social and political circumstances". Since sociopolitical and economic factors often play a significant role in what is commonly known as 'ethnic conflict'. Therefore, I will discuss the complex role of ethnicity in conflict. The case of Algeria is particularly interesting since it relates to the role of culture and language in nation-building, and to challenges to state legitimacy where culture and language are highly politicized. It therefore involves the process of nation-building as opposed to state building. Several Middle Eastern states, which emerged from colonial rule in the 1950s and the 1960s, have politicized the concept of national identity. The case of Algeria exemplifies how this may affect state challenges and create a situation where identity (in the form of linguistic or other ethnic markers) becomes tied to demands for political participation and influence.

As for Algerian textual sources I will rely much on Algerian media coverage of the events of 2001 and interviews I conducted in Algeria in May-June 2005. The Algerian media is today active and for the first time since independence offers images and explanations that challenge those presented by the state. Analyses of such material can provide new glimpses into national debates, and insights into how national issues are presented to the Algerian public, and how the media discusses these issues. I have collected articles from the following newspapers *al-H̲abar, Le Matin, El Moudjahid, El Watan, Le Jeune Indépendant,* and *La Liberté* from the period 12–14 June 2001. In addition, I have collected news articles from 1998 from *al-Masāʿ* and some articles from 2001–2005 from some of the above-mentioned newspapers' internet editions. I also have collected manifestos from different political parties and activist groups in Kabylia, as well as the Algerian constitution, and announcements from

[3] Numbers released from the National Bureau of Statistics (ONS) and cited in *El Moudjahid*, 27 November 2005.

the Algerian constitutional assembly. The High Commission for Amazighté (HCA) is the state-appointed organ for the promotion of Amazigh culture and language. They publish a journal *Timmuzgha* which features articles in French, Thamazight (transcribed with Latin letters), and Arabic. This journal is one of the few outlets where Berberist activists would express themselves in Arabic. The source material from the news media and the organized actors in the 2001 conflict will mainly be discussed in chapters four and five.

In interviews with an Algerian non-governmental organization (NGO), *Iqrʾā*, the High Commission for Amazighté, the High Council for the Arabic Language, a university lecturer at the University of Tizi Ouzou, a representative of the Ministry of Education, and informants in Tizi Ouzou, I have asked what lies behind the Berberist and Kabyle demand for official status for Thamazight. My Algerian sources are in both French and Arabic. This is due to two main reasons. Firstly, Algeria remains one of the most Francophone countries in post-colonial North Africa. Secondly, the Berberist movement is reluctant to use Arabic and most often prefer expressing themselves in French. Through the use of my sources and the secondary literature, I hope to further a new understanding of the Berberist movement; its national agenda as well as its prospects for achieving political change in Algeria.

1.2 Research traditions

France plays a leading role in the scholarly tradition on Algeria due to its historical presence in the country. The colonial anthropological and ethnological traditions within the study of Berber languages and cultures have developed into different fields of study today, encompassing political science and history as well as regional and linguistic studies. Algerian academic research has mostly resided within the limits of state ideology, and has served to verify this ideology and promote state Arabism in various ways. There is little in the way of academic literature in Berber, as the lack of standardization makes this difficult. Berberists tend to use French as their medium of expression.

One of the most prominent French academies for Berber studies is the Institute for Oriental Languages and Cultures (INALCO), Paris where one finds several prominent Berberists such as professor Salem Chaker, who is an active supporter of the Berberist movement. Chaker has given much support to Ferhat Mehenni and his call for Kabyle autonomy. The opinions of Kabyle cultural-political groups may also have influenced academic discussions in France. One example is the academic journal *Awal: Cahiers d'études Berbères* founded in 1985 by the renowned Kabyle poet and academic, Mouloud Mammeri, and Tassadit Yacine with the aid of Pierre Bourdieu. It is possible to speak of an academic corpus on which the Berberist movement has been able to draw support for their cause and

demands. To a certain extent, this research gives academic credence to the promotion of a national role for Berber culture by validating historical claims.

According to Morsly "les traveaux fournissent la lutte", (the work supplies the struggle). Morsly is referring here to how scientific work on, in particular Berber linguistics supplies militants with arguments such as Berber being "une langue, au sens plein du terme" (a language in the full sense of the term) (Morsly, 1997: 35). Such 'scientific' understandings validate the demands of the political activists, and academics are therefore important allies for the activists. The strong connection with French academia has however, also made the movement vulnerable to criticisms from the Algerian state of 'neo-colonialism' and of betraying Algerian unity and independence.

Anglophone academics have often focused more on the political development of the state. Some important contributions here have been works by William Quandt, John Ruedy, John Entelis, and Hugh Roberts. Importantly, research on Algeria tends to focus on *either* the Algerian socialism or 'autogestion' as a system in the 1960s and 1970s, *or* the political turmoil brought on by violent Islamist groups *or* the linguistic-identity situation from the Berbers' point of view. Hugh Roberts is one of the few that has sought to place the Kabyle developments in a national context in a critical manner without necessarily separating these issues.

1.3 The context of language, nation-building and conflict in Algeria

The Algerian state is one of the largest in the Middle East and North African region. The population counts approximately 32.3 millions (University of Laval, 2005)[4] of which 27.4 percent are Berber speaking.

The official name of Algeria is **الجمهورية الجزائرية الديمقراطية الشعبية**[5], the Algerian Popular Democratic Republic. The system of governance is often described as a Unitarian republic. Algeria was formed in 1962, and was a one-party state until political reforms in 1989 allowed for political pluralism. National identity issues have been at the forefront of the state political agenda since independence and have served as the main legitimating factor of the regime. Today, for the first time since independence, the state is participating in debates on Algeria's cultural pluralism rather than consistently rejecting the Berberists' demands as neo-colonial attempts to weaken national unity and state sovereignty.

Algeria is divided into 48 *wilāyāt* (provinces). The term *wilāya* in Algeria and Tunisia defines an administrative district, i.e. division of a country, headed by a *wālī* (Wehr, 1994:

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[4] http://www.tlfq.ulaval.ca/axl/afrique/algerie-1demo.htm, accessed 24 November 2005.
[5] *al-ǧumhūrīya al-ǧazā'irīya al-dīmuqrāṭīya al-ša'bīya.*

1289). Kabylia is situated approximately 92 km from the capital, Algiers, and is not defined as an area with borders by the state. The map below is distributed by the MAK (Movement for Autonomy in Kabylia). On the left side of the map, the Kabyle flag that was created in the wake of the 2001 riots is displayed. The area referred to as Kabylia, cuts across several of the administrative provinces. The most important are the provinces of Tizi Ouzou and Bejaïa.

Map 1: Greater and Lesser Kabylia

Source: The map is taken from the MAK webpage http://www.makabylie.info/IMG/gif/carte_kabylie-2.gif, accessed 31 August 2005. According to several sources, *Iggawawen* is the plural of *agawa*, called *zwawa* by the Arabs who are to have recognized them as the largest and most important Kabyle confederation, consisting of eight tribes (see for instance Roberts, 1981, Mehenni, 2004).

The Kabylia region has been the scene of rebellions and protests against the state, more than any other region of Algeria. Although violent conflict has been recurrent throughout Algeria in the past decades since Algerian independence in 1962, Algeria fought a bloody anti-colonial war from 1954–1962, a civil war in 1963, and experienced a violent decade of widespread Islamist guerrilla activity throughout the 1990s. Since independence society has been exposed to several militarized conflicts. Civilians have been specifically targeted or used to procure resources such as food and shelter. Trust between the military and policing authorities and the population has been damaged. This was particularly evident when radical Islamist groups were operating during the 1990s. The demonstrators in 2001 often referred to *la ḥogra* or *al-ḥagra*[6] – a situation of power abuse, mishandling and contempt from above as one of their grievances. Sometimes also referred to as *Thamheqranit*, which is a

[6] Algerian Arabic dialect *ḥagra* from the Arabic root ḥ-q-r. In the francophone press it has been transcribed as *la hogra*.

Kabyle inflexion of the Arabic word. It is not the Berberist movement and their actions that have caused the most significant outbreaks of violence. However, they have been more or less continuously mobilized and politically active.

I interchangeably use the terms 'regime' and 'state', as defined by Weber (1958) as an "entity with an institutionalized claim to a legitimate monopoly over the means of violence in a physical territory" (Schatzman, 2005: 292). In Algeria, the controversy does not regard the geographical territory with its boundaries and sovereign status. What opposition groups such as the Berberist movement challenge, is the legitimacy of the regime's construction of Algerian-ness or nationality as a basis for legitimacy. The nation has not yet completely established its definition as a 'volk' that is commonly agreed on. The problem for the regime is to make all Algerians accept the cultural definition and version of history that it has imposed from above onto society. In this sense, Algeria is not a unique case; the same process can be seen in other Middle Eastern such as Iraq (See Davis, 2005 for a more extensive discussion of this in the Iraqi case). Owen writes that in order to face the multifaceted problems following the end of colonial rule most states in the Middle East and North Africa opted for a strong focus on national consensus. However, since there were few democratic institutions developed at the time, the 'consensus' was likely to be imposed from above rather than emerge from public discussion and debate (Owen, 2000: 241). Laitin states that "rulers may have a greater need to construct states than to build nations. They may therefore have interests at odds with those of societal groups", (Laitin, 1992: 9). They may use the symbols of the nation, but their main occupation is maintaining order and state building. Yet issues regarding nation-building may not be resolved. In this way language issues are drawn into the state building process, and language becomes institutionalized.

The identity of Berbers in Algeria is mainly a question of the vernacular. Religion, which is often used to differentiate between groups, is not an ethnic marker in Algeria. The vast majority of Algerians are Sunni Muslims, and those who belong to other cults or faiths are not associated with any specific ethnic group. In order to differentiate Berbers from Arabs, language is the most suitable denominator. We can therefore speak of Berberophones and Arabophones. Kabylia is the Berber region that has most wholly retained its Berber dialect, *Thaqbaylit*, as mother tongue. In Kabylia, especially in the area known as Greater Kabylia, most people are familiar with Thaqbaylit and use it regularly. In other regions there are people who have lost their language, i.e. become arabicized, but still consider themselves Berbers. An example of this is the Shawiyya Berbers in the Aurès. In this area, few are able to speak their Berber dialect, *Thashawit*, but many still refer to themselves as Shawiyya and Berber.

Hence, the Berber identity prevails in communities despite language loss. In such cases the Berber identity is linked to a consciousness of history, traditions, and customs.

I will focus in this thesis on language as the main marker of Berber identity. This is because my focus is on the Kabyle Berberist movement, and also since the majority of Berberophones in Algeria resides in Kabylia. In this region language is a definite and prevalent marker. State arabicization programs have contributed to politicizing language and the Berberist movement has from the beginning in the 1940s had a focus on language issues. In view of this, language is not only the marker that most clearly distinguishes the Berbers from the Arabs in Algeria; it is also one of the central issues in the conflict between the Berberist movement and the state.

The politization of language and culture involves a wider problematic found not only in Algeria but in all Arab countries. This is partly due to the situation of Arabic 'diglossia', in which the official standard language is significantly different from all spoken vernaculars. It is also due to the role language has had in the post-colonial period in the Middle East and North Africa, as symbolic of national policies and historical identities. In Algeria this politicizing is exemplified by the state arabicization programs.

In Algeria there is currently a discussion of whether to recognize a Berber vernacular, *Thamazight*, as both 'national' and 'official'. There is not much mention yet of recognizing the Algerian Arabic dialect, but this would touch upon a wider trans-regional question of whether the Arab countries should eventually adopt and develop their central urban dialect into a separate standard language. This would introduce a new and radical argument for actively promoting dialects over the standard. However, the standard form of Arabic has a very strong position politically and cultural-religiously throughout the region. As an additional linguistic factor, Algeria has through the colonial experience, acquired a French linguistic heritage. The state views the French language and culture as contentious and as an imposition from the French colonial power.

In *Peoples Versus States*, Ted Gurr reflects on David Laitin's argument that language disputes alone are "not a common source of deadly rivalries, since they are subject to individual and collective compromises" (Gurr, 2000: 67). But one could perhaps argue that the social context in which these disputes take place may be such a source of conflict, meaning that there is a sociopolitical factor that contributes to the generation of violence. From this point on, the two factors (language disputes and violence) may interchangeably influence the situation as it progresses. Language can be treated not only as a symbol of ethnicity, but also of political participation or protest. In this context, the issues may become

inseparable. This can be viewed as what Suleiman refers to as *symbolic sociolinguistics* (1999: 27), and which he sees as an important approach for understanding language and conflict in the Middle East and North Africa. According to Gill (1999: 126), "contradictions between identity-enhancing official discourse and language practice on the ground, threaten to flare up into social protest whenever economic circumstances cease to be favourable". This makes it important to distinguish whether the movement is principally concerned with ethnic grievances or if the aim is to challenge the current regime and the current political system, and as part of this challenge, demand an inclusion of Amazigh culture and language on equal footing with the state sponsored Arab culture and Arabic language.

2. The language situation in Algeria

2.1 Arabic and arabicization

Algeria defines itself as part of the Arab and Muslim world. The majority of the population are Arabophone and speak a vernacular variety of Arabic. In addition, a minority of Berberophones speak a variety of Berber languages and dialects. The French language has also a prominent position in society, which it has retained from the colonial period. The only formal language that is officially recognized by the state is Standard Arabic or *al-ʿarabiyya al-fuṣḥā* in its modern form, which is used in news broadcasts, most publications as well as being the preferred speech in formal contexts. The use of the 'classical' form is used in religious and literary recitations[7].

Algeria has since independence engaged in some of the most extensive and strict arabicization programs in the Maghrib[8]. It has largely been aimed at eradicating the French (and thereby colonial) influence. During the colonial period, it was difficult for Algerians to receive any other education than in French. On the eve of independence, few were literate in Arabic, including members of the new power elite. Ironically, at the same time the Arabic language and Islamic religion were the two elements that served as the liberation movement's ideological and national framework. Islam probably facilitated much of the success of this strategy, as most Algerians are Muslim. The focus on Islam and the Arabic language

[7] All Arab societies display a linguistic phenomenon called diglossia. Arabic diglossia consists of two coexisting or parallel varieties of the Arabic language. A 'high variety' (H) called *al-ʿarabiyya l-fusḥā*, often referred to as Standard Arabic. It is a modern variety of Classical Arabic, and a 'low variety' (L) called *al-ʿammiyya* or in Algeria *al-darija*, usually referred to as dialect. The L variety is the spoken variety and the H variety is the written variety. H can also be spoken, most often in formal academic or religious contexts (Ferguson, 1959). In all Arab countries, the H variety is set down as official language. Most importantly in the Algerian case is that Arabic is the prestigious and up until 2002, the only recognized language in the state.

[8] The Maghrib consists of Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia and considers itself part of the Arab world.

continued in the new Algerian state as a means for cementing unity and, importantly, distancing the Algerian nation from France (Grandguillaume, 1983 & Stora, 1994, 2001).

Many political analysts have pointed to how post-colonial states often retain much of the political system and administration 'inherited' by the colonial powers. Grandguillaume (1997) states that the French political model, referred to as the Jacobin model[9] was introduced to the region by colonialism and influenced the later independent state model. The Jacobin model implies a centralized administration and a national language that symbolizes the national unity. The associated language planning, typically applied from the top down, promotes a Universalist message that according to Gill (1999: 122) denies ethnicity while symbolizing not only national unity but also concepts like progress, liberty and civilization. Hence, the political importance of language and the arabicization programs. President Houari Boumedienne, who initiated the most radical arabicization processes, perhaps most precisely defined the arabicization project. According to Boumedienne:

> "the transformation of the Algerian man and the recovery of his identity', should be done by 'actively pursuing the program of arabicization previously embarked on, which constitutes an essential instrument for the restoration of our national personality and which must come out from the use of the national language in all areas of economic, social and cultural life"[10]

By national language, Boumedienne does not refer to the vernacular, *al-ʿammiyya*, which the majority of the population speaks in different varieties. Algerians were on the contrary supposed to find their 'authentic identity' through using modern classical Arabic, *al-ʿarabiyya al-fuṣḥā*. However, this variety has no native speakers in the sense of a vernacular usage as a mother tongue.

Gill refers to the post-independence regimes in the Maghrib as having a dual discourse in their language policies. There were two sides to the arabicization project, namely that of modernity and that of tradition. While arabicization of the administration and school system occurred in the name of progress and modernization, arabicization was given a 'sacred' rationale and purpose that was essential for the de-colonization process (Gill, 1999). In this regard, tradition was invoked. Arabic dialects could not compete with French, the colonial language, in terms of formality as a standardized, written language. However, classical Arabic could compete with French in terms of standardization, and as a transmitter of 'high culture'. In the classical Arabic written tradition, the state found a body of literature, arts and sciences that could match French, as well as a highly stylized and standardized language. The

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[9] The Jacobin model stems from the French Third Republic. The model was built on modernist universalism and an elimination of regional idioms and eradication of minority cultures. This is sometimes referred to as an 'internal imperialism' by critics (Gill, 1999: 124).

modernization of classical Arabic was thus thought to be the way forward while at the same time anchoring the Algerians to a ‘glorious past’. Moreover, the arabicization process would link Algeria to the wider Arab nation – whose cultural bonds were channelled through the common standard language.

On the other hand, Grandguillaume (1983) comments that it is in the mother tongue that the individual is socialized. He attaches great importance to the identity of the individual as linked to the mother tongue. An identity, he claims, that demands to be recognized despite being frowned upon by the state. The linguistic policy of demoting the mother tongue has an impact on the socialization of individuals. Monolingual Berber or dialectal Arabic speakers may feel that they are ‘left behind’ in the competition for authenticity and modernity, as their languages are disregarded. To them, a language barrier, and thereby a social barrier still exists despite the departure of colonialism (Gill, 1999). An example of such a view is Mme Barki, the leader of *Iqr'ā*, an NGO that combats illiteracy among adults, especially women. For her pupils, she argued, learning to read Standard Arabic is more difficult than if they could have learned to read in their own dialect. In view of this, she would prefer dialectal Arabic as the official language (interview, 30 May 2005, Alger). Popular *ray* music also uses dialect explicitly as Benrabah has shown (1999). The music often portrays the everyday problems of ordinary people. Several *ray*-singers have highlighted the pride and defiance in using the dialect, which is defined as non-prestigious, rather than the more prestigious standard, despite how this is reflects upon them as uneducated (“pas instruite”) in the eyes of the state. Benrabah cites, among other interviews, the *ray*-singer, Khaled. According to Benrabah, Khaled explains that he sings *bel arbiya ddarja loahraniya nta na* (the transcription is Benrabah’s own, 1999: 203). In Standard Arabic, he would probably have said something along the lines of *bil-ʿarabiyya al-dariǧa al-wahrāniyya ʿindanā*. A translation can be ‘in the Wahran Arabic dialect that is ours’. Benrabah translates the meaning of ‘nta na’ as ‘bien de chez nous’.

The arabicization project has been set down in the constitution[11]. Article two in the 1996 constitution states that “Islam is the religion of the state” *al-ʾislām dīn al-dawla* and article three states that “the Arabic language is the national and official language” *al-luġa al-ʿarabiyya hiya al-luġa al-waṭaniyya wa al-rasmiyya*. However, these articles have been subject to several revisions. In the 1976 version of the constitution article three has an

[10] *El Moudjahid* 15.05.1974, in Adamson, 1998: 206.
[11] All the excerpts from the constitution are taken from the Algerian government official website http://www.conseilconstitutionnel-dz.org/Arabe/IndexArab.htm, accessed 22 November 2005.

addition later removed from the 1996 edition. In 1976, article three declared that the state worked for the generalization of the use of the national language in the official sphere[12].

المادة ٣ اللغة العربية هي اللغة الوطنية و الرسمية

تعمل الدولة على تعميم استعمال اللغة الوطنية في المجال الرسمي

This again, was a revision of the first constitution from 1963, which stated that the Arabic language was the national language (in the form of *qawmiyya*) in addition to being official, as we see from this excerpt:

لمادة ٥ اللغة العربية هي اللغة القومية و الرسمية للدولة.

In 1963, the word for 'national' in the constitution was *qawmiyya,* which has a somewhat different meaning than the word for 'national' used in 1976 and 1996, namely *waṭaniyya*[13]. The first term, *qawmiyya*, is more often used when talking about an ethnic people, or people in the sense of popular or 'volk', and much in use before the rise of nation states. It does also mean 'national' today. However, *qawmiyya al-ʿarabiyya*, may give a more symbolic meaning of cohesion and belonging to a union of Arabs. The second term, *waṭaniyya*, is derived from *al-waṭan*, which means 'the homeland'. Today, it is mostly associated with modern state nationalism and domestic in the sense of within a modern nation state. Typically, *waṭan ʿarabī*, means an Arab country. The three versions of the constitutional article regarding language in Algeria reflect the view of the state at different times. In the 1976 revision, President Boumedienne was championing an intensified arabicization campaign in different sections of Algerian society, which may explain why the 1976 constitutional article three mentions the specific responsibility of the state to oversee the generalization of Arabic. Neither in 1963 nor in 1996 is there is any mention of the state's responsibility to generalize the use of Arabic. The addition can therefore be seen as directly related to Boumedienne's arabicization program. Furthermore, the more 'symbolic' language in the 1963 revision is toned down in both the 1976 and 1996 revisions.

There are close to thirty laws regulating the official use of language in Algeria today. The laws, which caused much opposition in Kabylia, were the laws from 1991 and 1996 on the generalization of the use of the Arabic language[14]. Of particular importance are articles 11, 12, 18, 23, and 32 in the latter. Article 11 demands that all administrative correspondence be conducted in Arabic. Article 18 demands that all television broadcasts, declarations,

[12] I understand *maǧāl al-rasmī* (official sphere) to be translated similar to how Wehr (1994: 176) translates *maǧāl al-siyās*ī (political sphere).

[13] The constitution from 1963, 1976, and 1996 are available at http://www.conseilconstitutionnel dz.org/Arabe/IndexArab.htm

[14] Law no. 91–05 from 1991 that was completed and implemented through law no. 96–30 from 1996.

conferences and interventions be conducted in Arabic. In article 23, the law demands the formation of a supreme council for the promotion of the Arabic language that shall undertake the supervision of the application of this law. It shall also coordinate the work with generalizing the use and development of Arabic. As a means to ensure the adherence, article 32 states that anyone who breaches the demand to sign any official document that is not edited in Arabic is liable for a 1000–5000 DA (Algerian Dinar) fine. If the breach is repeated, the fine is doubled. The only exemption from article 32 is article 12 that allows for using another language in international relations. Earlier laws of importance are nos 66–154 and 66–155 from 8 June 1966 regarding the judicial system (the first administrative unit to be arabicized) and the decree from 26 April 1968 on the obligatory knowledge of Arabic for all state functionaries (University of Laval, 2005). The Berberist movement has naturally not been content with these laws as the inclusion of Thamazight as a national language in 2002 does not affect the general and official language use implemented by these laws.

The National Charter of 1976 had great implications for arabicization in the education system. The 1976 school charter implemented by President Boumedienne demanded an intense arabicization of the schools. In some people's view, the 1976 *école fondamentale* has only exacerbated the consequences of stagnation and cultural alienation. One Kabyle (Interview Tizi Ouzou, 3 June 2005) said that a problem with today's generation is that they have not been taught to dream or philosophize. He said his teacher had predicted that the 'école fondamentale' would turn into 'école au fond de la montagne'[15]. With this, he said he meant radicalization followed by guerrilla fighting in the mountains, as people in the new school system lost contact with their roots and therefore lost a sense of belonging.

Despite the strong emphasis on Arabic in the constitution and key legislation, article 29 in the constitution states that "all citizens are equal before the law and cannot be discriminated against (no discrimination can be applied) based on birth or descent (race), gender, or opinion or any other condition or circumstance, personal or social":

> *kullu l-muwāṭinīn sawāsiyatun ʾamāma l-qānūni wa lā yumkin ʾan yataḏarraʿa bi-ʾayyi tamayyuẓ yaʿūdu sababuhu ʾilā l-mawlidi aw l-ʿirqi ʾaw l-ğinsi aw l-raʾyi ʾaw ʾayyi šarṭin ʾaw ẓarfin ʾāẖara šaẖṣī ʾaw ʾiğtimāʿī*[16]

In principle, this should give the Berbers some support for their demands for equality. Moreover, the state has rarely implemented completely the decrees on language use. While the Berbers have been discontent with the absolute Arabic focus, the lack of consistency in

[15] The literally meaning is 'school at the base of the mountain', which is a word play on the term *école fondamentale*.
[16] The quote is taken from the official website of the Algerian government http://www.conseilconstitutionnel-dz.org/Arabe/IndexArab.htm, accessed 23 November 2005.

the applications of the laws has been a cause of complaint for graduates who have followed the arabicized education[17]. There are several reasons for this; one is that French has continued to play a large part in administrative and financial circles. A second reason is that the programs have lacked necessary resources, in terms of work force, knowledge, and financing. At independence, Algeria made a huge effort to educate its children, making school obligatory for all Algerian children. This effort affected the quality of schooling offered and the need to import teachers from other Arabic countries, sometimes teachers belonging to political and ideological groups such as the Baath (*ḥizb al-baʿṯ*) and the Muslim Brotherhood (*al-ʾiḫwān al-muslimūn*). Islamist influence has long been blamed on these foreign teachers, but the actual influence is most probably insignificant. Fuglestad (1997: 33) states that in the period 1967–76, the actual number of schoolteachers from the outside Arab world never exceeded the number of Algerian teachers. In addition, amongst the number of foreign teachers there were also a number of non-Arab teachers, such as French teachers.

While the colonial legacy should be understood as a key to the perceived need for a state linguistic and cultural restructuring in Algeria, the independent state was unable to ensure quality and consequently, loyalty for their arabicization programs in the education and administrative sectors. The power struggles of the immediate post-war era, between the GPRA (Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic), Ben Bella, and the fractions that instigated the rebellion in Kabylia in 1963 became intertwined in this politicization due to the problem of finding a national consensus (Grandguillaume, 1983). The fact remains that through the arabicization programs and the use of language and culture as a source of legitimacy, the regime participated actively in politicizing national culture. However, as the arabicization process suffered from lack of resources and lagged behind the already established French administrative language, it became increasingly relegated to the camp of traditionalists (Gill, 1999) instead of replacing French as a modern administrative and educational language. As noted by Gill (1999), it is especially situations where language policy is at odds with the socio-economic reality that risk cultural alienation, by not offering economic gains to those participating in the arabicization projects.

According to ʿAbd al-Rizāq al-Dūrārī (2004) the problem of the current identity crisis is brought on by the regime's unwillingness to deal with the linguistic realities present in the country and its vernaculars, or the local languages (*ʾalsinatuhum al-maḥalliya*). Instead, they pursued the generalization and use of a school Arabic (*al-luġa al-ʿarabiyya al-madrasiyya*). ʿAbd al-Rizāq al-Dūrārī suggests the state tried to implement the political factor (reality) over

[17] In the 1990s, the FIS was one party that was able to take advantage of this discontent in their criticism of the

the linguistic reality in order to erase the difference between the two spheres. This ideological approach, which combines a linguistic issue with politics, is in his view, what reflects the type of arabicization program of Algeria as well as an identity crisis.

It is important to understand that after independence, arabicization, or re-arabicization of Algeria was considered necessary in order to 'decolonize' the country. Several writers have commented on how the new Algerian leadership came from 'nowhere' (see for instance Nouschi, 1973). The new leaders did not belong to any pre-colonial ruling elite. The colonial system never encouraged education among the native Algerians, and a colonial law from 1938 even declared Arabic a foreign language in Algeria (Grandguillaume, 1983). Consequently, at the time of independence the literacy rates were lower than before colonization and the knowledge of formal Arabic was even lower. In fact, several of the key actors at the time, such as the first president Ahmed Ben Bella, did not know Standard Arabic. The inequality this suggests had a significant effect on the political relevance of language issues in Algeria. FLN (National Liberation Front)[18] made the language and identity issue their primary source of legitimacy after the liberation in 1962, backed by the ʿUlamā Movement of Reformist Islamic Clerics who had been an important ally during the liberation war. In 1926, under the leader Abdelhamid Ben Badis, the ʿUlamā movement formed the slogan "Islam is our religion, Arabic our language and Algeria our patrimony" (Grandguillaume, 1983: 96). This was to become the rallying slogan for FLN during the war with France. The new regime likewise chose to construct the Algerian national identity, in a top-down approach, heavily based on the Islamic and Arabic heritage, together with elements of Third World socialism and Arab nationalism (Noyon, 2003). Due to the French efforts of eradicating the influence of Arabic explained above, Arabic was not necessarily the only option for national language at the time of independence. This suggests why it is specified in the constitution how Arabic is the *only* officially recognized language of the nation. As is stated in the constitutional introduction, the Algerian people gave their blood in order to acquire their collective destiny in freedom and rediscover the national cultural identity[19]

واجهت بها مختلف الاعتداءات على ثقافتها، وقيمها، والمكوّنات الأساسية لهوّيّتها، وهي الإسلام والعروبة والأمازيغية. وتمتدّ جذور نضالها اليوم في شتّى الميادين في ماضي أمّتها المجيد

regime politics (Adamson, 1998; Quandt, 1998 & Noyon, 2003).
[18] FLN was the organization for all the liberation efforts 1954–62.
[19] The quotes are found at the official website of the Algerian government http://www.conseilconstitutionnel-dz.org/Arabe/IndexArab.htm, accessed 23 November 2005.

لقد تجمّع الشّعب الجزائريّ في ظلّ الحركة الوطنيّة، ثم انضوى تحت لواء جبهة التّحرير الوطنيّ، وقدّم تضحيات جساما من أجل أن يتكفّل بمصيره الجماعيّ في كنف الحرّية والهويّة الثقافيّة الوطنيّة المستعادتين، ويشيّد مؤسّساته الدّستوريّة الشّعبيّة الأصيلة

Translation: [Algeria] faced by various assaults on its culture and its values and the essential elements of its identity, they being Islam, and ‘Arab-ness’ and ‘Amazigh-ness’, and the roots of her struggle are today spread in all the diverse battlefields in the glorious past of her nation.

The Algerian people united under the wing of the national movement, and then they rallied under the banner of the National Liberation Front and went forth with huge sacrifices for the sake of taking in charge its collective future in an atmosphere [of] regaining its freedom and its national cultural identity.

It is important to note the emphasis given to the aggression directed at the Algerian *culture* that the liberation war sought to salvage. As presented here, the safeguarding and preservation of the national culture and identity which is Islamic and Arabic (and only since 1996, Amazigh as well), is viewed as the state’s very reason for coming into existence. The same text states later that Algeria is Islamic territory (’arḍ) and an undivisable part of Greater Arab North Africa as well as being Arab and African.

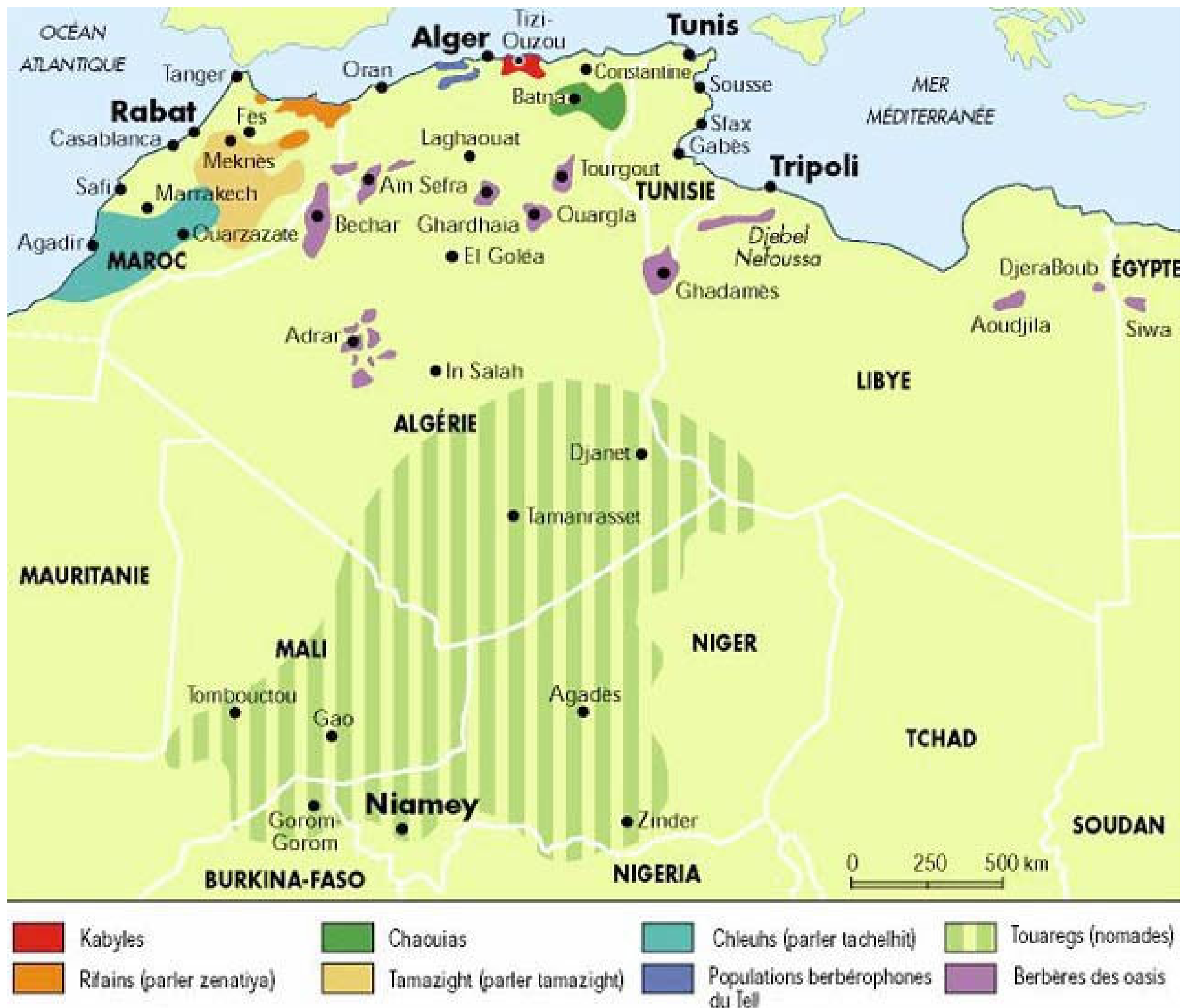
2.2 Berber or Thamazight

In addition to its Arabophone majority, Algeria has among its population Berberophones who speak different Berber dialects. These are pre-Islamic vernaculars. Arabic and Berber are distantly related languages – categorized by linguists in respectively the Semitic and Hamitic branches of the Semitic-Hamitic language group, or family, nowadays more commonly referred to as the Afro-Asiatic group of languages. Linguists used to define all African languages as belonging to the Hamitic family, but modern studies usually operate with five languages in the Hamitic group. Among these are the North African Berber languages (Veerstegh, 1997). Some claim that through time and intergroup contact the two, Arabic and Berber, have to some degree converged linguistically (i.e. become more similar). However, the two languages are not mutually comprehensible although they share some features and have borrowed from each other’s vocabulary. It is noteworthy that in North Africa, the introduction of Islam and Arabic culture has had a significant effect on the convergence of Berber vernaculars and Arabic (Veerstegh, 1997 and Grandguillaume, 1983).

The University of Laval documentation recognizes twelve different Berber dialects in Algeria; *Thaqbaylit*, *Shawiyya*, *Thamazight*, *Thashelhit*, *Thumzabt*, *Thaznatit*, *Thamahaq*, *Shenoua*, *Thamazight Tidikelt*, *Thamazight Temacine*, *Thagargrent*, and *Thadaksahak*

(University of Laval, 2005[20]). The following map is from the MCB (Berber Cultural Movement) website, and shows the geographic locations of different Berber groups[21]:

Map 2: Geographical dispersion of Berber groups



Source: MCB, at http://www.mcb-algerie.org/langdonn.htm. Accessed 9 December 2005.

The Berber languages lost significance as a written language, perhaps even before the Arab invasion in the Seventh century. The main challenge today is the lack of standardization of an alphabet to use as a transcriptive system. In Morocco, it is common to use Arabic script to transcribe phonetically Berber dialects, while the Berberist movement in Algeria has favoured the use of the Latin alphabet. The Algerian state is opposed to the use of Latin letters, while the Berberist movement refuses to use Arabic letters. There is now a standoff on this issue in Algeria. The lack of standardization also within each transcriptive system means that text is usually written according to how the individual speaker (author) pronounces the

[20]See the University of Laval webpage at http://www.tlfq.ulaval.. ca/axl/afrique/algerie.htm, accessed 28 June 2005.

[21] Not all of the groups referred to as Berbers here are Berber-speaking groups. However, they are still defined as Berbers based on other cultural criteria.

words. Remnants of an ancient alphabet called *Tifinagh* was found in use amongst the Tuaregs (Saharan Berber Nomads)[22]. According to Tilmatine & Suleiman (1996), there are some claims that its roots stem from the ancient Punic alphabet, via the Libyco-Berber alphabet. However, this has not been established with complete certainty. Tilmatine & Suleiman list twelve variants of Tifinagh distributed over the entire geographical area where Berber groups have been identified. Various attempts at restructuring this alphabet have been undertaken, and these are linked closely to the Berberist movement's goal to develop a modern Berber language.

Today's Berber languages are often referred to in general as *Thamazight*. However, Thamazight is also the name of a specific Berber dialect in the Middle Atlas region that should not be confused with this general term, or taken to be the standard. The elaboration, standardization and codification of Thamazight in Algeria, has not yet been undertaken. Usually Thamazight refers to 'a' or 'the' Berber language, but the state has not yet defined what this language consists of[23]. For now, the term is vague, as there are several Berber vernaculars or languages to choose from. I will use both the term Berber and Thamazight when referring to this language(s), depending on the issue discussed. The word *Thamazight* is spelled phonetically. It is therefore written in many ways. The French term is 'Tamazight'. Roberts (2003) and the ICG (2003) write 'Thamazighth' because the /t/ is pronounced /th/. After listening to how it is pronounced in Kabylia, I agree with Roberts that the first letter is /th/. However, I believe that the last letter /t/ is different, pronounced /t/. There are several types of /t/, /th/ sounds in the Berber vernaculars, and there are individual and local variations in the dialects. Theil (1990: 108) identifies two ways of pronouncing /t/ either as /th/ or as /t/. He also specifies local variations of pronouncing this letter. He transcribes however, the word as 'Tamazight' based on informants from Morocco. An example from Algeria shows that while the title on a journal published by the HCA (High Commission for Amazighté) is phonetically spelled in Latin letters as *Timmuzgha* with a introductory /t/, its version in Arabic reads *ṯīmmūzġa* with a /th/ sound by the use of the letter ث (ṯā'). The lack of standardization lies behind some of this confusion. As for now, transcription follows pronunciation and its varieties. The /gh/ sound at the end of such words as *Thamazight* and *Timmuzgha* is a transcription for the letter /γ/. One can of course write 'Thamaziγt', but many readers are not familiar with the pronunciation of /γ/. It is therefore a common choice to transcribe it as /gh/.

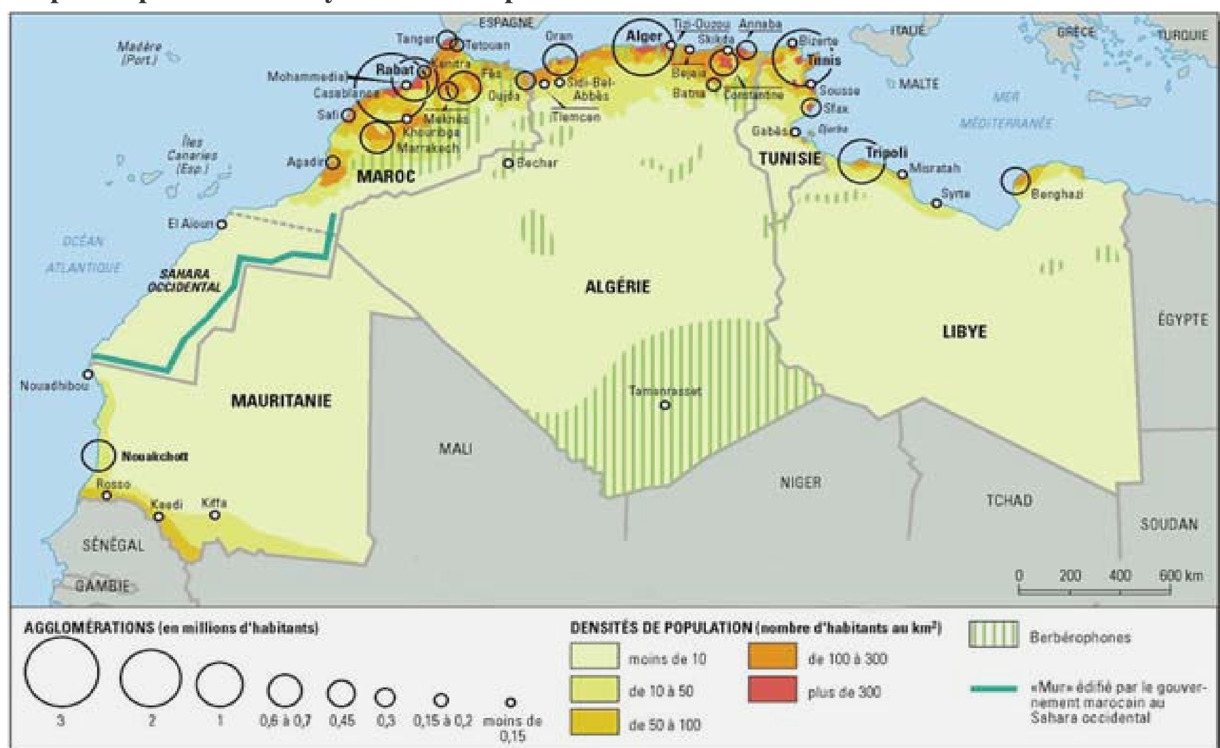
[22] Tuaregs are identified in Southern Algeria, Libya, Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso.

[23] Professors Salem Chaker and Mouloud Mammeri worked throughout the 1980s on developing a Berber script and a standardized grammar, which may become of use in such a process.

In Arabic, the /gh/ sound corresponds closely to the letter غ (ġayn) and for instance the journal *al-ʾĀdāb* and the official agencies in Algeria write *Amazigh* thus *ʾamāzīġ* and *Thamazight* thus *tamāzīġt*, not *ṯamāzīġt*. Based on these factors I have chosen to write 'Thamazight' but retain *Timmuzgha*, as it is spelled as such by the publishers of the journal.

As we see in Map 3 below, population density in the Sahara (Tuaregs) is extremely low, while the geographical area is vast. The numerically largest Berber group as well as number of Berberophones is found in Kabylia (Kabyles). The second largest Berber group is located in the Aurès (Shawiyyas), but the number of Berberophones is lower.

Map 3: Population density and Berberophone areas



Unversity of Laval, 2005: Source: *Le Monde diplomatique*, http://www.monde-diplomatique.fr/cartes/maghrebpop1994.

The Berbers in Kabylia traditionally learned a form of *Qurʾān* Arabic if they attended *Qurʾān* schools in any of the existing religious brotherhoods, called *zawiyāt*, that existed in Kabylia. During the colonial period, many in Kabylia received schooling through *Les Pères Blancs* (The White Fathers, a Christian order of monks that resided in Kabylia since the 1800s). A small Francophone bourgeoisie developed in Kabylia thanks to this schooling (Roberts, 1981). This local elite was employed in administrative units that were not arabicized, and within commerce[24]. The prevalence of French education over Arabic education and the existence of a Francophone bourgeoisie had a great impact on the political

[24] The standing of French schools in Kabylia was higher than in the Aurès where the Reformist schools gained much more ground. This contributed to the arabicization of the Shawiyya Berbers in the colonial era, from the 1930s and up until the 1960s (Benrabah, 1999; Colonna, 1975 & Roberts, 1981).

development in Kabylia. Colonna (1975) has pointed out in her study of Algerian teachers 1883–1939, that 89 percent of the students of rural origin came from the regions of Tizi Ozou and Bejaia. Furthermore, most came from the same *duwwār* or *douar* (settlement), namely the villages of Beni Yenni, Taourirt-Mimoun, Beni Iraten, and Tizi Rashid surrounding Tizi Ouzou in Kabylia. For comparison, the village of Tizi Rashid sent 56 students to French schools and only four to the *medersa* (dialectal form of the Arabic term for school, *madrasa*, which the colonial French-Arabic schools were called). The medersas were less popular in the Kabyle region than in for instance, the Aurès region. It also means that there was a viable alternative written language for the Berberists other than Arabic.

In 2002, Thamazight was accorded status as a national language. However, this was not enough for the Berberists, who have sought recognition for Thamazight as equal to Arabic, i.e. as an *official* language. The 2002 amendment states the following[25]:

المادة ٣ مكرر : تمازيغت هي كذلك لغة وطنية

تعمل الدولة لترقيتها و تطويرها بكل تنوعاتها اللسانية المستعملة عبر التراب الوطني

Translation: Thamazight is thus [in the same manner as Arabic] a national (*waṭaniyya*) language. The state works for its promotion and its development in all its linguistic variety which is used across the national territory.

The explanation following the amendment states that the state aims (*yahduf*) at the constitutionalizing of Thamazight (as) a national language in all its linguistic variability (*bi-kulli tanawwuʿātihā l-lisāniyya*) and its use across the national territory (*al-turāb al-waṭanī*). Also that this is a consolidation of the components that form the Algerian identity:

كونها عنصرا من عناصر الأمازيغية التي تشكل إحدى المكونات الأساسية للهوية الوطنية المذكورة في المادة ٨ (مطّة ٢) من الدستور

Translation: Amazigh being one of the ethnic elements that form one of the essential structures (formations) of the national identity mentioned in the article 8 (2nd extension) of the constitution.

However a bone of contention still remains, as Thamazight is restricted to being a 'national' language and not an 'official' language (*luġa rasmiyya*) as is the case with Arabic. As we see from these two excerpts, Arabic remains the sole official and national language. Neither does the amendment change any conditions in the general principles of Algerian society. The constitutional amendment is therefore seen only partly as a formal recognition.

[25] All the extracts from the constitution are taken from the Algerian government official website http://www.conseilconstitutionnel-dz.org/Arabe/IndexArab.htm ,accessed 22 November 2005.

The discontent is directed at the lack of official significance for Thamazight at all levels of the state.

و إعتبارا أن دسترة تمازيغت لغة وطنية بكل تنوعاتها اللسانية المستعملة عبر التراب الوطني لا تمسّ
بالمركز الدستوري للّغة العربية باعتبارها " اللّغة الوطنية و الرسمية "

Translation: and considering that the consitutionalization of Thamazight as a national language in all its linguistic variety used across the national territory, does not impair (infringe upon) the constitutional position of the Arabic language with regard to it being "the national and official language".

لا يمس البتّة المبادئ العامة التي تحكم المجتمع الجزائري ، و حقوق الإنسان و المواطن و حرياتهما ، و لا يمس بأي كيفية التوازنات الأساسية للسلطات و المؤسسات الدستورية ،

Translation: does not in any manner infringe upon the general principles which govern the Algerian society, nor the human rights and the citizen's rights, nor their freedoms, and it does not by any circumstance infringe upon the basic equilibrium of the authorities and the constitutional institutions.

A large part of the problem is the political status of Arabic, as a tool for governmental control, which, in Kabylia especially, has made people prefer the use of Latin letters for transcription, and French for formal expression. In comparison, the use of Arabic script for writing Thamazight is much more common in Morocco than in Algeria. The reasons behind the choice of script in Kabylia are often political. My source at the University of Tizi Ouzou testified that students would refuse to read Thamazight texts in Arabic transcription (interview, 4 June 2005 at the Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi Ouzou).

Many words in today's Berber dialects are originally Arabic. Knowing the extent of this influence can help assess important dimensions in the relationship between the languages, and the extent of the influence of Berber dialects on Arabic vernacular and vice versa. The Kabyle area has developed a strong political organization in the post-war era, and in this context, language has become a powerful symbol of opposition. For many people in Kabylia, the dominant language Arabic is first associated with the state arabicization programs and second with Islamist agendas considered to represent threats to Kabyle culture (Roberts, 1981, Gurr, 2000). This may influence the reported number of Berber speakers in the region

2.3 Language repertoire in Algeria

Language repertoires are "the set of languages that a citizen must know in order to take advantage of a wide range of mobility opportunities in his or her own country" (Laitin, 1992: 5). A 'repertoire' can be a manner to describe or model the phenomenon of multilingualism. Repertoires refer to how different languages are used, overlap, and have multilingualism as a norm rather than an exception. According to Laitin, this suggests that languages are as much

about roles as they are about transmitting information. In Algeria, a repertoire would typically consist of knowledge of one or more vernaculars and at least one formal written language. The vernaculars are used in daily communication while the formal languages are used in professional and perhaps religious contexts.

Languages in Algeria can be seen in the perspective of two domains, the written and the spoken. Within the written domain, French and Standard Arabic compete against each other. The state arabicization programs aim at eradicating the French language from the public domain as well as the personal, as stated in the earlier quote by Boumedienne. French continues to play an important role, not only in Algeria's international relations, but also in the areas of commerce, sciences, as well as dominating large sections of the media.

The spoken varieties that compete against each other are not only the Arabic and Berber dialects, but also French. Morsly (1986), states that there is multilingualism in Algeria not only because the languages have come into conflictual contact, but also because there is a widespread borrowing, constant interferences and shifts from one language to another. The varieties and patterns depend on the geographic, social and professional environment of the individual speaker. The University of Laval project (2004) on the linguistic situation in Algeria estimates that 72 percent of the population are Arabophones. Among them 83.2 percent, speak Algerian Arabic. The remaining Arabophones speak Hassaniyya Arabic (11.3 percent), Moroccan Arabic (0.4 percent), and Saharan Arabic (0.1 percent). Standard Arabic (or *al-ʿarabiyya al-fuṣḥā)* is learned through schools and in particular through higher education, therefore only educated segments of the population are familiar with it. Some will also have a somewhat passive understanding of Standard Arabic, without being able to use it actively themselves. Approximately 67 percent of the total population has some knowledge of French. 27.4 percent of the population are counted as Berberophones, speaking one of several varieties of Berber. Not all Algerians are multilingual, but a large percentage has knowledge of at least one spoken dialect, some French, and/or Standard Arabic. Neither this study, nor other estimations of linguistic groups in Algeria define exactly how many are monolingual, bilingual, or multilingual.

ʿAbd al-Rizāq al-Dūrārī recognized four languages present in Algeria. The French language is used within the domains of science, higher scientific research and diplomatic relations. The next is the school Arabic (*al-luġa al-ʿarabiyya al-madrasiyya*), which is used in the areas of education (*tarbiyya*) and the sciences as well as administration (*idāra*) and diplomatic relations with the Arab countries. Third is the Amazigh languages (he uses the plural *al-luġāt*) in their entire miscellany and each one with respect to Algeria, as a mother

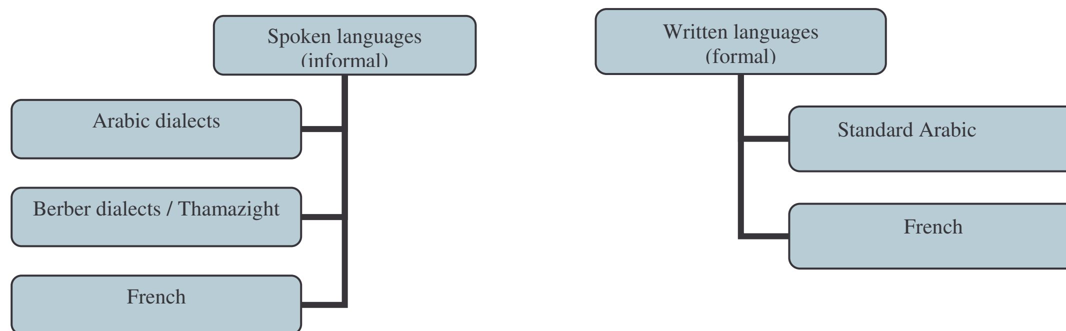
tongue (*ka-luġa al-ʾumm*). Fourth he lists the Algerian Arabic language (*al-luġa al-ʿarabiyya al-ǧazāʾiriyya*). He defines Algerian Arabic as one language as opposed to plural Amazigh languages. Furthermore, he states that Algerian Arabic is used as a significant common link between all Algerian speakers and is their mother tongue (2004: 9).

As mentioned above, Arabic and Berber vernaculars are not mutually intelligible. However, many Berbers are familiar with an Arabic dialect in addition to their own vernacular. The same does not necessarily go for Arabic speakers, even if there are many words of Berber origin in the Algerian Arabic vocabulary. One can assume that as a minority language more people in the Berber group will switch to Arabic, than the other way around in situations where speakers from both groups are present. The relationship between Arabic dialects and Thamazight is not symmetrical. Arabic is the language of the majority of the population and it is the language that is promoted officially. Standard Arabic is what linguists commonly refer to as the 'prestigious variety' of Arabic. There is, however, a deep resistance toward Arabic locally in Kabylia. Both groups will have the ability to switch to French, if speakers have some education or have learned French through other channels, such as the media. In fact, code switching (the use of more than one language in the course of a single communication episode[26]) is a very common linguistic behaviour also in some traditional folk music and within pop music, such as in *ray* music (Bentahila & Davies, 2002 & Benrabah, 1999).

I list in the figure below the existing varieties of both spoken and written languages in Algeria. French is a special case since it is not directly a mother tongue in Algeria, despite its important role and prevalence. However, among a large percentage of the educated it has a prominent place also in daily communication. I have therefore included French in the figure below both as a vernacular and as a formal variety. French is included as a vernacular variety because it is used in situations of code-switching or other speech behaviour, often borrows, and is influenced by the other vernacular used at the same time. Hence, it is a different variety than the written and formal French variety.

[26] Helles, cited in Suleiman (2004: 29).

Figure 1: Linguistic composition in Algeria



Arabic and French constitute the two written languages. An important project for the Berberist movement is therefore to construct a standardized system of writing Thamazight, in order to compete with French and Arabic on this level.

The actual number of Berberophones, and whether or not that number is declining, is impossible to ascertain without a proper census on Berberophones measured over time. What we do know is the number of students taking classes of Thamazight in public schools. For the school year 2004–05, the HCA (High Commission for Amazighté) registered 94,047 students and 385 teachers on a national level. Of these, 43,006 were Kabyle students and 189 were Kabyle teachers (see also Table 1 in chapter five). In 1913, Doutté & Gautier conducted a census that placed the percentage of Berberophones at approx. 30 percent in Algeria. The last one in 1966 also placed the percentage of Berberophones at approximately 30 percent (Entelis & Naylor, 1992). No state census distinguishing between 'Arab' and 'Berber' has been carried out since the 1960s. Chaker (1998) estimates that 30 percent of the population are Berbers and so do Theil (1990). The confusion regarding these percentages also regards the definitions of 'Arab' and 'Berber'. The University of Laval (2005) attempted to measure only the presence of Berberophones, and came up with a figure of 27.4 percent of the population. The group marker is then only language. The Berberist activists do not wish to see non-Berberophone Berbers classified as Arabs. Interestingly, the CIA World Fact book uses the concept "Arab-Berber 99 percent, European less than 1 percent" to distinguish the groups in Algeria[27]. Here 'Arab' and 'Berber' are not divided in two categories, rather seen as constituting the same group.

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[27] http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/ geos/ag.html, accessed 16 September 2005

2.3.1 The local and the Islamic

It is sometimes generally argued that 'Islam never managed to kill the Arab'. In this lies the assumption that the 'pre-existing culture' was never entirely overridden by the coming of Islam. This applies to both the Arab Bedouin societies, but also to the non-Arab societies conquered and Islamized in the 6–8th centuries. In contemporary studies, Lila Abu-Lughod's study of the Awlad Ali Bedouins in Egypt has given some testimony to this. The religious practice and traditional customs of the Awlad Ali has a local form and can be described as a variety that builds on Islamic theology and dogma as well as other historical cultural elements (Abu-Lughod, 1999). Likewise Yitzhak Nakash's study of the *Shiʿī* community in Iraq shows how the Iraqi *Shiʿī* community, with its Arab Bedouin background, differs from the Iranian *Shiʿī* community, despite the geographic and religious proximity between the Iraqi *Shiʿī* cities of Kerbala and Najaf and Iran (Nakash, 2003). While these, and all Muslim societies, share the universality of Islam through the religious messages of the *Qurʾān*, the Prophet's *sunna*, and the *ḥadīṯ*, daily Muslim practice varies within and across regions and communities (Abu-Lughod, 1999 & Nakash, 2003).

This may also be true of the Algerian situation. In Algeria, local culture is not only influenced by Islam and Arabic, but conversely, Islamic and Arabic cultural expression in Algeria is also influenced by other existing cultural elements. According to ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq (2005: 37), the Berber ethnic element in Arabic North Africa constitutes the largest non-Arabic linguistic group in the Arabic world (*yushakkilu l-ʿunṣuru l-barbarī fī duwali l-maġribī l-ʿarabī akbara jamāʿatin luġawiyyatin ġayr ʿarabiyya fī l-ʿālami l- ʿarabī*).

By virtue of assimilation of the Amazigh ethnic element with the Arabic ethnic element, the two form the Maghribi identity (*bi-ḥukmi ʾindimāǧi l-ʿunṣuri l-ʾamāzīǧī bil-ʿunṣuri l-ʿarabī wa taškīlhumā li l-šaẖṣiyyati l-maġribī*).

The nationalist concepts which evolved under and after the colonial period did not provide for cultural plurality, neither in the constitution nor in their institutionalization of culture through the arabicization programs. The post-war era was heavily influenced by an economic dependence on the colonial power but also by a need to maintain ideological distance. From the 1960s until 1989, the authoritarian Algerian regime suppressed expressions of other cultural elements than the Arab, since these were considered to challenge the regime and its political powerbase. In Algeria, any promotion of Algerian national identity that was different from FLN's ideological construct was accused of being subversive or neo-colonialist. The national project of the FLN was hastily formed in the last stages of the liberation struggle, and heavily based on the ideology of the ʿUlamā Reformists from the

1930s, whose aim was to reconstruct a 'pure' and 'authentic' Algerian identity that was Arab and Muslim. In this nationalist project there was no room for local varieties. The words 'pure' and 'authentic' are words that also the Berberists used in their struggle, as have the Islamists.

Despite the influence on a variety of regional cultures on the Algerian society, it must not be forgotten that the majority still consider themselves to be Arab and are Arabophones. The state's concept of authenticity is contested by Kabylia and the Berberist movement but the fact remains that Arabic and Islam are the two major sources of national cohesion in Algeria. Most Berbers are familiar with some form of Arabic. Islam also carries with it its own arabicizing element and the Berberophones as well as the Arabophones are to a large extent Muslims.

3. Berbers and the berberist movement

3.1 Roots

The North African region that the Arabs called *al-ğazīratu l-maġrib*[28] and parts of what they in the 7th century defined, as *ʾifrīqiya* (Africa), now constitute Algeria, Marocco, and Tunisia. Vandals, Visigoths, Romans, the Byzantine Empire, Arabs, and France have invaded the region. Some, if not all these conquests, have left their mark on the development of urban culture in the region, though not so much in the rural areas. The exceptions are the Arab and French invasions, which left significant marks on the economy, religion, language, and culture.

Ibn H̱aldūn (1332–1406)[29], is one of the few Arabic scholars and historians who have become well known in the West. He is referred to as the first scholar who praises the political intellect and bravery of the Imazighen of the Maghrib. He mentions them in his large treatise, his universal history called *al-ʿibar*. Ibn H̱aldūn himself grew up in the Maghrib and in Andalusia. The most famous section of *al-ʿibar* is the introduction, *al-muqaddima*. There he laid out his framework and approach to history, which would earn him a reputation as the world's first sociologist. However, the sections on the Berber civilization appear later in *al-ʿibar*. His treatise is one of the few older sources that exist today on the pre-Islamic and the Medieval Berber civilization. Baron de Slane (1852/2003) has one of the most commonly used translations of the section dealing with the Berbers, originally translated for the French

[28] The meaning is the peninsula of the sunset. Indicating the geographic location in the West, as opposed to the Arab peninsula in the East, where the sun rises, *al-mašriq*.
[29] There is a large uncertainty on the exact year of ibn H̱aldūn's death. The dates here are taken fromTalbi's article on ibn H̱aldūn in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*.

War Ministry. The sections here were found on a state subsidized scholarly (religious) Saudi Arabian website that has published an Arabic version of *al-ʿibar*.

As mentioned in the chapter on the language situation in Algeria, the Berberist movement has been able to profit from academic research in order to validate historical claims. On the question of the origins and ancient civilization, ibn H̱aldūn is often used as a source, as he saw them as being a civilization unto their own, with "what they had of events and battles and dynasties and kingdoms" (*ma kāna lahum min l-ʾayyāmi wa l-waqāʾiʿi wa l-duwali wa l-mamāliki*)[30].

The term *al-ʾayyām* as *ʾayyām al-ʿarab* (the days of the Arabs) signifies the pre-Islamic battles and the battles in the early Islamic period that the Arab tribes fought (Encyclopaedia of Islam, 1999). Lane (1863: 3064) defines *ʾayyām al-ʿarab* as synonymous to battles *al-waqāʾiʿ*. However, it is unclear whether Ibn H̱aldūn has wanted to indicate a similar *al-ʾayyām al-barbar*. de Slane (1852) translates the word as 'generations', indicating the time aspect and I have chosen to use 'events'. Ibn H̱aldūn continues his description as follows:

> *wa mā tušhadu aẖbārahu kullahā bi-ʾannahu ǧīlun ʿazīzun ʿalā l-ʾayyāmi wa ʾannahum qawmun marhūbun ǧānibuhum šadīdun bi-ʾismihim kaṯīra jamʿihim maẓāhirun li-ʾumami l-ʿālami wa-ʾaǧyālihi min l-ʿarabi wa l-fursi wa l-yūnāni wa l-rūmi*[31]

Translation: and what is attested of its facts all of it that it [the Berber civilization] is a grand civilization over generations and that they are a terrifying people. Next to them, strong in their name [by their own right] their group is large, [with] an appearance like the people of the world and its civilizations, such as the Arabs and the Persians and the Greeks and the Romans.

According to ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq, some German scholars in the middle of the 19th century, focused on the Eastern or Oriental (*šarqī*) origin of the Berbers. The French school in this period focused on the European origins of the Berbers and some similarities (*al-tamāṯulāt*) between the two coasts of the Mediterranean. In anthropological research some, according to ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq, such as the Moroccan anthropologist Dr. Mohammad Ḥaqqī, claim that the Berbers are descendants from a mix of indigenous people and people from the Near East that migrated to the region (2005: 38). However, ʿAbd l-Ḥaqq does not believe this to make void the idea that the Berbers are North Africa's ancestors (*al-ʾawwalūn*), for there is no people (*ʿirq*) that is pure in the terms of it being unmixed. According to Pellat (1960) there is no scholarly agreement on the origin of the Berbers. The answer to this lies too far back in the

[30] Original text available at Http://www.al-eman.com/islamlib/viewchp. asp? BID= 163& CID =182.
[31] Original text available at Http://www.al-eman.com/islamlib/viewchp. asp? BID= 163& CID =182

past to be conclusively deduced. Ibn Haldūn also mentions that their beginning and what was before them is not known لا يعرف أولها ولا ما قبلها [32]. Ibn Khaldoun continues that their beliefs were as the others in the West and East, that of Paganism, as well as how the Berbers would sometimes take on the faith of their conquerors such as the Romans (Christianity) we see from this passage:

> *wa kāna dīnuhum dīnu l-majūsiyyati sha'āni l-'aʿǧāmi kullihim bi-l-mašriqi wa l-maġribi 'illā fī baʿḍi l-'aḥāyīni yadīnūnu bi-dīni man ġalaba ʿalayhim min l-'umami*[33].

Translation: and their religion was the religion of Paganism, the condition (state) of all non-Arabs in the Mashriq and the Maghrib except sometimes they would believe in [the] religion of the people that conquered them.

3.2 What lies in a name

The term 'Berber' is originally abusive as barbar from the Greek *barbaroi*. It basically means 'one who speaks not understandably' or a 'non-Greek'. Used by the Romans as *barbarus*, it was an established term by the time ibn Haldūn wrote the *'ibar*. Ibn Haldūn uses both *al-barbar* and *ʿaǧam*. Ibn Haldūn also uses the term *ǧīl*. *Ǧīl* (plural *'aǧyāl*) can mean race, generation, century, epoch, or era (Wehr, 1994: 178). Lane (1863: 494) defines *ǧīl* as a 'nation', 'people', 'race', or 'family of mankind'. In Baron de Slane's translation (de Slane, 1852 & 2003) 'race' is used. However, one can use 'civilization' or 'people' without distorting the meaning. Pellat defines Berbers as only distinguishable by their language. Furthermore, that the morphological characteristics are so varied it is impossible to speak of them as a homogenous group or race (Pellat, 1960: 1173). Chaker (1998) also points out that the geographic dispersion of the different Berber tribes has resulted in very diverse cultures and languages. In the *ʿibar*, ibn Haldūn traces several tribal lineages and dynasties present in the region. He divides the people into different groups which show us different levels of assimilation and distinction, seven centuries after the Arab conquest. (de Slane, 2003: iii) 1) Pure Arabs *al-ʿarab al-ʿarbā* 2) Arabicized Arabs *alʿarab al-mustaʿriba*] 3) Arabs descendant from Arabs *al-ʿarab al-tābiʿa li l-ʿarab* 4) Barbarian Arabs *al-ʿarab al-mustaʿǧima*]. *Mustaʿǧima*, derived from *ʿaǧam*, means literally foreigner, non-Arab, especially used about Persian people, but also 'barbar' in the sense of incomprehensible speech (Lane, 1863: 1966 & Wehr, 1994: 694).

In category 2, ibn Haldūn uses the term 'Arabicized Arabs'. From this, we may deduce that he talks about those who have embraced Islam and use Arabic as a common language. Category 4 is defined as 'Barbarian' or 'non-Arab Arabs'. They must have

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[32] Original text available at Http://www.al-eman.com/islamlib/viewchp. asp? BID= 163& CID =183.
[33] Original text available at Http://www.al-eman.com/islamlib/viewchp. asp? BID= 163& CID =183.

embraced Islam in order to be called Arab, but distinguish themselves from the *arabicized* Arabs. The distinction may be a linguistic distinction. This category reveals that some were not incorporated fully into the Arab culture as they did not use Arabic as their first language. This leads to a conclusion that ibn Haldūn’s use of the term ‘Arab’ contains linguistic, cultural and religious dimensions. If this is so, then we are presented with an image of a mosaic society in Maghrib around the 13th century. A common denominator however, already exists; Islam. The Islamic religious identity also carries with it strong cultural elements through the religious language (Arabic) and the Arab transmitters. A comparative case can be the contribution from the Lebanese Christian, Michel Aflaq to the development of the Pan Arabic ideology. The justification he gave as for why he as a Christian would be a part of such a movement, was precisely that Arabic not only contained the Islamic culture but that Islamic culture as part of Arabic culture belonged to all Arabs. It had a universal message (Choueiri, 2000:162)

The Berber groups have traditionally used clan or tribal names, or names such as Kabyle, Shawiyya, Rifī, etc. in order to describe themselves. Ibn Haldūn writes that there are seven roots (*’aǧdām*) and they are the following: *Azdāǧa*, *Maṣmūda*, *Awraba*, *‘Aǧīsa*, *Kutāma*, Ṣanhāǧa, *Awrīǧa*. Furthermore, according to ibn Haldūn, there are three additions made by Sābiq bn. Salīm, these are *Lamta*, *Haksūra*, *Kuzūla*[34]. Today *Amazigh* (plural *Imazighen*) is often used as a general term by the Algerian state and by the Berberist movement. However, despite its literally derogatory meaning, Berber is not necessarily abusive, and is still commonly used by scholars. For instance, Chaker, one of the most prominent scholars on Berber linguistics and culture, and active supporter of the Berberist movement, consistently use the term Berber. There does however seem to be a trend toward using *Amazigh*/*Imazighen* more than Berber in political and academic circles in Algeria today.

Throughout the centuries of invasions, when foreign peoples controlled the trade in the cities and influenced urban culture, the mountainous Kabylia and Aurès regions were not affected in the same way as the cities. Administrative control rarely stretched far beyond the cities and surrounding cultivated areas (Jansen, Nef & Picard, 2000). Not many resources were used on acquiring submission from the arid and mountainous areas of Aurès and Kabylia. It was only with the arrival of the Arab nomadic tribes *Banū Ḥilāl* and *Banū Suleymān*, exiled by the Fatimid dynasty in Egypt around the 11th century, that the sedentary mountain tribes came in closer contact with the Arabs. However, the religious influence had spread into these areas earlier. In the first period of Islamization, it was mainly dissident

[34] Original text available at Http://www.al-eman.com/islamlib/viewchp. asp? BID= 163& CID =181.

religious trends that took hold, and Algeria still today has one of the last *Ḫawāriǧ* communities[35], namely the *ʿIbādī* community of the Mzab in Southern Algeria. As we saw by Ibn Khaldun's categorization of the different types of Arabs in the Maghrib above, identity had become a mosaic. Throughout the Middle Ages, it was the arabicized Berber dynasties of *al-Murābiṭūn*[36] and *al-Muwaḥḥidūn*[37] that continued the arabicization process as well as making Sunni Islam the main religious cult (Jansen, Nef & Picard, 2000). One can therefore say that the Berbers through co-existence with Arab conquerors assimilated much Arab and Islamic culture and language. The mainstreaming of religious belief was campaigned and achieved by Berber dynasties and not by the Arab rulers, while some tribes in certain areas retained more of their own cultural traditions. One may also ask whether the dynasties *al-Murābiṭūn* and *al-Muwaḥḥidūn* saw themselves as Berber or Arab. They may perhaps have seen themselves simply as Muslims, but it is reasonable to believe they associated themselves with some regional identity as well.

Berbers in Algeria are geographically spread throughout the country. The numerically largest Berber area today is Kabylia where an estimated 90 percent of the total Berber population lives. Other Berber groups are located in central Sahara and in the Mzab (Northern Saharan region). These are the Tuareg, who are nomadic, and the Mzabī or Mozabites. The Aurès, in South-Eastern Algeria, is the home of the *Shawiyya* (strictly translated in Arabic as sheepherder) (Chaker, 1998). The population in the South on the Saharan border and the nomadic Tuaregs have less contact with the rest of the country due to geographical reasons.

It would be difficult to argue that the state discriminates against the Berbers as a group. There are in fact several examples of Kabyles or Berbers from other regions that have attained high-ranking government positions. The current President of the High Council for the Arabic Language is a Kabyle, and so is the head of government, Ahmed Ouyahia. It is, however, a standing joke among Kabyles that they can acquire any post except the Presidency. A prerequisite for acquiring a position in the government is adherence to the state ideology (as stated in articles two & three in the constitution cited in chapter two).

3.3 Colonial legacy

France colonized Algeria from 1830 to 1962. European, and in particular French farmers and workers settled. What distinguishes Algeria's colonial experience from many others is that

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[35] Dissidents who initially supported ʿAli against the Ummawī clan. They renounced him and his followers, *Shiʿyat ʿAlī* in 661when ʿAlī accepted to negotiate with Muʿawiya at the battle of Siffin in today's Iraq (Vikør, 1993).

[36] named after *al-ribāṭ* a type of religious and military outpost, today most known through the folk religious expression of Maraboutism

[37] The Unitarians, seekers of the Oneness of God.

France included Algeria as an inseparable part of the French patrimony (Stora, 2001). At the same time, no Muslim was granted French citizenship. In order to be eligible for status as French, one had to convert to Christianity, and even then, the process was tenuous. Algerian Jews were naturalized and accorded citizenship, as part of the colonial strategy in 1870. The particular status of Algeria had a specific impact on the mainly Muslim Algerian population. The social and traditional administrative structures of society was alienated by the French 'mission civilisatrice' and the French colonial policies went a long way in destroying and disaggregating traditional society (see for instance Benrabah, 1999, Chaker, 1998, Ruedy, 1992, Stora, 1994, 2001). The bloody liberation war from 1954 to 1962 and the ongoing ambivalent relationship with France still colours, not just foreign policy, but also the domestic cultural 'authenticity' debate today, over 40 years later.

The French developed an Algerian colonial anthropology that in many ways elevated the Berber culture of Kabylia and the Aurès to be superior to the Arab culture, even though the Berbers suffered just like the rest of Algerians under the colonial discriminating policies. The Jewish community experienced a different situation, particularly after 1870 when they were eligible for education and other rights as naturalized French citizens (Stora, 2001). Colonna (1975) points out how republican reformers thought they could faster assimilate the Berbers and in particular the Kabyles, than the Arabs. This perception was built on anthropological studies describing a universal characteristic of the Berbers as independent and more intelligent, often referred to later as the 'Berber myth'. The quality of the colonial anthropological studies varied and the clear Orientalist approach and close ties to the military establishment, places these studies well inside the imperialist agenda of colonial France. Still, much of what is known about the Aurès and Kabylia, builds on the research conducted in the colonial period. According to ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq (2005), the Christian (and Jewish) past of several Berber tribes was accentuated to support claims of an existing Mediterranean link between Berbers and Europeans, which the Arabs supposedly did not share. These representations of Berbers and Arabs served as a method of 'divide and rule' in the colonial context. After independence, this has given rise to a perception that Kabylia was favourized by a *ẓahīr al-barbarī* (Berber endorsement)[38] founded on the 'Berber myth'. This has partly been raised to question the national loyalty of the Berberist movement in the post-independence era.

The existence of a specific 'Berber policy' or endorsement of the Berbers is rejected by Chaker (1998) who claims there did not exist any such policy in Algeria. He claims that instead the Bureaux Arabes actually contributed to the arabicization of the Berbers by

arabicizing Berber family names such as *ath* to the equivalent Arabic *banū* (*beni* in dialect), and place names such as Iaazuggen to Azazga, or Ihedduchen to Bashir Sharif. The French administrator of indigenous affairs would typically have an education in Arabic or rely on Arab Algerians from the *Marabou* (religious) families that held some of the lower administrative posts in colonial Algeria. Furthermore, while there did exist a favourization of Kabylia in the number of schools available to Algerian children, none of these taught Berber history or language. Chaker also points out that the actual number of students in the region benefiting from the schools was marginal. According to Murphy (1977), the level of illiteracy at the eve of independence surpassed that of at the beginning of the colonization and lay at approx. 90 percent. Any discussion of colonial school policy must take into account that the colonial administrators did little to encourage 'indigenous' education.

3.4 First stirrings

"La nation algérienne, arabe et musulmane, existe depuis le VIIe siècle"

In 1948 MTLD (Movement for the Triumph of Liberty and Democracy), one of the precursors to the FLN (National Liberation Front) that would lead the actual liberation war campaigns, issued a fifty page long pamphlet called 'memorandum à l'ONU' (memorandum for NATO) that begins with the above phrase. This sentence ignored the significance of Berber identity and cultural heritage for the Algerian nation. The pamphlet politically alienated those who Guenon refers to as "berbero-nationalistes" or Berber-nationalists (Guenon, 1999: 20).

The question of the Berber identity as we talk about it today surfaced in 1946, when a demand to discuss the national role of Berber culture was rejected by the MTLD leadership. After this decision, there was a continued tension between the Kabyles in MTLD and the other fractions. It is difficult to say with absolute certainty that this tension only concerned identity issues alone. It seems reasonable to assume that power struggles and power alliances explains an equal part of the ensuing Berberist crisis in 1949. At this stage of the nationalist struggle, the groups under the auspices of the FLN were in the process of forming a leadership as well as developing strategies, structures, and goals.

In 1949, the trench between Berberist and Arabist nationalists widened when a tract condemning 'Berberism' was issued on 15 April by the central command, with a following general mobilization against Berberists. The French authorities arrested several of the

[38] The Berber policy is said to first have been developed in Morocco based on Algerian experiences. It was then

Berberists, who in turn accused the MTLD central power of treason. While in prison, they were excluded from the party central committee on the grounds of Berberism, regionalism, and anti-nationalism. If not actually turning them over to the French authorities, the MTLD leaders used this opportunity to expel them in absentia. Aït Amrane, one of the leaders and strategists of the liberation movement dedicated to the imprisoned Berber-nationalists, a song in Thamazight called *si Lezzayer ar Tizi-Wezzu* (from Algiers to Tizi Ozou). After the situation became tenser between the parties involved. In an attempt to resolve the situation Sadek Hadjeres, Mabrok Belhocine, and Yahia Henine, under the pseudonym of Idir El Watani[39], published a brochure entitled *l'Algérie libre vivra* in order to make known the "courant de renovation et refuter l'accusation de berbèrisme" (Guenon, 1999: 23). The Berberist cause did in this way take a back seat to the appeal for unity during the struggle against France.

FLN held its first conference in 1956, where they drafted the *Soummam Charter* on the nature of the future independent state. Kabyle leaders were overrepresented at this conference as other parts of the leadership was either in French custody or unable to breach French military control over Algerian regions, in order to reach the Soummam Valley in Kabylia. In the *Soummam Charter* a collegial structure of leadership, the primacy of the political over the military, and the domestic over the external was set down. Ahmed Ben Bella, one of the detained FLN leaders, rejected the *Soummam Charter* on the grounds of its 'secularism' and the misrepresentation of delegates, the questioning of the religious nature of future political institutions. According to Abane Ramdane, one of the FLN movement's most prominent political strategists, the issue was also the fact that the charter was drawn up by Kabyles (Stora, 2001: 62). In 1958, The Tripoli Charter abrogated the *Soummam Charter* at a second FLN conference in Tripoli, Libya, where few Kabyles were present. The *Tripoli Charter* states that the Muslim identity "stripped of all its excrescences[40] and superstitions that have smothered or corrupted it, is to find expression in two essential factors in addition to religion as such: culture and identity" (Stora, 2001: 125). The last point was a nail in the coffin for the Berberists, because priority was given to developing a national Arab Islamic culture and identity.

The Kabyles, despite their participation in both political and military leadership lost out in the FLN power struggles after independence. The ground lost at the crucial moment at

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later applied in Algeria (see for instance Chaker, 1998 & ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq, 2005)

[39] Idir is a common Kabyle name while El Watani is Arabic for national. The pseudonym may have been symbolic, trying to overcome the political divide between MTLD and the Berberists.

[40] 'Excrescences' literally means unwanted growth on animals and plants. In this context, I assume that Stora is referring to (for some) unwanted religious practices in Islam that are based on non-Islamic customs.

the creation of the independent state, was never recovered. Some Berberists saw this as a betrayal or an injustice, with regard to the price Kabylia paid as one of the principal battle grounds of the war. In the war of independence, several of the original FLN leaders were Kabyles. Of these, several were assassinated in the course of the internal power struggles both during and after the war. This led to the loss of a Kabyle voice in the state construction, which is considered an injustice that the Berberist movement seeks to correct. In the Berberists' view, the 1956 *Soummam Charter* represented a state structure that would have made room for Berber participation in building the nation. Today, for instance the RCD (Rally for Democracy and Culture), one of the Kabyle-associated political parties, list in their program a demand for the instatement of this charter. In this manner, The Soummam Valley conference remains a significant historic event.

3.5 The post-war Berberist movement

A nail in the coffin for the Berberists upon liberation was Ahmed Ben Bella, one of the FLN leaders, who on his release from French prison in 1962, declared threefold that they were Arabs! ('Nous sommes des Arabes! Nous sommes des Arabes! Nous sommes des Arabes!'). Paradoxically, Ben Bella delivered his exclamation in French. While the Kabyles had mostly been active inside Algeria during the war, it was the ALN (National Liberation Army) and the Oujda clan of FLN leaders, stationed in Morocco or imprisoned in France, who took over the independent state. The statement made by Ben Bella was effective in form of alienating the Berberists as well as perhaps other Berber groups. The following 1963 civil war was set off by the 'FFS maquis'[41], led by Mohand ou el Hadj and Hocine Aït Ahmed, two of Kabylia's military leaders. The motivation of the rebels was linked to the above-mentioned power struggle and disagreement over the 1956 and 1958 charters (interview with Merahi, 2005; Guenon, 1999 & Stora, 2001). The Kabyle rebels surrendered in 1964, with the aid of the then General Houari Boumedienne. After a coup in 1965, Boumedienne became president from 1965–1978. At the time of independence, he was one of the FLN movement's few leaders educated in Arabic. Some of today's most disputed constitutional articles on national culture and language were set down under his rule in the constitution of 1976. It was also in this period that the arabicization programs were intensified. According to some sources, the National Charter of 1976 had a direct implication for the direction of the identity movement (interview withiMerahi on 24 May 2005). It dismissed completely all forms of cultural plurality. The charter stated that the "generalized use of the Arabic language and culture as a

creative functional instrument is one of the primordial tasks of Algerian society" (Stora, 2001: 181). Furthermore, as mentioned above in chapter two, the constitution (article three) stated the responsibility of the state to ensure the generalization of Arabic. According to Merahi (interview, 24 May 2005), in the 1970s people were afraid of speaking Kabyle or other Berber vernaculars publicly, and it was forbidden to teach it.

The authoritarian rule in this period meant that the movement had to take the struggle into alternative venues like the universities and the cultural arena in order to continue. The Diaspora in France played an important role in this. In 1967, *l'Académie berbère* was founded in Paris. The other academic centre of importance was the University of Tizi Ouzou, founded in 1979. Many of the followers and activists were students or academics in a period (1970s) where anti-war campaigns and student groups were very active throughout Europe. This may also have influenced Kabyle students. Kabyle Folk musicians such as Idir and Aït Menguellet acted as cultural disseminators, reaching a wider audience with their folk music, sung in Kabyle.

Every political movement develops its own vocabulary. The new generation, largely affiliated with the two academic centres, developed a certain Kabyle vocabulary that reflected the current debates of the activists. Instead of French, or perhaps even dialectal Arabic, Kabyle words as revolution *tagrawla*, freedom *tilelli*, and identity *tamagit* became key terms in these debates (Fatès, 2002). In April 1980, one of Kabylia's most renowned poets and scholars, Mouloud Mammeri, was refused permission to host a seminar on Berber poetry. The government's refusal, and the fact that he was arrested in front of his audience at the University of Tizi Ouzou, led to a student insurrection at first. Later, the uprising involved people from all occupations and across generations. The insurrection became known as *tafsut n imazighen* (the Berber Spring)[42] and it is still commemorated every year in Kabylia. According to Stora (2001), the effect of the revolt was for the first time to produce a public counter discourse in Algeria, on the cultural and intellectual issues. In this context, the Berberist struggle may perhaps be seen as a continuation of the struggle against the French colonial cultural and political hegemony. This time, the oppressor is not French, but Algerian, instead of the French-Christian dichotomy; it is the Arabic-Islamic state hegemony, which people challenge. The view remains the same, of a regime that imposes a cultural and linguistic reality upon them with which they are not familiar. ʿAbd al-Rizāq al-Dūrārī (2004), states that the 1980 revolt raised the issue of the Algerian identity (*al-huwiyya al-ǧazāʾiriyya*)

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[41] 'Maquis' is a French word that literally means bush vegetation. It was used as a term for the guerrilla battleground in the French-Algerian war. Algerian guerrilla used to hide and ambush French troops in areas with such vegetation. In the same way, 'maquisard' means an Algerian guerrilla fighter.

in all its forms. He criticizes what he sees as a refusal of the regime to include the Maghribi and Algerian identity in an understanding of a common identity. He suggests that instead the state opted for an Islamic and Arabic variety alone. He also suggests that the Amazigh quest in 1980, became an essential part of the democracy issue in an, at the time, authoritarian state. That the linguistic quest and the pursuit for identity could not be separated from the quest for democracy generally (*ʾinna l-maṭlaba l-luġawī wa maṭlaba l-huwiyyati lā yumkinu ʾan yakūna bi-maʿzilin ʿani l-maṭlabi l-dīmuqrāṭiyyi bi-ṣūratin ʿāmma*)[43].

Violent repression did not halt the Berberist movement. As Merahi pointed out (interview, 24 May 2005), resistance to any central power had long been a Kabyle trademark, under any rule, whether Arab, Ottoman, or French. Kabyles often explain Kabyle activism by referring to such a 'tradition for resistance'. The Berber Spring led to an increased consciousness and pride in this tradition. The symbolic value of the Berber Spring is still great, despite that today's generation have different aspirations and ideals than those who participated in the 1980 revolt. The question of democracy has also continued throughout the different national political climates to be linked with the linguistic and cultural agenda of the movement. After the political reforms in 1988–89, Kabyle political parties were eager to participate in the national political system, despite the clear weaknesses of the system. Parts of the Berberist movement see this as a betrayal of the 'tradition for resistance' and call for 'true' democracy.

3.5.1 Football as a political arena

During the Boumedienne era, Kabyle political opposition was suppressed. Political activism was forbidden, and so was speaking or teaching Thamazight. In this situation, as Fatès (2002) describes, the JSK football matches (*Jeunesse Sportive Kabyle*) turned into political rallies for Kabyle Berberists. Moreover, the success of Kabyle players over other Arab regional teams translated as political success. In 1972 under the arabicization laws *Jeunesse Sportive Kabyle* was renamed *Jama'i Serri' Kawkabi* (Allstars Team) in an effort to remove the ethnic or regional affiliation from the club's name. However, this proved to be to no avail. The JSK acronym became popularly known as 'je suis Kabyle'. The supporters also sported slogans like *Imazighen* (the plural of *amazigh* 'free man'). On 19 June 1977, under the Algerian Cup finals in Algiers, the JSK supporters drowned the singing of the national hymn with a team song (sung in Thaqbaylit) dedicated to the JSK composed by Kabyle poet Aït Menguellet. There were also banners sporting Tifinagh letters. After the match, the JSK supporters turned

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[42] Spring is also an allusion to the 'Prague Spring', not only because it happened during that season.
[43] ʿAbd al-Rizāq al-Dūrārī (2004: 8).

to demonstrating against the arabicization laws. Fatès argue that the presence of President Boumedienne at the stadium was one reason for the massive demonstration of Kabyle symbols, a clear provocation to him. The same year a law on physical education and sports tied state-run sports associations, such as the JSK, to regional economic and administrative units. The JSK was attached to the ENIEM (l'Entreprise nationale des industries électroménagères de Tizi Ouzou) and renamed JET (*Jeunesse électronique de Tizi Ouzou*). As with the other attempts by the state it failed, as JET immediately became known as short for 'Jughurta[44] existe toujours'.

During the *Tafsut n Imazighen* (Berber Spring) in 1980, JSK football matches became, according to Fatès, 'l'occasion pour dire', occasions where one could shout political slogans and engage in political dissent and cultural opposition. This was the only means to engage in a 'dialogue' with the authorities. The only official political channel that existed was that of the FLN, so these matches were the only venues where the government could hear them. At the same time, the shelter of the crowd meant that the police would have difficulty identifying the individuals. This resembles in some ways the way Islamism began disseminating political views through sermons in mosques. Neither is the case of turning football matches into political rallies unique for Kabylia. In Jordan, football matches between Palestinian (refugee) football teams and Jordanian ones turned into Palestinian political rallies (Tuastad, 1997). The JSK as they keep winning over other regional teams has remained a magnet for resistance until today. In *El Watan* June 2005, the president of the football club, Moh. Šarīf Hannašī, declared that the JSK remains apolitical. This was a point that he obviously felt he needed to stress.

3.6. What is the 'Kabyle question'?

As we have seen above, Kabylia and Kabyles have been particularly prominent in the Berberist movement. Everyone who studies Algeria comes across expressions such as the 'Kabyle question, 'Kabyle problem', or 'Kabyle exception'. These expressions serve as attempts to identify and explain an existence of a development that set Kabylia politically and culturally apart as a region from the development of the rest of the country. Kabyles loyal to the Algerian regime as well as the regime itself has denied the existence of sucha a development, and maintained that such a view is traitorus. An example is the declaration from thirteen Kabyle deputies to the National Assembly (APN) in 1963, in which the authors

[44] Jughurta (160-104 BC) was a Numidian king. The grandfather of the earlier mentioned Massinissa who became a Roman ally. Jughurta himself was beheaded by Rome.

rejected the existence of a Kabyle problem and claimed that Kabylia was a region like any other region in the country[45].

At the same time, one can argue that the prevalence of Kabylia as the centre of the Berberist movement and the frontline of clashes between civilians and the police have become a significant aspect of the Kabyle identity. It seems that being a *Kabyle* Berber has an added meaning of being politically active and in constant opposition. Kabyles are the ones who resist. Such an identity construction draws on a history of previous Kabyle resistance against the Arabs and the French, as well as the losses they sustained during the liberation war, and the loss of power at independence. In an interview with the ICG, a Kabyle stated that while Kabylia shares its problems with the rest of the country, they are "in the vanguard" (ICG, 2003: 12). According to Laroussi 'je suis kabyle' can, in some cases, not just mean 'I am Kabyle' but rather emit identifications such as 'I refuse to speak Arabic' or 'I don't accept the Arabic cultural hegemony' (Laroussi, 1997: 27). The Berber and specifically Kabyle identity is thus expressed through language, in opposition to other identities. Scholars such as Quandt (1972, 1998), Chaker (1998), and Roberts (1981, 2003) have discussed Kabyle political activism, which I briefly will look into. However, first I will provide a sketch of the political landscape of the region, to present some of the key organizations, in the Berberist movement. Two political parties, the FFS (Socialist Forces Front) and the RCD (Rally for Culture and Democracy), have developed over the years, with somewhat different agendas.

FFS was founded just after independence in 1963 and after being banned in Algeria continued its work from France. Aït Ahmed, its founder, returned from exile in 1989 and re-established the FFS under the new legislation that established the right to organize politically. Aït Ahmed is one of the historical chiefs from the liberation war and the 1963 insurrection, and since become one of Kabylia's most well known political figures.

Saïd Saadi, former member of FFS and former leader of MCB, established RCD in 1989. RCD also has a strong emphasis on Kabyle issues in their political program. Their platform calls for a separation of religion and state, a removal of the sections of the constitution that makes Algeria an Arab state, and an official recognition of Thamazight. They also call for the instatement of the 1956 *Soummam Charter* for a more democratic Algeria[46]. Several of its members are former FFS members.

Another strong organization is the MCB (Berber Culture Movement), which has played an important role in the 1994–1995 school boycotts and strikes that eventually led to

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[45] Quote from Quandt, 1972, cited in Roberts (1981: 168) 'There is no Kabyle problem; Kabylia is a region like any other in the country'.

the formation of the HCA (High Commission for Amazighté). MCB is a cultural organization, but has a strong focus on political activism. It split into two fractions, one working very closely with the RCD. The fractions split over the issue of the formation of the HCA. The HCA was formed by the state in 1995, and many activists were split over whether or not to seek employment with or support the HCA

The HCA, contrary to the other organizations, claims to be apolitical but suffers from constraints as a government-funded organisation. Another challenge is that they have been unable to replace their late President Mohammed Idir Aït Amrane, who passed away in October 2004. Hence, the HCA now only operates with a partial leadership under their Secretary-General, and this may affect their cooperation with the State. Several of the HCA staff are previous members of the other mentioned organizations.

The most recently established are the CADC (Coordination of the Aarsh Daïrat and Communes) and the MAK (Movement for Autonomy in Kabylia), formed during the riots in 2001. The CADC rejects the legitimacy of all Algerian political parties, including the FFS and RCD. Their initial role was closely tied to organizing the demonstrations and protests. The foundation of the CADC has been described by themselves as that of a traditional Kabyle *ʿarš* (tribe or in plural *Ạ̄ʿrāš*, tribal confederation), one could have expected the CADC to dissolve immediately after the protests had died down, as a traditional ʿarš would have. Instead, they have remained in place and expanded their role as the primary negotiation partner to the authorities in 2004 and in 2005. The CADC also runs local activities in Kabylia such as Summer University courses, and in May 2005, they were constructing a commercial centre in Cité Genêts in the centre of Tizi Ouzou. The MAK (Movement for Autonomy in Kabylia), actively promotes the idea of an autonomous Kabylia. They have received much attention from the Press but have not managed to inspire much support within Kabylia. The leader of MAK, Ferhat Mehenni, is a former member of RCD and a former President of MCB.

With the exception of the CADC, who was mainly recognized by the younger generation, most of the organizations have drawn activists from the same pool. To illustrate, Ferhat Mehenni, leader of MAK, is former president of the MCB and member of the RCD. Saïd Saadi, the leader of the RCD is a former member of the FFS. The Kabyle movement is diversified, but at the same time noticeably reliant upon a few main activists. The CADC represents a definite generational break. The fact that it was the CADC who people in 2001 gave support to dealing with the government could mean that the CADC represents a generational shift. With their relatively young leadership, they do seem to represent the

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[46] The full manifest can be found at http://www.rcd-algerie.org/Notre%20projet.htm, accessed 30 September

majority of the population who are below thirty years, more than other parties such as RCD and FFS[47]. The two latter are likely to represent the elder generation and their views.

3.6.1 Kabyle developments

The name Kabylia has a history of its own. According to some sources, it stems from the Arabic word *qabīla* (plural *al-qabā'il*) which means 'the tribes'. This understanding associates the name with the territories of certain tribes. Roberts (1981) suggests that the term may have been used indiscriminately for any hill-folk or tribal group. He considers that this implies a designation of the region as a tribal area, as opposed to non-tribal or de-tribalized societies in towns and surrounding districts. It is common to integrate Arabic loanwords according to Berber grammar and *thaqbilt* (from *qabīla*) refers to the largest stable political organizational unit, by ethnographers called 'confederation'. According to Roberts (1981), the meaning of *thaqbilt* as confederation supports the above understanding of *al-qabā'il* as a tribal area. The word *thaqbilt* is grammatically constructed in the same manner as other Berber nominal forms such as *Thamazight* and *Thaqbaylit* or *Thamheqranit* (the last example is from the Arabic word *ḥaqra*). Another word for confederation or tribe[48] is *ʿarš* (plural *ʿurūš* / *āʿrāš*), the term that was employed by the CADC in 2001. There also exists a second interpretation of *al-qabā'il* that the term stems from the translation of the same root (q-b-l) but based on the verb form, and the meaning 'to accept'. In this sense *al-qabā'il* would mean those who have accepted Islam. Language or words have a tendency to change meaning with time and in response to new realities and experiences. It is problematic to try to transfer meaning backwards in time. It would require a careful study of how the term was applied in written sources over time. Suffice here to say that there are two possible interpretations of the meaning of *al-qabā'il*, and I will rely on the first understanding of the term, meaning 'the tribes'.

Under the French occupation Kabylia was applied as a name for a specific geographical area and its inhabitants, now known as *kabyles* (Roberts, 1981). This is also the version that is found in modern Arabic dictionaries such as Wehr (1994: 868). *Al-qabā'il* today refers to a specific geographical area in Algeria that is divided into several communes and mainly the two provinces (*wilāya*) of Bejaïa and Tizi Ouzou. In modern times, it is only the Berber-speaking inhabitants of this area that are referred to, and refer to themselves, as

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2005).

[47] Both the leaders of FFS and RCD have been leaders of earlier revolts. Aït Ahmed in 1963 and Saadi in 1980.

[48] ʿarš can also mean throne. In Wehr, it is noted that the understanding of the word as 'tribe' is specific for the Maghrib (Wehr: 2004: 704).

kabyles or *leqbayel* (sing. *aqbaylī*) and who distinguish their Berber language from the others by the term *Thaqbaylit*.

Kabylia is today separated into, what in English is referred to as, the Lesser and Greater Kabylias. The latter, Greater Kabylia stretches between the Mediterranean and the Djurdjura mountains and Tizi Ouzou. The French know it as 'la haute Kabylie', while in Arabic it is referred to as *al-qabā'il al-kubrā*, and it is this area that is the centre of the cultural and political Berberist movement in Post-colonial times, and also the area that has the highest number of Berberophones. Lesser Kabylia is linguistically speaking more mixed, with a higher degree of Arabophones. Therefore when speaking of the 'Kabyle question' and the Kabyle movement in general, this is most often in reference to Greater Kabylia, with a main centre in the city Tizi Ouzou. Although lesser Kabylia, with Bejaïa as its main urban centre was important in the spread of the 2001 riots and the El Kseur platform (named after the village in Lesser Kabylia), Berberists in this area did not play an equally active role under previous Kabyle protests, notably the 1963 insurgency and the 1980 uprising (Roberts, 1981, ICG, 2003).

Roberts furthers the analysis of the Kabyle question by talking of a Kabyle exception as having developed from two factors; the emergence of a Kabyle bourgeoisie and the economic and cultural integration of Kabylia. These two factors were both fostered during the colonial and early Post-colonial years. The result has been, an emergence of what Roberts defines as Kabyle nationalism. It may perhaps not be a true nationalism, as it is not separatist in character, but it has involved a strong demand for cultural autonomy (Roberts, 1981).

According to Roberts, Greater Kabylia has had a somewhat different development than the overall Algerian society following independence. Roberts (1981: 170) further argues for the existence of a distinct Kabyle community because the Kabyles have a common language, common territory, common culture and common economic life. Roberts traces a long history to demonstrate the existence of a conscious identity as *qbā'ilī* among the tribes in the Djurdjura who were engaged in trade migration, and consequently had collective interests. However, it was not until the French colonization that this term became a common denominator for all of todays Greater and Lesser Kabylia (Roberts: 1981: 187). Furthermore, when the French colonization policies restructured society, and its labour market, the Kabyle trade turned toward France. This means that inhabitants of Greater Kabylia (especially males) developed French as their new second language, and this contributed to a cultural development diverging from that of the rest of Algeria (Roberts, 1981: 189). Roberts has thus

argued in order to demonstrate the pre-colonial and colonial development of a distinct Kabyle identity.

A support for the argument that Kabylia has experienced a special political development can be found in the 1990 election results[49]. FIS won in all the main regions of the country, except in Kabylia (Dillman, 1992: 35). An explanation of this may be that Kabylia had a political alternative and that FIS, just as much as the government, represented a threat to the Kabyle cultural and linguistic agenda. Islamists carried out several attacks on Kabylia during the 1990s, often accompanied by verbal threats. This includes such incidents as a call in September 1990 by a FIS leader from Aïn Taya (near Algiers) for *ǧihād* against Kabylia in order to bring it back into the Islamic fold (MAR 2005). The referral to 'Islamic fold' can be understood as Kabylia engaging in heresy or un-orthodox religious worship, *bidʿa* (plural *bidaʿ*). Effort or exertion (*ǧihād*), most likely violent effort in this context, should be exerted in order to bring them back to orthodoxy, which consists of a version of Arab-Sunni cult, deemed dogmatic by the Islamists in question. Another example of attacks on the Berber cultural expression was in April 1991, when over 200 Islamists were convicted for stoning a Berber music concert (MAR 2005). Later, Kabyle militias engaged in skirmishes with different groups of radical Islamists hiding in the Kabyle mountain areas. The latter type of violence is more typical of the violence between civilians (and their militias) and the radical Islamist groups in general and cannot be said to be in the same category as the first two examples that directly targeted a Berber cultural expression.

Quandt sees the repressive politics of the Chadli government in the 1980s and the violent crackdown on the 1980 revolt to be "laying the groundwork for an outspoken cultural movement with the potential of rallying support from some 10 to 20 percent of society. Among its demands were greater democracy" (Quandt, 1998: 36). Quandt describes the Berbers as the major ethnic minority (1998). He also sees the Kabyles to have been the most significant politically active of this group and the most prominent in the Berberist movement. However, Quandt is not convinced that this movement is significant on the national state level.

While Quandt is more sceptical of Kabylia having any impact on national politics, Chaker (1989, 1992 & 1998) sees the Berberist movement as the only real popular movement in Algeria. Both Chaker and Benrabah (1999) are concerned with what they see as a marginalization of Algeria's most authentic identity. Their research has a clear view of what they see as the state's exclusion of the Berbers at the cost of the development of an Arab

[49] These were Algeria's first open elections.

nation. Much of their works have not only been aimed at establishing the authenticity but saving it from oblivion by raising consciousness and knowledge about both its history and language. Chaker (1998) also refers to a specific different development in Kabylia due to some of the same factors as Roberts has pointed out.

While initially judging Kabylia's political role as important, Roberts seems more sceptical of recent developments. In comparing the 2001 riots and political movements to those of 1963 and 1980, he finds the 2001 riots lacking in political vision. The level of political savoir-faire and organization in his view had dropped compared with earlier Kabyle protests (ICG, 2003; Roberts, 1981; 2003).

The common economic life has been more or less destroyed by today. Migrant remittances that for long has been part of Kabylia's economy, is also diminishing as the distance between the Diaspora and the original community grows (ICG; 2003). On the other hand, the notion of a common culture has perhaps become increasingly manifest, and with a more politicized culture being used to cement Kabyle identity. Factors that may have contributed to such a development are the state culture project, the arabicization programs and laws that forbade administrative units to use any other language than Arabic. This may have led to a perception of discrimination. At the same time, there were cultural arenas in which to disseminate this view. The large Kabyle Diaspora in France also played an important role in political mobilization and sustaining political organizations. For instance, the FFS, banned from its formation until 1989, was active in France. Lastly, the intellectuals could turn to French academic institutions when they were barred from Algerian universities.

3.6.2 The effect of national developments

The most important condition for the growth of the Kabyle Berberist movement was perhaps the right to form political organizations and associations, implemented in 1989. If we look at the HCA statistics of Amazigh cultural organizations, 620 Amazigh organizations formed in the period between 1990 and 2004 (HCA, 2004b). This means that people more openly can discuss different political and cultural agendas. The Berberist movement thus entered a new reality of enhanced political freedom, a worsened economic situation, and a huge youth bulge (the majority of the population is under thirty). The socio-political and economic problems have also increased enormously and the horrors of the Islamist violence and incapacity of the state to deal with the Islamists has perhaps furthered the loss of the regime's legitimacy. The graffiti sprayed on walls in Tizi Ouzou in 2001, demonstrated a lack of faith in the future and the value of their own lives with the words *les balles ne pouvaient pas nous tuer parce que on est déja morts* (bullets cannot kill us because we are already dead) (interview with Merahi, 24

May 2005). There is a definite distrust toward the authorities, despite that several steps acknowledging Amazigh culture and language have actually been taken. This is mostly due to the lack of any real change resulting from policies such as the previously mentioned constitutional amendments.

While commemorating every year the 1980 Berber Spring revolt and drawing on historical events, the current generation does not fully share the experiences or look up to the role models of the 1970s. The young generation of activists has also developed a partially new agenda, based on the economic and social realities felt on a national level and not only in Kabylia.

These new developments as well as the historical factors described by Roberts and Chaker above are all relevant to understanding why Kabylia is a region that continuously challenges the central authority. Through the course of the colonial as well as the post-Independence years there has emerged a specific political-cultural identity among an economic and administrative middle class who were not dependent on the Arabic elites in Algiers, Oran or Constantine. The continuous mobilization was based on political alternatives that developed in this environment. At the same time, due to this process, the Berberist movement as a brand of political-cultural activism has been tailored for Kabyle conditions. This may also have contributed to the containment of the activism mainly to Kabylia, and not far beyond. New analyses have to be made in the wake of the new economic, demographic and political realities and the fact that the situation on the national level after years of violent conflict and disappointment with the lack of policy reforms, has led to a potential convergence of Kabyle with national interests. The Kabyle activists picked up the widespread problems of unemployment and corruption, and a critique of the government for not acting on these problems, in 2001. As a result, riots and unrest broke out across the country. This change of the national political agenda, may lead to a potentially different role for Kabyle activism on the national level, if it is not perceived as too regionalist.

4. 'Printemps Noir': The events in 2001

The earlier Berberist movement I have described mainly drew on the same pool of activists. However, I believe there is a marked generational gap between these groups and the organization that developed in 2001. As discussed above, while Kabylia may have had a special economic and political development, in 2001 a national situation made the Kabyle crisis have a national impact. This has never happened before in the history of the Berberist movement. The material or socio-political and economic grievances shared by the population

at large were the common denominators that led the riots to spread across the country. I believe that this national attention played its part in forcing the state to take different action than suppression of a regional revolt. In addition, the national focus presented a challenge to the political agenda of the Berberist movement. Therefore, it is interesting to look closer into what happened in Kabylia in April 2001 and what happened in June when riots spread across the country.

Despite the initial violence in 2001, where 123 people died in confrontations with the Gendarmerie or Police, the Kabyle insurrection is best defined within what one could call unarmed insurrection or civil disobedience. The protesters used actions such as demonstrations, sackaging of government offices, political boycotts and illegal strikes, which are all actions that can be defined within the limits of civil disobedience or non-violent action (Schock, 2005). Gurr (1993: 93) defines three forms of strategies of political action that a communal group can use to pursue their interests: *non-violent protest, violent protest,* and *rebellion*. Protest typically aims at persuading, pressurizing, or threatening officials to change their policies toward the group. Rebellion aims at achieving more structural changes in the power relationship between the groups. In the case of the Berberist movement, the pattern throughout the years has been to engage in non-violent, and at times violent, protest. In the immediate vicinity of Tizi Ouzou, there are mountain areas that the Kabyle guerrilla used in 1963–64, and the Islamist guerrillas used from the 1990s until today. Weapons are still available in the region, and the militia groups, established in the 1990s as protection against Islamist guerrillas, still exist. This shows that the Berebrist movement could potentially have taken up arms, had an armed rebellion been the aim. These indicators show that non-violence may be part of a conscious strategy rather than the only strategy available.

4.1 A word on the sources

The International Crisis Group (ICG)[50] conducted an extensive series of interviews related to the events in April 2001, and these were published as an ICG report in 2003. Hugh Roberts, who has long academic experience with Kabylia, was responsible for the report. Based on interviews and commentaries by Algerian activists, politicians and academics, the report represents a unique collection of accounts, and I have therefore chosen to rely on this report regarding the actual events in 2001. Regarding how the media treated the question of the riots and the spread of riots, I rely on Algerian newspaper articles from 12–14 June 2001. The events that took place in 2001 happened in a period where Algerian media had achieved a

certain level of freedom of press. I find that the response to the events varied in different newspapers but the most striking difference is found between *El Moudjahid* and the rest.

Al-Habar is an Arabic weekly newspaper, one of the few that also circulates in Kabylia. *El Moudjahid* is the most well-known of the earlier 'state media'. It continues to be the most important media tool for the regime, next to the national television channel, although it is published in French rather than Arabic. *El Moudjahid* is rarely found in newsstands in Tizi Ozou, Kabylia's main city. *El Watan*, *Le Matin*, *La Liberté*, and *Le jeune indépandant* are all more or less critical and independent newspapers. Of the newspapers, *al-Habar* is in Arabic while *El Moudjahid*, *El Watan*, *Le Matin*, *La Liberté*, and *Le jeune indépandant* are in French. The editor of *Le Matin*, Mohamed Benichou, is currently in jail. *La Liberté* has also been in conflict with the regime, and so has *El Watan* has, notably in 1993, 1994, 1996, and 1998. It is currently the state that owns the printing offices that are used by the newspapers, and this is one of the weak points for Algeria's freedom of the press (APF, 2005). *Le Matin* may seem to have if not a connection to Kabylia, at least sympathy for more than the socio-political cause. It had its logo printed in Tifinagh during the 2001 riots, and also published an open letter from CADC. All newspapers have internet editions as well as regular paper editions. The quality of the internet sites vary, though all are within an acceptable standard that enables readers to follow them regularly. Most of the articles from the period in 2001 are based on the paper editions. For a statistical overview I would like to mention that a quick count revealed that of 46 national media sources (Radio, TV, and newspaper media), 16 are in Arabic, 25 are in French, and 5 are in English. This table shows how, despite the laws regulating language, Arabic is not the main media language. The prevalence of French in media and business life is something noted by most researchers (Gill, 1999).

[50] The International Crisis Group is an independent, non-profit, non-governmental organisation, with over 110 staff members on five continents, working through field-based analysis and advocacy to prevent and resolve deadly conflict. More information available at http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm.

Table 1: Linguistic distribution of national media

Broadcast Media		Newspaper Media		Press Agencies	
ENTV	ARA	Ech Chaab	ARA	Agence Algerienne d'Information*	ENG
Radio Algerienne*	ARA	El Khabar*	ARA	Agence Algerienne d'Information*	FRA
Radio Algerienne*	FRA	El Khabar*	ENG	Agence Photo Presse	FRA
		El Khabar*	FRA	Algerie Presse Service*	ARA
		El Moudjahid	FRA	Algerie Presse Service*	ENG
		El Watan	FRA	Algerie Presse Service*	FRA
		El Youm	ARA	New Press Algerie	FRA
		Journal Officiel	ARA		
		La Tribune	FRA		
		Liberté	FRA		
		Akher Saa	ARA		
		Al Fadjr	ARA		
		Algiers Post	ENG		
		All Headline News	ENG		
		Le Buteur	FRA		
		Les Debats	FRA		
		Echourouk El Youmi	ARA		
		El Djazair News	ARA		
		El Heddaf	ARA		
		El Kechfa (satire)	FRA		
		El Massa	ARA		
		Essabah	ARA		
		L'Expression	FRA		
		Horizons	FRA		
		Info Soir	FRA		
		Le Jeune Independant	FRA		
		Le Jour d'Algerie	FRA		
		La Nouvelle Republique	FRA		
		Sawt Al Ahrar	ARA		
		Le Soir d'Algerie	FRA		
		La Tribune	FRA		
		La Depeche de Kabylie	FRA		
		El Waha	ARA		
		La Voix de l'Oranie	FRA		
		Le Quotidien d'Oran	FRA		
		Le Petit Tlemcenien	FRA		

Note: Only media that is of Algerian ownership has been included. There are many, especially Kabyle media sources that are distributed from other countries. These have not been included since I wish to look at the national distribution.
* These media sources are counted as different for each language they appear in. This is because the content sometimes differs when targeting different language groups. The list is taken from http://www.abyznewslinks.com/alger.htm, accessed 17 October, 2005.

4.2 The initial events

I have chosen to refer to the demonstrations and riots in general as 'events' or 'incidents', as these are the terms most often used by my sources. The Arabic newspapers use mainly the word *ʾal-āḥdāṯ* (sing. *ḥadaṯ*), that translates into events, incidents, or phenomenon, but also misdeed and misfortune (Wehr, 1994:189).

The initial event that made thousands of young Kabyle men descend into the streets, took place on 18 April 2001, the date of the commemoration of the Berber Spring revolt in 1980. That day the gendarmerie in Beni Douala[51] arrested 18–year-old Massinissa Guermah who later was shot inside the gendarmerie station. The incident was described by the police forces as an accidental shooting of a 26–year-old criminal (ICG, 2003). However, the autopsy revealed that Guermah was shot with two rounds of machine gun fire; something experts doubted could happen by accident. The correct age and occupation (student) of Guermah was

[51] Some Kabyle sources use the name Ath Douala. 'Ath' is the Kabyle term for tribe, corresponding with the Arabic term 'banū' (dialectal, beni).

also known. Guermah's fellow students protested and were soon joined by others. The Gendarmerie attempted to arrest others protesting against the arrest and vilification of Guermah.The ICG concludes that the gendarmerie acted initially with great arrogance by the manner in which they tried to cover up the incident, and that this triggered additional anger.

Protests and rioting escalated, while the gendarmerie responded with violent actions such as firing real ammunition at demonstrators. Thirty-eight people were killed between 25 and 28 April and the final number reached 123 dead, and several thousands injured (ICG, 2003). The 2001 revolt hence became named *Printemps Noir* (Black Spring), alluding both to the former revolt in the spring of 1980 and to the grief over those who lost their lives. On 30 April, Bouteflika in a televised address recognized the problems Kabylia shares with other regions, but then dwelled on 'the identity crisis' and referred to 'a constitutional dimension which could only be addressed in the context of a revision to the constitution'. The government's first reaction was to blame the events on 'Kabyle identity demands' and not focus on the incident at Beni Douala and the behaviour of the Gendarmerie troops.

Later, the state was forced by popular outrage to commission an independent report by an ad hoc committee on the violent incidents and deaths. While the commission was given a unique amount of freedom in the political history of Algeria, and the published results were quite critical of the role of the authorities, no one actual was named as responsible. Mohand Issad, the leader of the commission, himself a Kabyle and a jurist, stated that the gendarmes had likely shot to kill. Issad was critical of their claim of self defence, as several of the dead were shot in the back, and none of the protesters had been shot inside the Gendarmerie compounds (this claim is echoed by a Kabyle lawyer Maître Mokrane Aït Larbi in an interview with ICG) (ICG, 2003: 9).

The Issad report was also critical to whether the gendarmes acted on their own initiative since they overstepped their mandate to such a high degree. The gendarmes are a regional policing force built on the French model. While they are responsible for order, they do not have police status, meaning there are some restrictions on their mandate in relation to policing actions. The ICG report interprets the Issad report findings to be twofold: a) That the violence in Kabylia was provoked and prolonged by the gendarmes who exceeded their mandates by firing live ammunition at demonstrators without a legitimate cause for self-defence and b) that this behaviour could not be explained as individual 'excesses'. This would mean that either the command had lost control of its forces, or external forces were manipulating sections of the Gendarmerie command. The latter implies that general Bousteila,

who took command of the national Gendarmerie in February 2000, had in fact been usurped by senior power-holders (ICG, 2003: 9).

Despite the obvious criticism in the Issad report and the government's acceptance of its findings, many oppositional actors as well as other parts of the regime rejected it. In Kabylia, local actors were disappointed that no officials were held responsible. The ICG report quotes Ikhlef Bouäichi (FFS National Secretariat) that "the Commission pursued a horizontal, not a vertical investigation" and that the report was "telling Algerians what they knew already" (ICG, 2003: 9). The first quote means that there was no investigation into the cause and effect in the power structure itself, and the second quote that as such the media had already covered what the report did. The Popular National Assembly (APN) were opposed to the conclusion in the Issad report and issued a second inquiry and subsequent report, which concluded that the reason for events was indeed individual excesses on the part of certain gendarmes. However, few accepted this second conclusion as serious (ICG, 2003: 9).

Other criticisms stated in the ICG report regard the fact that the authorities did not tell the gendarmes to stop shooting no matter what led them to shoot in the first place. Regardless whether Guermah had been a criminal, that did not legitimate shooting him. The ICG identified two main factors that stand out as having provoked public outrage. The first is the way in which gendarmerie and authorities handled the death of Guermah, and tried to cover up events. Secondly, the authorities did not intervene to stop the violence instigated several places by gendarmerie brigades, thereby allowing violence to escalate. Lastly, no matter the disputed nature of the Issad report or promised actions by the regime, the authorities have taken no significant action.

4.3 The channelling and organization of the protests

Within weeks of the initial protests, several organisations attempted to take charge of the demonstrations. Three key actors were the FFS (Socialist Forces Front), the RCD (Rally for Culture and Democracy), and the CADC (Coordination of the Aarchs, Daïras and Communes). Of these, CADC came out as the key organizer.

FFS and RCD are as described above the two political parties with especially strong ties to Kabylia. This 'regionalist' label has ensured both parties a majority of the vote from Kabylia, but made them marginal on the national level (see the 2002 ICG report on Algeria's municipal elections for more details). Neither party managed to channel the protesters and their actions to the same degree as CADC. The ICG report concludes that a reason for this failure on the part of the RCD was the inclination to see the protests as motivated mainly by the *identity issue*. The FFS was considered to be trying to impress central authority, or

enhance their own political status, rather than act in solidarity with the grievances expressed by the rioters. The bureau chief of the Tizi Ouzou newspaper, *La Dépèche de Kabylie*, Khaled Zahem, (according to the ICG) said that "the FFS and RCD have had no influence on public opinion or on the course of events, because they have had no capacity to channel anything" (ICG, 2003: 26). In a poll the following year, 48.8 percent of the asked persons responded that they had no faith in the political parties[52]. One can assume that the Kabyle population equally represented such a view. This may be yet another reason that FFS and RCD failed in taking control of the demonstrators, since they were not seen as representing the Kabyle population or movement but as representing the political system.

Arezki Yahoui and Chabane Aït El Hadj, founders of CADC, refer to the political rivalry between the two parties as one reason they were unable to represent the masses (ICG, 2003: 26)[53]. A gigantic march in Tizi Ouzou on 21 May 2001 drew over 500.000 people and clearly demonstrated the power of the CADC in channelling the mass protests. The CADC became known under many names such as *les arrush* (tribal confederation) and *mouvement citoyen* (Citizen Movement). Key members such as Belaïd Abrika are from Cité Genêts, an area in Tizi Ouzou that would become the epicentre for the protests and clashes with the security forces. 'Quartier virulent' was how one source referred to it, while another cited the slogan 'Les Genêts vont faire tomber l'état'. (Interviews in Tizi Ouzou, 24 May 2005). The residents of Les Genêts have been in the centre of the national attention on the riots, which means the clashes between demonstrators and police not only happened on their doorsteps, but so did arrests, and political rallies.

Of the 123 persons killed in Kabylia, only a few were women. The women listed on the 'martyrs list' died mostly indirectly of police actions. For instance, Yamina Aribi, age 70, died of aspyxiaton caused by tear gas. One exception may be Nadia Aït Abba, age 30, who was shot in her friend's apartment in Aïn el Hammam[54]. The escalation of riots and demonstrations were related to both the death of Guermah and the following cover up attempt. There seems to be evidence of a targeted anger as much set off by socio-political issues as identity issues. Especially since the RCD's attempt to promote the identity issues seems to have worked against them. Kabylia shares with other Algerian cities the plague of housing shortage, unemployment and economic decline. The Islamist conflict that lasted throughout the 1990s has in many ways contributed to a freeze in economic development

[52] Temlali (2002, in ICG, 2002), the polling sample was 1,144 persons.
[53] Arezki Yahoui and Chabane Aït El Hadj were excluded from the movement for being in favour of a dialogue attempt by the government in December 2001 (Liberté 8 December 2001 and Kabyle.com 30 November 2001, both articles available at http://www.kabyle.com).
[54] See the CICB webpage at http://membres.lycos.fr/cicbgayet/album.html.

besides putting an emotional strain on the population. The suicide rate in Algeria has increased over the years and Kabylia is responsible for a fair share of the statistics (ICG, 2003 and *La Liberté* 18 July 2002). One of the main slogans of the Kabyle rioters were *ulac smah ulac* meaning 'no mercy, none', which made clear that the limit of the demonstrators' patience had been reached. It was under such a slogan that the Gendarmerie in the course of 2001 was forced to abandon their barracks in Kabylia. These factors may also explain in part why the riots spread. However, this says little about what role identity had in the initial outbreak, and in the continued mobilization in Kabylia. First of all the fact that the Guermah incident took place at a very culturally sensitive time in Kabylia (the commemoration of the Berber Spring) may have contributed to the riots escalating. Furthermore, the main organizer of the protests, the CADC, cast themselves in the traditional role of tribal confederation, *ʿarš*, and clearly used not only Berber but also Kabyle traditional symbolism.

On 17 May 2001, delegates from the CADC produced a platform named the *Illoula platform*. It set up a list of immediate actions, which included boycott of the Issad report and boycotts of all national cultural and sporting events, as well as ostracizing the Gendarmerie until their definitive departure (ICG, 2003: 36–37). The platform was directed specifically at the youth who had participated in the protest. Barely a month later, on 11 June, another platform was drawn up, named *El Kseur platform*. In this platform, the demands had become more radical: an immediate democratic restructuring of all authorities, an immediate recognition of all Amazigh demands (without referendum), and an immediate departure of all national security forces (such as riot police) as well as Gendarmerie troops from Kabylia. The platform also demanded an immediate economic emergency plan as well as a national plan against the pauperization of the Algerian people (ICG, 2003: 38–39). The wording in the *Illoula platform* was more general and less specific. The *El Kseur platform* defined more specifically and in stronger terms the demands as well as how the demands should be executed, such as 'recognition without referendum'. This not only specified but also delimited the state's room for manoeuvre. Furthermore, the manifest stated that all demands were equally non-negotiable: in short, all or nothing.

4.4 The riots spread

The initial protests took place in Beni Douala, Tizi Ouzou, and the surrounding areas, but later spread to cities in other communes, such as Annaba, Khenchela and Skikda, according to *al-H̲abar* on 13 June. When the riots spread in Khenchela, in the Aurès region, they were reportedly triggered by anger over the constant lack of water and of an alleged aggression towards a young girl from a police officer. However, *La Liberté* also reports on riots in

Skikda that apparently were set off by the cancellation of a football match. In this case, unarmed police received the anger of the streets unprovoked and the downtown area of the city was sackaged by rioters (Belferag, 2001).

It took over a month before the riots spread outside of Kabylia. Still, if the reason behind the events were mainly 'Kabyle identity demands' as claimed by the government, then it is not likely they would have spread at all. As it was, the riots were contained inside Kabylia the entire month of May and the beginning of June. At that point the riots spread fast and in eastward as well as westward directions. The rioters were mostly young men, either unemployed or in school. The slogans, 'you cannot kill us because we are already dead', and 'pouvoir assassin', became characteristic of the struggle and may have found susceptible audiences in other regions. They conveyed some of the despair or frustration with which the demonstrators initially descended into the streets.

4.4.1 Comments in the press 2001

When the riots started to spread, the national media as we shall see here, and later in chapter five, placed little importance on the identity issues or the aspects of the CADC that were rooted in the concept of a tribal confederation or even the language issue. Rather they emphasized the socio-political grievances that Kabylia shared with the rest of the country and, to different degrees; emphasized this as the most important aspect of the movement.

On 12 June, *al-H̱abar* explained the reasons for the outbreak of violence in Annaba as demonstrations of protest regarding the absence of water and the suffering that almost grew into actions of sabotage (*masīratu l-iḥtiǧāǧiyyati ḥawl ʾinʿidāmi l-myāhi wa l-buʾsi kādat tataḥawwalu ilā ʿamaliyyātin taẖrībin fī ʿanāba*)[55].

On the same date, in an article in *La Liberté*, Rachid Hanifi, former national secretary of the FFS, demanded that the state should cease to accuse contestations of being expressions of a foreign interference, "nos responsables politiques devraient cesser d'accuser toute revendication d'être l'expression d'une ingérence étrangère". The article strongly denied that the identity issue was the cause of the riots.

On 13 June *al-H̱abar* quite critically assessed the government handling of the crisis as superficial, as *makiyāǧ* (makeup)[56]. On the same date, *al-H̱abar* reported that protests and confrontations had spread to other regions (*al-ʾiḥtiǧāǧātu wa l-muwāǧahātu tantaqilu ʾilā manāṭiqa ʾuẖrā*)[57]. They listed the following places, Khenchela, Oum el Bouaqi, Bouira,

[55] al-h̲abar, 12 June, front page, 2001a.
[56] Sālīmān, 2001. *al-h̲abar*, 13 June, p. 3.
[57] al-h̲abar, 13 June, front page, 2001c.

Annaba, and Skikda. Between 12 and 14 June 2001, the events in Khenchela were covered day-by-day by several newspapers. On 12 June there were four articles in *al-Ḫabar* on the riots, on 13 June there were twelve articles, and on 14 June there were ten articles. During this period, in a total of twenty-six articles of which all were front page news, *al-Ḫabar* did not mention ethnic or cultural demands as causes for the protests. What they do mention specifically is the fact that the acts are mainly perpetrated by 'local youths' (*al-šabāb al-maḥallī*) and 'sons of the city' (*abnā' al-madīna*), and focus on the anger directed at the authorities[58]. On 13 June, an editorial also present the issue of political representation as a source of conflict[59]. For instance, Khenchela lies in the Aurès region, the second largest Berber community in Algeria. However, in period 12–14 June, there was no mention in *al-Ḫabar* of a link between the outbreaks of violence there and Berberism, or any suggestion of a joint Berberist project between the Aurès and Kabylia. On 14 June Raḍwān (2001a) reports that new discord is breaking out in the region of Kabylia, but neither here is there any specific mention of ethnic factors as motivating the violence. On 14 June Raḍwān (2001b) reports on events in Bejaïa without mentioning other factors than material and socio-political[60].

El Moudjahid, who comments on 13 June on how "des médias pyromanes" have fuelled a socalled "culture du chaos", distributes a different view. Unnamed sections of the media were thus blamed for fuelling and exploiting people's misery[61]. By overreacting, the media supposedly played into the hands of the socalled 'godfathers' of democracy, the CADC. However, *El Moudjahid* did not mention Kabyle identity demands or any other form of Berberism. If anything, the national unity was at risk not due to internal discord, but a foreign and subversive element. An opinion piece attacked such elements, describing them as pro-terrorist groups who, for historical and political reasons that are evident, are bitter toward the institutions that have stopped their plans to destabilize the country:

"des milieux étrangers profondement pro-terroristes ressentent de l'amertume face à l'institution qui a mis en échec leurs plans de destabilisation du pays et pour des raisons historiquement et politiquement évidentes".

These elements were further described as anti-Algerian. The article refers to them as an external-internal conspiracy, which has not yet revealed its secrets, and that an anti-Algerian coalition has been in place for some time. Lastly, the article compares how this opportunism

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[58] al-ẖabar, 12 June, front page, 2001a; Daḥrīz, 2001. *al-ẖabar*, 13 June, p. 2; Maṣmūdī, 2001a. *al-ẖabar*, 12 June, p. 3; Maṣmūdī, 2001b. *al-ẖabar*, 13 June, p. 2 & Nūr l-Dīn, 2001. *al-ẖabar*, 12 June, p. 3.
[59] al-ẖabar, editorial, 13 June, p. 3.
[60] Raḍwān, 2001a, *al-ẖabar*, 12 June, p. 3. & Raḍwān, 2001b, *al-ẖabar*, 14 June, p. 3
[61] Djamel K., 2001. *El Moudjahid*, nos commentaries, 13 June, p. 3.

curiously in many ways resembles the manipulation by the party that was dissolved after the riots in 1988.

> "un complot externe-interne qui n'a pas encore révélé ses secrets […] qu'une coalition anti-algérienne est en place depuis un temps [..] Cet opportunisme rappellent curieusement par bien des aspects la manipulation par le parti dissous des émeutes de 1988".

The last snide most likely is directed at the CADC who defined themselves strongly as a democratic movement[62]. The choice of words in the article is clearly in favour of the government. The ANP (Popular National Assembly) is defined as 'glorieuse', while its contesters are nameless, mainly defined as members of a foreign conspiracy against the Algerian nation[63]. In contrast to *al-Habar*, *Le Matin*, and *La Liberté,* the *El Moudjahid* edition also avoided showing any pictures of the riots.

La Liberté covered the June events with emphasis on the failure of the local authorities to provide social services as the main reasons for riots (émeutes) in El Tarf, Hjar Eddis and Derradji-Rdjem (semi-rural areas near Annaba)[64]. Regarding the violence in Khenchela one of their journalists, Khelifi stated that "c'est parti de l'agression d'une jeune fille par un militaire". Furthermore, he explained how the young woman as well as Guermah were "deux citoyens des categories les plus vulnérables de la société algérienne, victims de représentants de l'État"[65]. Khelifi criticized the government for not showing any signs of making their representatives alter their behaviour toward the citizens. Even when the gendarmeries were declared 'persona non grata' in Kabylia, the authorities still refuse to communicate or relate to the population. Khelifi pointed to the fact that the young protesters represented the majority of the population, and that "ils exigent des actes et non pas des discourses sur une grandeur nationale qu'ils n'ont pas vécue". On the other hand, Khelifi also identified political stagnation linked to a mythification of the liberation war and those who fought it, as a major obstacle for moving Algerian debates on legitimacy and identity forward.

One may perhaps conclude that the journalists in *La Liberté* were part of the media *El Moudjahid* criticized as 'fuelling chaos'. The views expressed in *La Liberté* follow the trend of focusing on the social aspects of the grievances, such as how the forces meant to protect them instead attacked a young and vulnerable girl and boy. Sections of the media argued that actions by civilians against the authorities even in the form of vandalism, destruction and violations of the law, were if not legitimate actions, at least understandable actions.

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[62] see for instance http://www.aarch.com or http://www.algerie-dz.com/article1448.html
[63] H. A., 2001. *El Moudjahid*, nos commentaries, 13 June: 3.
[64] Bara, 2001. *Liberté*, actualité en question, 12 June.
[65] Khelifi, 2001. *Liberté*, actualité en question, 12 June.

As a short summary, three somewhat different views can be outlined based on this information. The first is the views expressed by the CADC through their platforms (Illoula and El Kseur). These state an equal emphasis on cultural and linguistic demands, with demands for political and economic reforms as well as a judicial investigation of the behaviour of police and Gendarmerie. The cultural demand does not take a backseat to these other issues in the platforms. The second view is that of the majority of the press, who agreed on the importance of the CADC's socio-political and economic concerns, but more or less ignored the cultural demand. This part of the press did not represent the riots as unlawful acts, but rather as expressions of popular anger. A third view is transmitted by *El Moudjahid*, who sees the unrest as unlawful and furthermore as a foreign and subversive manipulation of popular sentiment. In other words, the people were being duped into rioting by forces that were set upon tearing the fabric of Algerian society. In the midst of all this, no part of the press, including *El Moudjahid*, specifically blamed or targeted the Kabyle movement as engaging in unlawful acts or as troublemakers. Hence, *El Moudjahid* claimed that other subversive elements were more or less manipulating the protesters into these actions. *al-Ḫabar* was mainly interested in the material demands regarding political representation. However, there was little attention to the Kabyle movement's cultural agenda.

5. Taking it national

"Pour la dignité, pour tamazight et pour la démocratie"[66]

"The Kabyle crisis was the psychological trigger for the whole of Algeria"[67]

The Berberist movement has never truly separated demands for cultural and linguistic recognition from demands for democratization. The movement seems to consist of two main strands. One that believes in a *nationalist Berberist* project, which takes issue with not only minority rights, but also with the Algerian national culture that their own cultural project challenges. As quoted in the introduction, the Secretary-General of the HCA described this position as the belief that all Algerians are Berbers that have been arabicized. Morsly (1997), also describes a view that Arabophones are as much Berbers as are Berberophones. They use much of the same language and rhetoric as the government on the issues of 'authenticity' and 'identity', and aspire to maintain national unity as the state claims it does.

Another fraction believes in a *Kabyle Berberist* project that does not include or incorporate any of the other Berber groups or any of the Arabophones in the country and their

[66] *La Liberté* 12 June 2001: 4.
[67] The quote is from the ICG report on the events in Kabylia in 2001 (2003: 12).

cultures. It deals only with Kabyle language and Kabyle culture and is therefore strictly regionalist in nature. Furthermore, the latter fraction's opposition to a national Berber or Amazigh concept seems to be the result of disillusionment with the national project rather than anything else. Both sides agree on the language issue; that the state needs to accord Thamazight equal status with Arabic in the constitution immediately and without a referendum. Both parties also demand democracy. While there were several new developments in the way the movement was organized in 2001 and the national attention they gained, these two main strands seem still to be evident. In my view, a *minority cultural* project is secondary to both these main fractions due to the specific nature of Kabyle organization built upon and tailored to Kabyle realities more than to the diverse realities of the different groups identified as Berbers.

In the earlier conflicts with the regime, Kabylia was isolated due to the authoritarian nature of the state. During the 1980 Berber Spring uprising, *Tafsut n Imazighen*, there was no free press or independent politicians to voice opinions. There was an iron ring of military and information control around Kabylia. In many cases information had to go through France before being filtered back into Algeria. This was no longer the case in April 2001. This time there were plenty of press to portray different images of the events. By the time of the June riots, popular opinion did not necessarily see the tension as an outburst of Kabyle grievances. I will attempt to show through the views expressed by the Algerian press in the period 12–14 June 2001 that police brutality, and what was seen, as arrogant power displays by officials, were not Kabyle phenomena alone.. I also wish to describe two actors that represent the two different approaches in the movement today, the CADC (Coordination of ʿArš, Daïras and Communes) and the MAK (Movement for Autonomy in Kabylia). Finally, I will introduce the HCA (High Commission for Amazighté), the first official national body for Amazigh culture, and look at their role in a potential nationalization of the movement.

5.1 The origin and role of les ʿArūš or the Coordination of the ʿArš, Daïras and Communes (CADC)

The CADC appeared as a grassroots movement early on in the 2001 riots. The name *ʿarš* (from Arabic[68]) means tribe and stems from a traditional model of inter village councils that would convene when the region experienced a crisis or threat from the outside. It would dissolve as soon as the problem was solved. On the *ʿarš* official webpage, they state that CADC is exactly the confederation of Kabyle tribes, a type of supreme political institution in

[68] The Arabic plural of *ʿarš* is listed in Wehr (1994: 704) as either *aʿrāš* or *ʿurūš*. However, the Kabyle movement and the Francophone Algerian press tend to use *les arrush* as the plural. This is also a usual way of pronouncing it in Tizi Ouzou.

which the region, through several centuries, always has looked to for temporary services in cases of external aggression.

> "Le mouvement citoyen des Archs est justement la conféderation des tribus Kabyles, une sorte d'institution politique supreme dont la region a toujours recherché les services temporaries dans les cas d'agression extérieure depuis plusieurs siècles".

They further state that the core of the confederation of the Aarchs is the Thadjmaat (Village Committee), the most ancient of known social organization, in the region.

> "le noyau meme de la confederation des Aarchs qui est Thadjmaat (Comité de village) l'organisation sociale la plus ancienne connue des populations de la region".

According to this description, the movement is organized on a) the village council principle and b) a temporary confederate assembly of village councils that would meet in times of external threats. A modern characteristic of the CADC can be seen in the term 'Mouvement citoyen' used by many, also by the movement itself. The movement also states in their self-description that it is a reduced political entity, from the Kabyle society, that has developed progressively. The emergence of the Arch Citizen movement has strongly contributed to the process of change. It has been transformed into a true and adequate political environment, which discusses not only the future of a village of a group of citizens, but the destiny of an entire people and an entire country.

> "une entité politique réduite de la societé Kabyle qui a cependant évolué progressivement […] L'émergence du movement citoyen des Aarchs a fortement participé à l'accéleration du processus changement […] Elle a été transformée en veritable environnement politique adequate discutant non seulement de l'avenir d'un village d'un groupe de citoyens mais du destin de tout un people et de tout un pays".

Here they lay out the more modern political aspirations of representing on a national level. Furthermore, a democratic aspiration, as they state that the organization is a type of modern political organization that is dominated by extremely free and varied debates in transparency that has never been denied. A democracy from the base.

> "un mode d'organisation politique moderne dominé par des débats extrêmement libres et varies dans une transparence jamais démentie. Une démocratie à la base" [69].

It is clear that the *ʿarš* movement is neither a traditional movement nor a temporary organization as the traditional ʾarš was. The movement operates today with three official branches the CADC (Coordination of ʿArš, Daïras and Communes in Tizi Ouzou), CIADC (Inter-*wilāya* Coordination of ʿArš, Daïras and Communes), CICB (Inter-Commune Coordination of Bejaïa), CPWB (Popular Committee of the *wilāya* of Bejaïa), and CCCWB

[69] The entire manifest can be found atwww.aarch.com/mouvement.htm, accessed 25 August 2005.

(Coordination of Citizen Committees of Bouira). In addition, a number of different interest groups are affiliated. Hence, they have expanded rather than dismantled in the years following the 2001 riots.

The control over demonstrators and ability to channel demonstrations into organized marches and boycotts and the *El Kseur platform* has made the *ʿarš* movement the principle actor associated with *Printemps Noir*. In 2004 and 2005, it was CADC who were invited to negotiate with the regime, and it is the *El Kseur platform* drafted by the CADC that form the basis for the talks in 2005. The abysmally low turnout in Kabylia during the 2002 communal elections can also be attributed to the massive boycott campaign of the CADC of *ulac el vut* (no to the vote) (ICG, 2002). It demands not only civil and democratic rights, which were demands shared nationwide, but specific demands for economic priority to Kabylia and an official and immediate recognition of Berber culture and language as described above in chapter four. The signing and adoption of the *El Kseur platform* in the village of El Kseur near Bejaïa became a point of concern for some regarding the future of the struggle. The ICG sees this platform as a negative development (ICG, 2003). The platform was adopted as non-negotiable, a point that the ICG has criticized strongly as destructive to the political process (2003). The ICG report predicted that this platform cost the protest much support and perhaps even made it loose its momentum to make a political impact on the national level. However, the government started a new process of negotiations with the CADC in 2005, and have 'accepted the El Kseur platform in its totality' as the basis for the talks. Hence, the total effect of the El Kseur platform may not yet be clear.

The goals of the *ʿarš* movement, as stated in the *El Kseur platform* and on their website[70], have many national aspects, such as demands for increased freedom of expression and a speeding up of the promised democratization process of 1989. However, the framework remains mostly Kabyle. The focus remains on the victims from the demonstrations in 2001 and their families, and on the language issue, as well as the relationship between government and the region. The CADC disassociates itself from MAK (Movement for Autonomy in Kabylia), but may still be seen as having mostly a regional impact.

5.2 The MAK

Ferhat Mehenni, a Kabyle singer and long-time political activist founded the MAK (Movement for Autonomy in Kabylia) in June 2001[71]. He was active during the 1980 Berber Spring, and worked together with author Kateb Yacine in 1981 on the journal *Tafsut*

[70] www.Aarch.com

distributed by the MCB (Berber Culture Movement). He was appointed president of the MCB in 1993. Mehenni had been one of the co-founders of the RCD (Rally for Culture and Democracy) in 1989. He was arrested several times for his political activism, in 1976, 1980, and 1985–1987. He was onboard the Air France flight that was highjacked by militant Islamists in 1994. In 1995, he immigrated to France, but remained active in the Berberist movement (Hamdi, 2003).

One way of looking at Mehenni's political orientation is that he has become increasingly radical over the years. MAK is the most radical organization in terms of demands for autonomy. No other Kabyle movement has specified a completely autonomist project. Their petition for an autonomous region is aimed at achieving four points: 1) to avoid the repetition of massacres 2) to shelter the region against state violence 3) to guarantee the youth a future of peace, plenitude, and prosperity, and 4) to take charge of language, identity, and culture[72]. Furthermore, the project for autonomy is based on the claim to a Kabyle identity that exists, a priori to that of an Algerian identity. Mehenni states in an address to the Symposium on the Amazigh, 2005 that Kabylia's problem is that they loose their way every time, forgetting the initial reason for their actions, that of the re-conquest of her sovereignty.

> ”Le problème de la Kabylie est qu'elle s'oublie, à chaque fois, en cours de route et perd de vue la raison initiale de son entreprise: celle de la reconquête de sa souveraineté”.

However, in the beginning of his address he says that the demand for autonomy is a last resort to the solution of the Kabyle question, yet to be resolved after 40 years. He goes on to say that They have unsuccessfully tried every path where they counted on meeting the understanding, fraternity, compassion and moral support, of non-Kabyle compatriots, for a struggle that will benefit all of Algeria. They now feel isolated as Kabyles, and seem to have resigned themselves to what the manifest calls 'the worst of solutions.

> “Ce n'est qu'après avoir emprunté sans succès toutes les voies par lesquelles nous escomptions rencontrer, chez nos compatriotes non kabyles, compréhension et fraternité, compassion et soutien moral dans nos luttes au bénéfice de toute l'Algérie, que nous avons été amenés, par la dure réalité de notre isolement de Kabyles, à nous résoudre à la fatalité d'un combat en solitaires pour notre région. C'est une option par défaut plus que par choix. Elle est probablement la pire des solutions... après toutes les autres”[73].

This quote indicates that such a solution is the only choice left after all other means have been exhausted. Nor does he seem optimistic about the choice, since he calls it 'la pire des

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[71] In the ICG report 2003, they set 25 August as the formal launch date for the MAK, but Ferhat Mehenni had begun his agitation early in June already.
[72] http://www.makabylie.info/article.php3?id_article=149, accessed 31 August 2005.

solutions' (the worst of solutions) There is no evident explanation as to why 'all of Algeria' is to benefit from a solution, other than common social tranquillity as beneficial in general. Importantly, he sees Kabylia as isolated in its struggle. His tone seems disillusioned with the project's national side and disappointed with the lack of outside support.

Regarding national identity he goes on to state that "nos concitoyens qui se croient encore être des 'Arabes'". In his view then, the Algerian identity is Berber and the Arab identity is a historical falsification[74]. Unless he is referring to Kabyles in both the case of autonomy and the case of identity, these two points may seem somewhat paradoxical. If the whole of Algeria is Amazigh in its true cultural identity (which in fact also other parts of the Berberist movement claim) the reason for Kabylia to have autonomy based on it being a 'people unto its own', seems contradictory.

He may believe it has become futile to expect the Arabophones to realise their inherent Berber culture. It seems that he has given up convincing Arabophones that the authentic identity is not Arab but Berber. At the same time, his identity construction does not mention or seem to include any other elements than Kabyle elements. His project would demand that the majority conform to the Kabyle minority. In such case, he is as uncompromising as the regime has been in denying people a right to their own culture. Nowhere does Mehenni refer to a pan-Berber minority culture or demands for autonomy. It is all or nothing. Either the entire nation or Kabylia only. In light of his 'either or' policy his autonomist project is not as radical as it may seem at the first glance. Giving up on making the entire Algeria conform to a minority culture leaves him only one option. If Mehenni truly believes that Kabylia possesses a particularity that both colonial France and the independent Algeria has denied and suppressed (Mehenni, 2004), then autonomy could be, at least theoretically, a logic solution to salvage that particularity. However, most would agree that his project is unfeasible.

According to the ICG (2003), Mehenni seemed disappointed with the whole concept of Amazighté (a common culture on a national level), and had opted for Kabylité (local culture on a regional level). In his view, Kabyle parties should not represent national interests nor try to nationalize the Amazigh concept. Mehenni and the MAK have received much support from Professor Salem Chaker in Paris, a prominent figure in the Kabyle Berberist movement. However, he has not gained much political ground in Kabylia with his project. On the MAK webpage, 1,332 people originally signed the petition for autonomy in 2001 and a

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[73] Http://www.makabylie.info/article.php3?id_article=99, accessed 31 August 2005.
[74] For the full address see Http://www.makabylie.info/article.php3?id_article=99

meagre 16 have followed up since[75]. The ICG report claims that the Francophone press received Mehenni surprisingly well when he announced the MAK project in 2001, but several of the francophone newspapers are quite critical as well. *Le Quotidien d'Oran* ran a story on 12 June 2001 entitled, "Ferhat M'henni seul avec son autonomie". Apparently the RCD, FFS, and Fondation Matoub[76], all denounced his demand for autonomy as too extreme. The FFS is to have accused him of being on the payroll of 'de certains groupes occultes du pouvoir'. He is also accused of trying to manipulate the commemoration of the death of singer Lounes Matoub. The article concludes that the divorce has definitively been consummated between Ferhat, the idol image of the 1980s youth, and all political actors as well as the Kabyle associative movement.

> "le divorce est définitivement consommé entre Ferhat, image de l'idole de la jeunesse des années 80 et tous les acteurs politiques et du movement associatif de la Kabylie"' (Djilali, 2001: 2).

Furthermore, the article states that he was rejected categorically by the 'mouvement des jeunes de la Kabylie' (probably a common term for the demonstrators in general)[77].

Mehenni on his part claimed that the FFS and the CADC were actually regionalists as well, because of their demands regarding linguistic and cultural recognition. However, the FFS and CADC have strongly emphasized that their endeavour is nationalist and not regionalist. Rachid Hanifi, the former National Secretary of FFS, rejected this claim in *La Liberté* on 12 June 2001. He writes that M'Henni should remember that the Kabyle martyrs sacrificed their lives for all of Algeria, and not just for a single region… that the martyrs of democracy and of the authentic Algerian-ness have died so that Amazigh-ness, the original language and culture of all the people, can rediscover its natural status, that of a national language alongside Arabic.

> "M. M'henni devrait se rappeler que nos martyrs kabyles de la Révolution ont sacrifié leurs vies pour l'Algérie entière et non pour une seule region…que les martyrs de la démocratie et de la algérianité authentique sont morts pour que l'amazighté, langue et culture d'origine de tout le peuple, retrouve son statut naturel, celui de langue nationale aux côtés de l'arabe. Vouloir aujourd'hui réduire la revendication identitaire de notre jeunesse à la seule Kabylie".

In the article, Hanifi draws on the liberation war and stresses the national sacrifices of the Kabyle region, which should have earned them more recognition in the post war years. This is one of the older grievances of the Berberist movement. He also mentions the liberation war or

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[75] For the list of signatures, see http://www.makabylie.info/article.php3?id_article=149.
[76] Foundation Matoub is an interest organization set up by the sister of Lounes Matoub, a Kabyle singer who was assassinated in 1998.
[77] Djilali, 2001. *Le Quotidien d'Oran*, 12 June, p. 2.

the Revolution as he calls it. Such references are often evoked in debates and serve as a source of political legitimacy. Regarding the identity question, he uses the word 'authentic' to describe the nature of the identity and that Amazigh is the original culture of all Algeria. Hence, he nationalizes the concept. In the same phrase, he also combines the struggle for democracy with the struggle for identity.

> […that the martyrs of democracy and of the authentic Algerian-ness have died so that Amazigh-ness, the original language and culture of all the people, can rediscover its natural status, that of a national language alongside Arabic].

MAK and FFS use much of the same symbolism or arguments for a Kabyle particularity such as their role in the liberation war and the authenticity of the Kabyle identity. However, FFS operates as a national political party and cannot afford to be seen as regionalist. The Algerian constitution forbids 'religious and regionalist' political parties (Owen, 2000). This ties the hands of both FFS and RCD from officially joining any movement such as MAK. It also explains the need for FFS to reject categorically any comments by MAK regarding FFS as a regional actor. Otherwise, they may risk exclusion from the political system.

Likewise, CADC, according to one of the articles in *Le Quotidien d'Oran*[78] rejected Mehenni's claim that CADC was autonomist in character based on their demand for a withdrawal of the Gendarmerie from all of Kabylia. CADC was quick to stress the national character of their movement. Probably the movement at this point was aiming at securing as much national support as possible. Their campaigns in June was as much directed at making the Algerian public denounce the authorities for their power abuse as it was directed at pressuring the authorities to accept their cultural demands. The more support CADC has on a national level the more force will they have behind their demands to the authorities.

However, Mehenni's calls for autonomy and his attempt at including FFS, RCD, and CADC, according to the ICG, may still have discouraged Algerians from supporting the Kabyle uprising. The state was able to use MAK statements to their advantage, namely to deflect the regime critique and in turn place the Berberist movement in a separatist and regionalist light (ICG, 2003).

5.3 High Commission for Amazighté (HCA): An organ for nationalizing the Amazigh concept?

The HCA (High Commission for Amazighté or *al-muḥāfaẓa al-sāmiya li l-ʾamāzīġiya*) has the status of a *maǧlis al-dawla* (state council). It receives its funding from the government. Its

[78] Djilali, 2001. *Le Quotidien d'Oran*, 12 June, p. 2.

primary cooperation partner is the Ministry of Education. However, the HCA's main agenda is the promotion of Amazigh culture and the teaching of Thamazight on a national basis. The state founded the HCA in 1995 as a response to an 8–month long school boycott in Kabylia. Besides its main task of organizing the education programs for Thamazight in school, it publishes short stories and poetry in Thamazight, arranges workshops and finances different cultural projects[79].

HCA has played a major role in organizing the teaching of Thamazight in the schools that do offer it on the curriculum. They have also been responsible for developing pedagogical programs for this purpose. They work on standardizing Thamazight grammar, and editing a lexicon. When I interviewed the Secretary-General Yussuf Merahi and Mme. Bilek, who is in charge of educational projects, both criticized the state for lack of commitment. Merahi referred to a "reflexe du réjet", by the state, and according to Bilek, "le travail bilateral ne fonctionne pas". I also interviewed Si El Hachemi, cultural coordinator for the HCA who characterized the current situation as a "hostilité à tous niveaux". The people working at the HCA have different activist backgrounds and at least the Secretary-General and the recently deceased President are Kabyles.

The HCA is intended as a national body, convening and drawing on different Berber groups in order to unite and spread knowledge of all the Berber culture(s) existing in Algeria. It keeps a record of, and cooperates with different local associations and provides aid to these upon request, in the form of staff, information, publicity, or financial support. As explained by Si El Hachemi, HCA is not a large organization and by supporting the events and projects of other associations, they can cover more ground. In return, they profit from support and information from other groups. By placing themselves at the centre of Amazigh groups and associations, the HCA aims at functioning as the centre for the development and distribution of Amazigh culture.

As mentioned the experience of cooperating with the Education Ministry has been quite negative. Financial support from the Ministry for pedagogic seminars or courses has been difficult to obtain. In terms of cultural dissemination there are two major venues; the various publications financed by HCA, and an annual film festival. Publications by HCA are, as all state publications, distributed free of charge. Therefore, it is not possible to generate income from this venue, a concern voiced by Bilek. Si El Hachemi spoke of the annual film festival as one of the larger cultural events. It relies on external partners, even from abroad to

[79] My interviews and meetings with HCA took place 24 and 28 May 2005.

allow distribution of the festival outside as well as within Algeria. In 2005, it will include a showing in France (Bobigny) and Ireland (in cooperation with the Cork film festival).

The HCA keeps registers over the existing cultural associations in Algeria, categorized by *wilāya* (province). As expected, the *wilāya* of Tizi Ouzou is heavily represented on this list, counting 620 out of 622 associations. The last two are located in Ghardaïa in the Mzab and in Khenchela in the Aurès region. There seems to be a continuous development since 1988 in the formation of the associations, and no apparent leap in the period after 2001 (statistics from HCA for the year 2004).

Si El Hachemi stressed that the HCA are careful not to get involved in politics and that they try to stay out of the political sphere regarding the language issues. As he explained, the different political parties have become particularly keen to use Thamazight as a means for gathering votes. For instance, the Worker's Party have Tifinagh phrases on their posters. Mohammed Laʿrbi from the Ministry of Education also suggested that today one would not find any political party that is completely against an official recognition of Thamazight. Not even Djaballah, the leader of *al-ʾIṣlāḥ* (*al-ʾIṣlāḥ* is one of the larger Islamist parties in Algeria) would in his opinion go directly against it. One reason may also be that President Bouteflika has in general statements been positive regarding Thamazight (interview, Algiers, 30 May 2005). However, in January 2005, the Secretary-General of *al-ʾIṣlāḥ*, Lakhdar Benkhelaf, did express reluctance toward such a step without a referendum[80]. However, there are potential votes to accumulate from Kabylia, if the parties are seen to include Berber elements in their official electoral positions. Negotiations are still ongoing between CADC and the government, so the issue of language status remains unresolved for the time being.

The HCA are strongly opposed to an ideological framework for the standardization of Thamazight, but favour a non-political process, based on a scientific approach.
They would like a national institute to fill this role, instead of having the work shared between the two existing institutes for Amazigh studies at the universities in Bejaïa and Tizi Ouzou. According to Si El Hachemi, the problem with locating all the work in Kabylia is a continued regional focus and prevalence given to Kabyle dialect and cultural custom, instead of a more nationally focused study.

The University of Tizi Ouzou is also a hot spot for many of those who see the struggle for Thamazigh in reality as a struggle for Thaqbaylit. According to Si El Hachemi, this will undermine and set back work on Amazigh culture and Thamazight that is done nationally. On the other hand, Si El Hachemi recognized that all who work with or are in favour of a full

[80] Amar, 2005. *El Watan*, actualité, 18 January.

recognition of Thamazight are in their own way ‘des militants’. This suggests that for the moment, the work is mostly taken care of by activists rather than linguists.

Si El Hachemi was positive to CADC and their talks with the government, but did not recommend leaving the development of the language in political hands. The way to ensure this, he said, was to keep the language development within the University centres. In his opinion, CADC is not apolitical and cannot be in charge of the actual development and elaboration of Thamazight.

HCA are strongly opposed to a referendum on the status of Thamazight, arguing that since Thamazight exists de facto it cannot be subject to a referendum. By this, they mean that a referendum would recognize or deny the existence of this language and culture, which is not an acceptable question for a referendum. Furthermore, Si El Hachemi refused to accept Arabic as a supra national language as the situation is today. The status for the two languages, he argued, should be equal. In his view, one cannot place languages in a hierarchy. HCA has published a translation of the *Qur'ān* in Thamazight. Nevertheless, Si EL Hachemi was willing to accord Arabic a special place within Islam, but preferred the state to be secular and out of the realm of religion.

In view of how HCA defines its cooperation with the state, it seems that the establishment of HCA was more an attempt to placate than to engage in any serious reform. The regime may have been trying to ‘put out fires’ rather than to engage in a real dialogue. The creation of the HCA only happened after a lengthy school boycott in the Kabyle region. Nor has the Ministry of Education, which is ultimately responsible for the Thamazigh school projects, invested much effort in this work. However, HCA still tries to push through reforms and projects that aim at developing a national awareness and better pedagogical programs for the education of Thamazight. Furthermore, HCA is focused on raising awareness and debate on the Berber culture in all its diversity, not just the Kabyle Berber identity that the Berberist movement tends to favour. This positions HCA at what may be a centre for the promotion of a national Berber culture. However, it will remain marginal without more support from the Ministry of Education. That support will probably depend on the political climate at the top level regarding the role of Thamazight language and Amazigh culture nationally and officially.

5.4 Thamazight in school

Education is especially vital to the feasibility of a national Thamazight project. The education sector is also the field where the regime has distributed their version of national culture, state religion and history. In the state education system, there has been no place for what today's

movement call *al-Amazgha*[81], which means the Berber nation. The Thamazight classes organized by HCA are optional and open to anyone that is interested. Besides language, the students in these classes can learn about the Amazigh culture and background in today's Algeria. This means that HCA is potentially rivalling the state in the area of national history.

According to Bilek, most concessions the government has made or funds they have allocated have been due to popular pressure. The school boycotts that resulted in the formation of the HCA involved the Kabyle regions of Tizi Ouzou, Bejaïa and Bouira (and partly Setif). The demands concerned mostly *Thamazight di lakoul* 'Thamazight in school'. The word *lakoul* is borrowed from the French word *l'école.* Another precursor was the annulment of the Chair of Amazigh Studies at the University of Algiers in 1993, held by Mouloud Mammeri. He continued to give lessons in private "clandestinely" and his "disciples" gave lessons to those who wanted, primarily in their localities. This 'supply-and-demand' was according to Bilek also based on certain militancy in the regions, maybe a certain type of resistance provoked by the annulment of the Chair and in support of Mammeri, who is a renowned academic in especially Kabyle circuits[82]. These lessons were private initiatives and if not exactly forbidden, then certainly against the wishes of the regime. The radical Islamists active during this period were also opposed to such courses. One of the reasons why HCA has worked for a return of this Chair lies in its objective to make the Amazigh culture and language a national agenda, not marginalized as a folkloric or regional phenomenon. According to Bilek, this is not in the regime's interest, since it challenges the hegemony of the Arabic language and culture.

One main task of HCA has been to aid the Ministry of Education on how to introduce Thamazight into the education system. HCA have organized workshops for people interested in becoming teachers in Thamazight, and have developed pedagogical manuals. The Ministry of Education has taken charge of revising these manuals. HCA continues to organize annual workshops in pedagogies and in the subject of Thamazight. According to Bilek, these are important measures, since many of the teachers come from different backgrounds. Some have general pedagogical experience as teachers. Others have perhaps specialized in Amazigh studies at university but have little pedagogical training. HCA publishes and disseminates the proceedings of these workshops freely to all the teachers involved in the program. The publications are not only minutes of the colloquia, but form the pedagogical material available

[81] *Al-Amazgha* is an Arabic collective/plural form, taken from the root that form the Berber terms *Thamazight* and *Amazigh* (plural *Imazighen*).

[82] Mammeri is one of the few who has attempted to develop a concise grammar for Thamazight. He is also depicted as a hero from the 1980 revolt. He was arrested at the University of Tizi Ouzou for attempting to hold his lecture of Kabyle poetry that the regime had banned.

to teachers in their profession (HCA, 2002 & 2004a). HCA have also developed a small children's lexicon for geology and zoology in Kabyle-French, which lists various dialectal pronunciations and regional phonological varieties (HCA, 2004c). However, there does not exist a special committee or body for developing a standard, and thereby solve some of the issues regarding the linguistic and phonological structures of Thamazight.

Some of their main challenges in the work of HCA have been to decide which script shall be used, make a lexical selection and standardization, and develop a suitable grammatical structure. There is a variety of choices to be made in all these questions, and neither the government nor independent associations have reached any consensus on these issues yet. There is also a lack of competent teachers. This problem is difficult to address as long as the standardization and elaboration of the language remains unresolved.

The teachers that went through the initial HCA workshop in August 1995 were to teach in their respective *wilāyāt* (provinces). However, several obstacles awaited them. First, Thamazight has not become an obligatory subject, even in Berberophone areas. Students have to take such classes in addition to all other subjects, and in the beginning, classes were often set at inconvenient times like at lunch or after school. Some of the teachers, but not those from Kabylia, also reported that they received intimidations from the school management or others that made working conditions difficult. Of the original sixteen *wilāyāt*, six have no longer students today, and Tizi Ouzou thus carries a large percentage of the yearly total, as we see in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Number of Thamazight students by province (*wilāya*) and year

	1995–96	1996–97	1997–98	1998–99	1999–00	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05
Alger	349	479	436	465	339	479	50	30	278	54
Batna	805	632	293	49	78	73	0	0	0	0
Bejaïa	7941	9663	15953	13695	13473	22479	14056	22769	29773	25433
Biskra	654	255	191	127	108	140	103	174	223	249
Bouïra	9000	9654	11873	11664	11474	13517	12734	14680	17384	19027
Boumerdes	1078	785	1152	533	698	1394	1109	3217	1978	2125
El Bayed	9	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ghardaïa	584	158	124	64	0	0	0	0	76	67
Illizi	80	138	0	119	120	0	0	0	0	0
Khenchela	483	715	244	490	562	265	499	329	244	429
Oran	127	220	55	75	55	25	0	0	0	0
Oum el Bouaqi	1462	1335	4785	1375	2262	2382	2367	2476	2427	2432
Setif	584	626	971	1526	2616	690	1217	332	390	904
Tamanrasset	114	370	505	942	465	440	440	237	226	321
Tipaza	980	576	189	76	79	0	0	0	0	0
Tizi Ouzou	13440	32315	27127	24530	23629	30457	22460	35102	39085	43006
Total	37690	57934	63898	55730	55958	72359	55035	79346	92084	94047

HCA statistics, 2005

Bilek has tried to get direct answers to why students have abandoned the courses. The reason that many students gave was that they had reached their final year of upper secondary school

(lycée) and had to concentrate on the obligatory subjects. This shows how the school system indirectly disadvantages the study of Thamazight. Another reason given to this question was that few jobs required knowledge of Thamazight. Bilek told me that they still need to establish Thamazight as a "langue du pain". There is therefore a lack of correspondence between the militancy favoured by many Kabyles and the actual participation in the school project, and not only a lack of interest. This is one reason why HCA aimed to make Thamazight obligatory.

The lack of standardized linguistic material affects the quality of teaching, which depends largely on the competence of teachers, who in some cases are themselves autodidacts. A single class may consist of students with varying backgrounds and language competence that may require teaching on different levels. Bilek explained that since there is no agreed standard, it is for the teachers to decide which alphabet to use. The manuals consist of material repeated in all three scripts. She admitted that there is nothing that hinders the use of one or the other, or one script that is more phonetically suitable. Arabophones may find it easier to use the Arabic alphabet, and the government is certainly against the use of the Latin alphabet, defining those in favour of it as *ḥizb fransa*, which means 'the party of France' and indirectly 'neo-colonialists'.

There are those who see the use of Tifinagh as desirable in order to achieve a full restoration of the Amazigh culture. This will be even more difficult since it will involve learning a third alphabet (despite the arabicization policy most Algerians are familiar with French and therefore Latin characters) as well as the task of adapting Tifinagh to modern use. At this point, such a task seems unrealistic. Bilek mentioned it as a possibility in the future, but not at present.

In defence of the use of the Latin alphabet, Bilek pointed to the amount of work done by French scholars during the colonial era on the Berber dialects. They developed a certain system of transcription using the Latin alphabet. Algerian researchers such as Mouloud Mammeri and Salem Chaker have tended to build on this tradition. All publications by HCA also use Latin characters. In Kabylia, there is a considerable resistance toward using Arabic characters. According to Bilek, the Arabic script represents the state imposing its will vertically onto the population. This is unacceptable, also for HCA, as they and the Kabyle movement consider the state to have been reluctant at all stages. They argue that since the Berberist movement and HCA have stood for the existing development and preservation of the language, they and not the state should decide on this matter. However, the strong Kabyle focus, and demand for a special place in this development, raises the question whether in

reality the slogan *Thamazight di lakoul* means ‘Thamazight in school’, or whether it means ‘Thaqbaylit in school’[83].

As a solution to the problem of the students’ varying lexical knowledge, Bilek suggested dividing the education in two. Those for whom it is a mother tongue should be in one class, and those who are not familiar with it in another class. In this way, teaching will be more suited to the students needs, and one can use different techniques. As it is today, Thamazight is taught to all students as if it were a foreign language.

5.5 The Thamazight experience at the University of Tizi Ouzou

The Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi Ouzou has been one of the centres for the Kabyle movement. A conversation with one of the lecturers[84] at the department for Arabic studies (where the courses in Thamazight are given) revealed some of the same views and experiences that Mme. Bilek from HCA expressed.

According to the lecturer, Thamazight lacks a political status that both French and Arabic have[85]. This makes it difficult for people to take the language and the education seriously. The education remains an addition to, not part of, regular education. It is not a useful language unless you should want to become a teacher in it yourself. There are no other areas where it is useful or a requirement. Even people who themselves speak Thamazight fail to study the language for the reasons mentioned above. This lack of motivation is not due to the number of institutes or departments but that the language does not have a political status like French and Arabic, the lecturer explained. She further noted that Thamazight is not a “langue de savoir”. This means that it is not the medium of teaching other subjects, such as history, mathematics, and other school subjects.

The lecturer felt that among her students the reasons for taking Thamazight courses varied. Most did it for personal and political reasons. At university level, she pointed out some people wanting to be teachers choose Thamazight because they know this field is in need of qualified personnel. There is a high level of unemployment for teachers in regular subjects so specializing in Thamazight was a strategic choice. For those taking it for political reasons she mentioned such factors as positive activism. They wish to promote Thamazight and Amazigh culture, but instead of taking to the streets “descend à la rue”, they would rather work with it.

[83] ‘Kabyle in school’.
[84] This interview is from a visit to the Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi Ouzou on 4 June 2005. The lecturer wished to remain anonymous.
[85] Thamazight cannot compete at any level as a written and formal language with French and Arabic.

She found the lexical level of Kabyle students quite high, whereas students from other regions often had more problems. In her view, the Kabyle dialect was easier to teach than other dialects because it had been more studied. She also felt that in Kabylia the teachers had more support from the students, who were often are militants. This made the environment easier for Kabyle teachers compared to teachers in other regions like Ghardaïa, where they felt ostracized or at least not taken seriously (see also interview with Bilek, 2005)[86].

In Kabylia Thamazight is highly valued, she claimed. She believed that most of her students would prefer Tifinagh to come into use, but as it was still unexplored in so many ways, Latin letters would be more practical. She emphasized that in Kabylia, Arabic is not an option as a transcription system.

Concerning the three language scripts in which Thamazight is written; I have observed that in Kabylia, there has been a steady increase in the use of Latin on shop signs and other private enterprises. Tifinagh has also become more used. Single signs, like the one for 'free man' *Amazigh* ⵣ , are painted on banners and used in jewelry and posters in connection with the revolt, often painted on black flags. What is also new is the use of Tifinagh on official signs. As can be seen on these pictures, Tifinagh is used in addition to Arabic and French. The order seems to be consistent with Arabic first, then Tifinagh, and lastly French:

Note: Photos taken in Tizi Ouzou, May 2005

5.6 Comments in the press 2001

Although the newspaper *El Moudjahid* strongly criticized the protests and CADC as forces trying to destroy national unity, and most of the newspapers focused on the material or socio-political agendas raised, some stories dealt with the questions of Kabylia's alleged regionalism. One example is *La Liberté* from 12 June 2001, in a story entitled *Kabylie: "Je suis algérienne"*. The heading indicates a national rather than regional motive. The content follows up with a strong focus on how the Kabyle organization's motivations lie in the

[86] Kabyle teachers will most likely be teaching Thaqbaylit, the Kabyle dialect, since there is no standard Thamazight version yet.

demand for dignity, not for ethnic exclusiveness or autonomy. The article rejects any claim that Kabylia could survive as an independent region. It says clearly that Kabylia is Algerian and that what it wants dignity for itself and the whole of the country, not autonomy.

> "La Kabylie est algérienne. La Kabylie ne veut pas être autonome. Elle veut juste pour elle et pour tout le pays un peu de dignité. Beaucoup de dignité"[87].

Two more articles in the same issue criticized the demand for autonomy by Ferhat Mehenni and MAK (Movement for Autonomy in Kabylia). In one of them, the former national secretary of the FFS, Rachid Hanifi, stresses how *la hogra* (mistreatment and power abuse) was the initial cause of the revolt. However, at the time, it was in danger of being turned away from its initial objective by those who wanted to "scinder la Kabylie du reste de l'Algérie", that is those who wanted to drive a cleavage between Kabylia and the rest of the country. With this, he pointed a finger at Mehenni and his petition for autonomy. As support for his argument that Kabylia was targeting a national problem, he described how demonstrations were taking place in Algiers, Oran, Blida, and Batna. These disturbances well outside the Kabyle area were taken as proof that there was a combined problem of identity and social injustice that had to be dealt with nationally, and not only in Kabylia: "La meilleure prevue que le problème identitaire ainsi que celui de l'injustice sociale concerne l'ensemble du peuple Algérien". This national problem was evident in the inability to live a dignified life with pride in one's origins, and in safety from attacks by those he refers to as 'arabo-islamistes'.

> "dans la dignité, fier de son authenticité, n'en déplaise aux défenseurs des constants arabo-islamistes qui ne représentent rien autre qu'une algérianité infirme"[88].

'Arab-islamists' may mean different Islamist groups such as FIS (Islamic Salvation Front) and GSPC (Salafist Group for Prayer and Combat). It could also mean Arab and Islamic characteristics as formulated by the state, although the state Arabists are usually referred to as 'Arabo-Baathist'.

This is all in line with how CADC in their manifest stressed the national agenda of the rioters and maintained that the identity problem was a national rather than regional problem. Nevertheless, the underlying agenda may have been different, as CADC require Amazigh culture to be regarded as a key issue. On the other hand, the cultural 'denial' by the state affects both Berber and Arab culture in its local forms. It is not clear from this article where the author stands on promoting the Berber minority culture or the Arab culture.

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[87] Ourad, 2001. *La Liberté*, 12 June, p. 3.
[88] Hanifi, Rachid, 2001. *La Liberté*, 12 June, p. 3.

"Il s'agit de revendications citoyennes dictées par la situation génerale de l'Algérie faite de misère sociale d'indigence culturelle ou de déni identitaire"[89].

La Liberté reported on how protesters heading for a big march in Algiers on 14 June carried both black flags (as a symbol of grief for the 123 who died in the initial violence) and Algerian flags. Many of the protesters marched from Tizi Ouzou or other Kabyle localities along the highway all the way to Algiers. Other places car pools where organized. Throughout these protests, people were encouraged to supply food and accommodation to those on the road. The demonstration on 14 June was the largest in Algerian post-war history, and an immense display of the CADC ability to organize and draw support.

The movement had access to express their manifests and opinions in the national news press. In an open letter to the nation in *Le Matin*, dated 1 June, CADC drew on events that took place in the West in the beginning of the 1980s, on events in Constantine in 1986, all leading up to what happened in the Casbah of Algiers in 1988. During the 1988 demonstrations in Algiers, several hundred were killed by police violence before the state agreed to constitutional reforms. Later, many of these events were seen in light of the escalation of FIS (Islamic Salvation Front) popularity, power, and the later Islamist violence in the 1990s. The initial demonstrations were in fact demands for democracy, political rights and economic reform, much of the same demands made by the Berber movement.

"Il s'agit de revendications citoyennes dictées par la situation générale de l'Algérie faite de misère sociale, d'indigence culturelle ou de déni identitaire. En cela, elles ne diffèrent en rien des sursauts de dignité qu'ont connus les régions de l'ouest du pays au début des années 80, de Constantine en 1986, de la Casbah d'Alger pour être couronnés en octobre 1988, désormais reère historique de nos colères".

The letter continues by claiming that the government is attempting to ghettoize the region of Kabylia and misguide the Algerian population by its traditional methods of media manipulation and professional provocateurs.

"Fidèle à sa culture de l'intox, il a actionné comme de tradition ses relais médiatiques et ses professionals de la provocation pour induire en erreur le peuple algérien, ghettoïser notre region et l'installer durablement dans un cercle de violence infernale".

The CADC desires an Algerian flag that embraces diversity, and for Thamazight to become a national language next to Arabic. They are careful to stress the unity of Algeria and that they are not secessionist or regionalist in their project.

"Nous voulons un drapeau? Celui de l'Algérie digne et fière. De ses hommes, de ses richesses, de son histoire et de sa diversité"[90].

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[89] CADC in an open letter to *Le Matin* 1 June.
[90] Open letter from the CADC to *Le Matin*, 2 June 2001.

The issue of dignity is stressed several places. In *Le Matin* on 12 June one article states how the anger in Khenchela (where riots engulfed the city from 11–12 June 2001) was nothing but

> "un cri de dignité et de détresse. Elle a tout de cette colère de Beni Douala qu'on a tenté, sans talent, de réduire à un caprice kabyle, comme s'il n'y avait, en terre algéreienne, que la frustration identitaire pour pousser le peuple dans la rue"[91].

The author rejects the view that the Kabyle insurrection concerns a regional matter of identity. The nationwide anger and frustration concerns issues of social injustice. Maṣmūdī, who writes for *al-Habar*, reports on 14 June that the youth disagrees on the issue of representation[92]. This is perhaps symbolic of the numerous shifts of positions and splits within and among those parties that tried to channel the contestations in 2001. In combination with a general mistrust in political administration and authorities, that may have contributed to the rise of such disagreements.

Le Matin also introduces another term to describe the movement, namely 'mouvement de contestation' (movement for contestation) which is more neutral than terms such as 'CADC' or *les arrush* (Francohone press often use this spelling). *al-Habar* also tends to use a similar meaning term, *ḥaraka al-muǧtamaʿ al-madanī* (urban community movement)[93]. On 13 June, *Le Matin* has a word in Tifinagh above its usual logo. This was a clear indication of where they stood on the language issue. When transcribing from Tifinagh using the alphabets by Chaker (1984) (available for instance at http://www.monde.berbere.com/langue/tifinagh/tableau2.htm.) and the one provided by HCA, *Le Matin* possibly used a Thamazight inflexion /thasebḥit/ or /thascbḥit/ of the Arabic word for morning /ṣabaḥa/, with a nominal prefix /th-/ and a suffix /-t/. In that case, the /s/ should have been emphatic which it is not. There are also Berber terms for 'morning,' like *tufat* or *tanekra n wass* that are not borrowed from Arabic. It is therefore unclear why they would not use these available words, but rather borrow an Arabic word.

On 14 June, *al-Habar* states on the front-page that it is the 'village councils' that will decide the meeting of the head of government *("tāǧmāʿat" tuṣirr ʿalā muqābala al-ra'is*). The meaning is that the state is helpless in its confrontation of the anger of the streets (*ġaḍab al-šāriʿ*)[94]. *al-Habar* occasionally uses terms such as *tāǧmāʿat* or *ʿarš*, which can be said to be ethnically sensitive, in order to describe actors in the movement, but they as mentioned in section 4.3.1, do not ascribe the motivations of the movement to be ethnically oriented. For

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[91] M. B., 2001. *Le Matin*, 12 June, p. 1.
[92] Maṣmūdī, 2001a. *al-Habar*, 14 June, p., 2.
[93] See for instance, Raḍwān, 2001a, *al-Habar*, 12 June, p. 3.

instance, on 13 June *al-H̱abar* writes that the *ʿarš ʾawlād yaʿqūb* (the awlad[95] Yaqub confederation) are preparing to participate in a large demonstration in Algiers on 14 June. Still, despite the use of the word *ʿarš*, the article still focuses on the events as, "*aḥdāt l-šaġab*", events of anger over material issues[96].

Tāǧmāʿat is a Thamazight inflexion of the Arabic word *ǧāmiʿ* which means group or association. The nominal prefix /t/ (or /th/ depending on local varieties) and suffix /t/ is used for the traditional Kabyle word 'village council'. They also use other, more neutral terms, to describe the movement, such as 'urban society movement' (*ḥaraka al-muǧtamiʿ al-madanī*). *al-H̱abar*, does not necessarily have an agenda that supports the Berberist or the Kabyle cause, but they do support demands for democratic rights, which may explain their focus on the 2001 events. On 14 June 2001, *al-H̱abar* state that freedom of expression is in danger in Algeria and urge the support of the arrested caricaturist Dilem in a gathering in front of the Parliament (*maǧlis al-ʾumma*). Because of this more general interest for democratization, they become perhaps not so preoccupied with the more ethnic demands of the movement, but rather focus on the discontent and anger that the movement channels and disseminates. The articles typically seize upon what is actually happening such as the burning of the offices of the political parties RND (National Rally for Democracy) and FLN (National Liberation Front) in Oum el Bouaqi[97]

Likewise, in an editorial on 13 June, *Le Matin*'s Hassane Zerrouky also accused the state of having tried to contain the revolt inside Kabylia by defining it as an identity contestation, which had to be resolved constitutionally

> "contenir la révolte à la Kabylie, éxpliqué qu'il s'agit de revendication de type identitaire dont la solution reside dans une revision constitutionelle".

They further claim that the state tried to sow division by framing the revolt as an "external conspiracy" (complot ourdi de l'extérieur). Currently, Zerrouky writes, the contestation has reached other regions and there is a total impasse (l'impasse est totale)[98]. On 12 June, the headline in *al-H̱abar* says that the riots occur for "reason of disregards and contempt" (*bisababi l-taǧāwuzāti wa l-hagra*)[99]. *Hagra* (usually spelled *hogra* by the Francophone press) is written in the dialectal with the letter /g/ ڤ, which does not exist in the Arabic alphabet.

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[94] al-H̱abar, 2001d,e. Frontpage, 14 June
[95] Awlād literally means children, but can also be used to define a tribal 'genealogy' or group, as in this case, as the descendants of Yaqūb.
[96] Jumʿa, T., 2001. *al-H̱abar*, 13 June, p. 2.
[97] Faẖr al-dīn, 2001. *al-H̱abar*, 14 June, p. 3.
[98] Zerrouky, Hassan, 2001*Le Matin*, 13 June, p. 3.
[99] al-H̱abar, 2001a. Frontpage, 12 June.

This is due to the use of the word and its meaning in dialectal Algerian Arabic. If we look at the choice of words used to characterize the events in *al-Ḫabar* for the period 12–14 June in all the twenty-six articles that cover the events, they are as follows: *taḫrīb* (sabotage), *ġaḍab* (anger/wrath), *šaġab* (riot/tumult), *iḥtiǧāǧāt* (protest), *muwāǧaḥāt* (protesters), and *masīra* (public demonstration). In comparison *El Moudjahid* uses words such as *opportunists* (opportunists), *coalition anti-algérienne* (anti-Algerian coalition), *francmaçonnerie* (freemasonry), and *milieux d'agitateurs* (groups of agitators) during the same period.

Le Matin, La Liberté, *al-Ḫabar*, and *El Watan* made it seem that CADC during 11–13 June succeeded in presenting the revolt as a movement of national social concerns rather than ethnic grievances. The fact that riots broke out in Arabophone areas, such as Dirah in the Bouira region, and in Annaba, Skikda, Khenchela and Algiers may have helped create that impression. The riot in Skikda was clearly triggered by the cancellation of a football match. It may have been the result of either a pre-existing anger now released, or a contagious effect of the other riots, like in Khenchela, were riots began due to lack of running water and electricity[100]. Several news reports stated how it seemed Algerians had learned to take their issues into the street. During conversations in Tizi Ouzou in May 2005, similar comments were also made. As one said, "You don't take your complaint to the offices anymore, if you want something done you stage a demonstration" (interview, Tizi Ouzou 30 May 2005). The ICG report also partly concluded that the regional issues of identity were secondary; more important were issues of a socio-political nature. However, ICG were as of 2003 sceptical to the success of nationalizing the contestation (ICG, 2003).

5.7 The national project

While a recurring theme in many of the articles was the issue of dignity and rage, several articles also talked about identity and the concept of authenticity. The authoritarian state's use of a selective history and identity often entails imposition on society. This can be done by controlling all dissemination of culture, history and religion. Earlier, the authoritarian Algerian state had control over the mosques, media and the schools, which were the main arenas for such dissemination. In the end, this may have worked against the state instead of for it. The hegemonic construction turned out not to be representative and this may have reflected back on the state in terms of a decrease in its legitimacy. This is especially likely when the national economy and state structures are in such a decline as they are in Algeria. Instead of pressing all diversities into the same mould, it has instead given ample ground on which contesting groups can attack the state. In contemporary Algeria, there is not only the

Kabyle or Berber identity question, but also the religious and the local Arab diversity to consider. The state has sanctioned its own cultural expressions and suppressed or ignored others. Today, these are bubbling to the surface of a national debate on what constitutes Algerianism.

At the same time, the Algerian state is no longer authoritarian to the point where it responds with the use of absolute force on popular insurrections. This influences the choices the state has in dealing with the debate. Algeria may not yet be democratic, but the regime does not hinder the debate from reaching the public sphere. The national press will be difficult to silence completely again and civil society organizations likewise. According to ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq (2005: 39) the debate on the Amazigh culture is an important part of the transition to a modern democratic society in the Maghrib, as it reflects on a larger discussion on diversity and the democratic acceptance of that diversity (*li-ḥiwārin muǧtamiʿī dīmuqrāṭī wa ḥidāṯī yulāmisu l-ʾasʾilata l-kubrā*). The aim is to avoid it being a discussion confined among the leadership (*maqṣūra al-qyāda*).

The Kabyle Berberist movement has been able to reach out and attract support in the national media. However, this may be due to a change in the social conditions that in a sense has caused a convergence over issues. The movement cannot expect to have the whole nation accept their culture as the definition of 'Algerian-ness'. Neither can they expect to be accorded a special status. The work of CADC in the state negotiations will be important for the future Kabyle Berberist movement. They have worked hard to present themselves as having a national agenda, but still with a regional focus and preference for Kabyle realities. After all, that was their base of construction and from which they derive a large portion of their legitimacy.

The media have largely focused on the national grievances as well and have ignored the more controversial aspects of CADC's regional demands. This is not likely to have happened had the language and identity issue been perceived as the most pressing elements of the conflict. The anger at the authorities and the national feeling of despair at the worsened social and economic conditions were indeed part of the problem in Kabylia and elsewhere. This attracted support for CADC and the Kabyle movement that perhaps would have been absent. As a result, the identity matter surfaced in a national setting and the demands were given national attention and in some cases national definitions.

The only newspaper truly critical to CADC was the newspaper that is seen as the regime's voice, *El Moudjahid*. *Al-H̱abar* may not be directly supporting the movement but

[100] Falūrī, 2001. *al-H̱abar*, 13 June, p., 3.

since their stories tend to disfavour the state, they can be seen as playing a part in raising some form of support for the more material demands of the CADC. The willingness of the state to negotiate with CADC is more likely an attempt to stabilize the region than anything else. The work for a national Berber identity will more likely depend on the HCA. In three articles from *al-Masāʾ* from 17, 19, and 21 December 1998, they treat the work of the second national assembly of the HCA. One of the main tasks of the assembly was to form or adopt a decision regarding the coordination between the different activist associations, research centres, and universities (*ẖalq taqālīd bayna muẖtalifi munaššiṭī l-ǧamʿiyāti wa marākizi l-baḥṯ wa l-ǧāmiʿāt*). This is difficult as the activists such as the MCB (Berber Culture Movement or *al-ḥaraka al-ṯaqāfiyya al-barbariyya*) have clearly political agendas they wish to promote rather than scientific agendas (*al-Masāʾ*, 1998a,b,c). Furthermore, this suggests that the HCA, despite their wish to focus on a purely scientific development of Thamazight and promotion of Amazigh culture, retain close ties with political activist groups. The HCA experience tells more realistically of the lack of willingness of the state to engage in actual reforms and changes as well of the problems residing inside the camp of the activists. One might therefore conclude that the media and the joint national problems enabled the Kabyle Berberist movement to take their grievances national. However, it is less likely that there is a national solution for the Kabyle Berberist solution.

6. Ethnicity and conflict

In this chapter I will discuss the term 'ethnicity', look at the link between ethnicity and language as well as the link between ethnicity and conflict, and discuss how these factors relate to the Algerian case. One issue is how to understand ethnicity as a factor in conflicts, whether as a mobilizing factor or as an initial reason for the onset of conflict. In order to discuss these issues I will first present different views on ethnicity and in particular use Gurr's discussion on ethnicity and conflict as well as the *Minorities at Risk* (MAR) labeling of the Berbers as an ethnic group in Algeria. I will use the MAR definitions of the Berbers to illustrate some of the difficulties in defining ethnic groups as well as in assessing the role of ethnicity in this particular conflict.

Gurr (1970, 1993, & 2000) and *the Minorities at Risk* study have over the years analyzed and registered the world's minorities[101]. Gurr refers to three sets of views, or

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[101] The MAR dataset tracks 284 politically active ethnic groups over the time period 1945 to present. They focus especially on nonstate communal groups with 'political significance. The project was initiated by Ted R. Gurr in 1986 and has been based at the Center for International Development and Conflict Management, University of Maryland since 1988. The dataset is available at http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/inscr/mar/.

schools, on the inherent nature of ethnicity and ethnic identity: the ‘primordial’ view, the ‘instrumental’ view, and the ‘constructivist’ view. The latter is the basis used in his *Minorities at Risk* project and recognizes both the adaptive nature of ethnic identities, and their elements of non-malleability (Gurr, 2000: 4). Gurr does not agree with a model of groups as primordial social entities, nor as purely instrumental. This point to a crucial distinction, that ethnicity is more than a convenient political tool, despite its ability to be re-created. While ethnicity can be manipulated for recruitment or for sustaining a conflict, this does not mean that the ‘ethnic’ does not matter or is not real. This is important to establish in order to focus on the factors that make ethnicity matter. Social movements that draw on identities to rally around collective values, beliefs, and experiences, and often work for collective political or material goals, may be more resilient and persistent than social movements solely based on material or common political interests. Gurr concludes, “we assume that ethnic identities are enduring social constructions that matter to the people who share them. How much they matter depends on people’s social and political circumstances” (Gurr, 2000: 5).

Gurr also uses the term ‘communal groups’ or ‘identity groups’ when he refers to ethnic groups. He sees these as “psychological communities whose members share a distinctive and enduring collective identity based on cultural traits and life ways that matter to them and to others with whom they interact” (1993: 3). Gurr also sees *shared perception* of the defining traits to be essential for identifying these groups. Furthermore, he concludes that the salience or importance of communal identifications varies over time and is dependent on cultural, economic, and political differentials between the group and others. Meaning that if a minority group is treated differently or perceives to be treated differently this can influence the self-consciousness of the group and their perception of distinctiveness from others. Minimizing differences between groups may reduce the need or salience of the communal identity and in turn lead to assimilation into the larger group.

Liebkind also states that while ethnicity can be manipulated, it cannot be created out of nothing (1999). In a conflict discourse such as in a post-colonial society where culture often is politicized and subject to an ‘authenticity debate’, it may be essential to prove the historical existence of the group in order to compete for the official agenda. Perceptions of discriminations or inferiority are powerful tools that can be triggered and thereby used politically. They may be influenced not only by what the group thinks of itself, but what they perceive the other group to think. This is not relativism but a process that often occurs in inter-group relations. Inferred views of what the other group believes, whether true or not,

may lead to actions directed at that group, especially if people sense a need to protect themselves.

Social psychology offers, amongst others, a definition of ethnicity by DeVos, who refers to ethnicity as a "subjective symbolic or emblematic use of any aspect of culture, in order to differentiate themselves from other groups" (1975: 16, in Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey, 1990). Giles & Johnson (1981: 202, in Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey, 1990) say that an ethnic group consists of "those individuals who identify themselves as belonging to the same ethnic category". Fishman states in a similar vein that "ethnicity is rightly understood as an aspect of a collectivity's self-recognition as well as an aspect of its recognition in the eyes of outsiders" (Fishman, 1977: 16). Fishman's definition includes the aspect of some external categorization that can be instructive in determining how internal and external definitions of a group correspond. In order for the ethnicity variable to be a significant element, the 'other' must also see ethnicity as a legitimate claim of distinctiveness and to an extent agree on the markers of distinction.

Categorization made by outsiders versus internal categorization, are two qualitatively different perspectives that do not always correspond. Ethnic categorization as it has been carried out by social scientists has been subject to much criticism, especially when later disputed by those who were categorized. On the other hand, even people who carry ethnic labels that have been imposed from the outside often have made use of such identity in social mobilization. Bourdieu writes that

> "the characteristics and criteria noted by objectivist sociologists and anthropologists, once they are perceived and evaluated as they are in practice, function as signs, emblems or stigmata, and also as powers. Since this is the case, and since there is no social subject who can in practical terms be unaware of the fact, it follows that (objectively) symbolic properties, even the most negative, can be used strategically according to the material but also the symbolic interests of their bearer".
> (Bourdieu, 1991: 221)

In my opinion, Berber identity has developed in relation to the Arab and French conquests and the influences the Arab and French colonizers brought with them, such as Islam and French language. However, there are distinct cultural traits that have been maintained in this process that may serve to distinguish Berber communities. In addition, there is an acute awareness about specific Kabyle Berber traits due to the academic research conducted by scholars like Mouloud Mammeri and Salem Chaker. Kabyle activists have drawn on these academically supported traits and linked them to a modern political group identity. The state has followed more or less the same procedure and has focused on certain linguistic and religious traits as ethnic markers. They both engage in the same authenticity

debate. The state uses the universal identity of Standard Arabic and Islam that are weighty both historically and religiously as formal representations, while the Berberist movement argues their concept is more in line with the daily speech and cultural behavior that has its own history among the population at large.

6.1 Language as a motivating role for ethnic identity

Language is naming the surrounding world and a person's place in it. By naming the world, one controls it. Language is power, and written language is usually considered the most important in this regard. On the other hand, Liebkind (1999) claims that it is spoken language that is one of the most salient characteristics of ethnic groups. The non-written character of Thamazight or Thaqbaylit is not an obstacle to its position as an ethnic marker. However, it may be an obstacle to its chances for an official status in society. The focus on constructing a grammar, lexicon, and even reconstructing the ancient Tifinagh alphabet, is in part an attempt to make the language more compatible with such an official status. For the time being, the state can use the informal (i.e. unwritten) character of Thamazight as a reason for holding back on recognition.

As established above, the concept of perceived or presumed belief in an identity can be important for the members of a group. Social psychology sees both a changeable position and the more deep-seated attachment to kin as different aspects of the concept of ethnic identity. This is somewhat along the lines of the constructivist approach Gurr uses. Ethnicity as a social identity is furthermore seen as a way to distinguish favorably own group from other collectives on value dimensions. This may include political values such as democracy, political activism or human rights. This is what Tajfel (1978, in Gudykunst & Tingtoomey, 19990) refers to as the need for positive distinctiveness.

Languages that have gone out of use may still be part of a larger personal or group identity. This is for instance the case of the Berber identity in the Aurès. Most of the Shawiyya Berbers have been arabicized, yet today there is a cultural revival of their identity as Shawiyya despite the language loss. Researchers who claim that a native language is not salient for group survival may also in a sense be correct since language proficiency is not the same as language identity. Language identity may be of a sociological or political nature. One well-known case is the Kurdish struggle for autonomy. As part of this struggle and under cultural bans from Turkey, Iran and Iraq, Kurdish culture and language have experienced a revival that is connected to the political struggle (Suleiman, 2004). These different notions about language suggest that social context heavily influences the role and relevance of

language for the groups in question (Liebkind, 1999). These are some of the same points made above by Gurr (2000).

Language can express symbolic features or self-images of an ethnic group or individual, and in such instances it can be an important denominator between groups in an inter-group conflict. Giles & Robinson developed a theory that "when ethnic group identity becomes important for individuals, they may attempt to make themselves favorably distinct on dimensions such as language" (Liebkind, 1999: 143). Individuals strive for positive social identities to enhance self-esteem. Language is an important expressor of ethnicity, culture, and identity, and can therefore play an important role in ethnic consciousness. According to Gumperz (1982, in Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey, 1990) language is also critical to the maintenance of ethnicity. On the other hand Haarman (1986, in Gudykunst & Ting-Toomey, 1990) states that language is only relevant to ethnicity in terms of boundary making. It is safe to conclude that while language is important for ethnic identity, the degree to which language is critical for the ethnic group differs. In the case of Algerian Berbers, in Kabylia particularly, language is the distinguishing feature between those who define themselves as either Arab or Berber (Chaker, 1998). According to Chaker, language is the main aspect of both the individual and collective consciousness of being Berber today. He argues that other collective traits such as traditional folktales, thought patterns, and worldviews are not easily distinguishable, but language is.

The concept of *ethnolinguistic vitality* refers to a group's ability to survive collectively in an intergroup setting. According to Liebkind, this survival is dependent on three factors. The status of the group (economic, political, and linguistic prestige), demographic strength (numbers, concentration, birthrates, and migration), and institutional support and control factors (linguistic representation in media, government and education) (Liebkind, 1999). Concerning Liebkind's arguments, the ethnolinguistic vitality of Berbers would be considered low. The Berber languages are not very visible in state media, government, or education. The Berberophones do not represent a majority or large segment of the population (estimates lie around 30 percent). What can be argued is that in the Kabylia region, the majority is Berberophone and there is some degree of institutional representation inside Kabylia.

According to Giles, Bourhis & Taylor the "ethnolinguisitc vitality of a group is that which makes a group likely to behave as a distinctive and collective entity in inter-group situations" (1977: 308). They thus see language as a measure of an ethnic group's vitality. On such a basis, one can argue that in the Algerian case, language becomes an important means

to express distinctiveness for the Berber population. This is so because the state does not wish to distinguish between Arabs and Berbers, but rather see all as Arab Algerians.

In Kabylia, the Berber language and identity is very vibrant in cultural expressions such as music, poetry, and in independent media. In the last two decades Kabyle music has experienced a revival and has played an important role in raising self-awareness and promoting the Kabyle language. Several active culture-political groups have served as links between political activism and culture or sports. The most well-known is the football club JSK (Jeunesse Sportive de Kabylie). Furthermore, Kabylia has a political mobilization that has developed on its own track somewhat independently, albeit not isolated from other political developments in Algeria, such as Islamism. Hence, one can also speak of a specific Kabyle political culture.

Despite the differences described above, one could argue that the level of Arab and French cultural influence on the population in the Kabyle region has blurred the distinction between those who see themselves as Arabs and those who see themselves as Berbers in contemporary Algeria. Cultural and religious traditions have been modified and are no longer usable as markers of ethnicity. The main marker that remains is language. In addition, or perhaps as a result, language has been politicized and hence the boundary-making effect of language has become even more visible.

6.2 What type of ethnicity for Algeria's Berbers?

"There is today neither a Berber language in the sense of it reflecting a Berber society conscious of its unity, nor a Berber people and even less a Berber race … and yet the Berbers exist"[102].

In the *Minorities at Risk* dataset, the Berbers of Algeria are categorized as a minority at risk because of the Islamist threat (Islamic reform and arabicization would threaten the folk religious expression and the Berber languages), the arabicization policies of the state which likewise threatens Thamazight, and the instability of the democracy in general[103]. They are in this dataset defined as 'indigenous', with the following definition:

"These are conquered descendants of earlier inhabitants of a region who live mainly in conformity with traditional social, economic, and cultural customs that are sharply distinct from those of dominant groups"[104].

[102] Quote by Gabriel Camps in Dourari (1997: 45). The original text is as follows 'En fait il n'y a aujourd'hui ni langue berbère dans le sens où celle-ci serait le reflet d'une communauté ayant conscience de son unite, ni un peuple berbère et encore moins une race berbère … et cependant les berbères existent'.
[103] Available at http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/inscr/mar/assessment.asp?groupId=61501.
[104] The list of definitions is available at http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/inscr/mar/definition.asp.

Defining the Berbers in Algeria as ‘indigenous’ may be understandable from a certain point of view. They are among the first known inhabitants of the region. The nomadic Tuaregs and the traditionalist Mzabis follow a way of life that may be described as ‘indigenous’. However, the metropolitan lifestyle of the largest Berber group, the Kabyles, and their close geographical proximity to the capital, Algiers, make the category ‘indigenous’ less fitting. Neither does this category fit well with the second largest group, the Shawiyyas. In addition, the Arab Algerians are indigenous by the same right as Berbers today. It is difficult to argue that Arab-Algerians are non-indigenous. Society has allowed for an assimilation that makes it difficult to find Arabs without some Berbers in their families and the other way around. The term indigenous in my view assumes the presence of another non-indigenous group. The Arabs in Algeria cannot be said to form such a group. The descendants of both Berbers and Arabs, or arabicized Berbers populate Algeria. The converging of the groups through marriages and integration of Islamic, Arab as well as Berber customs has blurred the distinction between the two groups inside Algeria today.

Neither is it the indigenous aspect of the Kabyle community, which will provide an understanding of the nature of the conflict. It may partly explain the dynamic of the conflict. It cannot however explain the triggering of the protest or the reasons why people who identify themselves as Kabyle Berbers also see themselves as inherent political activists or avant-gardist and democratic. Perhaps one could use an alternative concept such as Gurr’s term *politicized communal group*. Even though they are not experiencing specific economic or political discrimination in comparison with the rest of the country’s population, which is one of Gurr’s criteria for this category, there is a linguistic discrimination to speak of, as many Berbers would like the state to invest in the use of Thamazight. In addition, they have taken political action in support of collective interests, which is Gurr’s second criterion. However, in terms of political rights and freedoms; they are at a par with other Algerians.

6.3 Ethnicity and internal political conflict

Ethnic identity alone is not enough to explain ethno-political conflict. I will mainly rely on Gurr’s analyses on how the salience of ethnic identity is likely to influence the level of political activity and the importance of the group’s political capacities to organize[105]. I will also look at the role of language as an ethnic element in conflict and discuss why it has a special place in Middle Eastern and North African political conflicts.

[105] (Gudykunst & Tingtoomey, 1990; Liebkind, 1999 & Suleiman, 2004) also see the salience of the group’s identity as important for its survival and its importance among the group members.

Gurr sees all collective identities, whether on communal, group or national level, to be transient and situational. With this, he does not mean that they are short-term identities, rather that they are non-static, in constant change. In addition, he states, this does not mean these groups are merely transitory phenomena that immediately loose their functions with political gain. As is argued in the section above on ethnicity, few believe ethnic identities are constructed out of nothing. The level of saliency of the identity however, can be dependent on factors that make the group perceive a need to protect itself. These need not necessarily be exact threats to the identity of the group; they can also be threats of a material kind. In conclusion, an ethnic group that gains political recognition and acceptance for the grievances its members have experienced does not necessarily disappear as a group. Rather, recognition may encourage stronger identification On the other hand; festering grievances may also increase ethnic awareness in communities. The relationship is thus not symmetrical or causal. For instance, the Berbers in Algeria have since the 1990s experienced several concessions by the regime in their favour. First, by the recognition of Amazigh culture as part of the national cultural landscape. Second, by the recognition of Thamazight as a national language. However, instead of abating, the resistance and unrest has increased. The ethnic grievances are perhaps somewhat alleviated, but the material grievances have, as on the national level, increased.

Gurr defines *ethno-political conflict* as "conflicts in which claims are made by a national or minority group against the state or against other political actors" (2000: 65). He continues, by listing four general factors: the salience of ethno cultural identity for members and leaders of the group; the extent to which the group has collective incentives for political action; the extent of the group's capacities for collective action; and the availability of opportunities in the group's political environment that increase its chances of attaining group objectives through political action (2000: 65–66). He uses the term 'ethno-political group', defined as "identity groups, whose ethnicity has political consequences resulting, either in differential treatment of group members or in political action on behalf of group interests" (2000: 5). Another important factor is the group's abilities to engage in political activity. This last comment deserves an addition made by Gurr that "state responses to communal grievances are crucial in shaping the course and outcomes of minority conflicts. Strong states have the capacity both to suppress rebellions and to make significant concessions to protesters, weak states may be unable to do either" (Gurr, 1993: 91).

Thus, we can understand that ethnicity seldom operates alone. It is dependent on several other factors. As explained above external threats that may increase group

consolidation or ethnic awareness, may be both threats to culture as well as material threats. The opportunity to engage in some form of organized political activity may also be of influence as to whether the conflict remains non-violent or violence erupts. Violent conflict also requires the availability and resources to procure arms. In relation to this, in the context of the Middle East and North Africa, Bates & Rassam (2001) write that one must consider appeals to ethnicity in conflict in the Middle East, within specific political environments. Instead of considering politicized ethnicities as waiting to erupt when a state weakens, one should instead focus on how authoritarian regimes often have set the preconditions for such politicized alternatives to develop.

6.3.1 Language as ethnic factor in internal political conflict

I will argue that both the manner in which the state handles the conflict, as well as how the regime has laid the grounds for challenges of state legitimacy are significant for the outbreak of internal conflict. The problem with conflicts such as the one in Algeria in 2001, where ethnicity is expressed, but where this expression occurs in close relation to sociopolitical factors, is that one may risk viewing the ethnic factor as only instrumental. It is difficult to establish that ethnicity or ethnic grievances alone are the motivating factor for conflict. However, even if the use of ethnic arguments is instrumental, they can develop their own raison d'être and thereby their own 'revival' or prominent place in the conflict. The Berberist movement's combination of a linguistic demand baked into the demand for democracy is not so mysterious either, if we look at it in this context. Holt writes on the subject of divided loyalties in the Arab world that "when the mismatch between state and linguistic identity is combined with dynastic regimes and almost complete lack of popular participation in the political process, then it is easy to see why such states are facing a crisis of legitimacy" (Holt, 1996: 22). The Algerian state made itself vulnerable for attacks on the basis of their linguistic and cultural project and has engaged in making ethnicity a contentious issue nationally by making some linguistic groups feels discriminated against or excluded from the state national agenda.

6.3.2 State use of ethnicity as legitimization in the Middle East and North Africa

I believe that some of the answer to determining the role of ethnicity in political conflict can be found by investigating state strategies on ethnicity, as well as political systems and representation. This applies particularly to post-colonial states in the Middle East and North Africa.

Islamism in Algeria partly developed in relation to a state that has employed a state Islam as one of their bases for legitimacy (Noyon, 2003). Part of the accusations from Islamist

groups has been that the state has used religion to further its own end and contain power. They challenged this version of state Islam and combined it with a political message for reform. With this program, they gained the electoral majority in 1990[106]. However, the end was disastrous; a launching of Algeria into a decade of violence.

The other base for legitimacy in Algeria is language and identity. Based on the material in my sources I find a combined program of a language-cultural demand and secular democracy. The national press has mostly focused on the socio-political and economic grievances, but the manifests from the organizers and the symbolism of protest in the region has several protruding cultural elements. To define the conflict as one or the other would therefore be a simplification.

According to Morsly, the demand for a recognition of Thamazight as an official language alongside Arabic in Algeria is a contestation of the linguistic uniformism and thereby a contestation of the uniformism of the state-sanctioned identity. The state-sanctioned identity is in turn the basis on which the legitimacy of the regime is founded (Morsly, 1997: 38). This means that by demanding ethno-linguistic recognition the Berberists challenge the state to redefine their basis of legitimacy, since the discourse revolves around the idea of the nation and state system, which has also based itself on the promotion of the unique role of Arabic.

Suleiman (1999, 2004) argues along the same lines that in several parts of the Arab world, language is connected to a politicized national identity. The question of national identity has to various degrees been linked to supra identities like Pan Arabism or Islamism. Language and culture have been institutionalized and used as platforms for political legitimacy (Suleiman, 1999; 2004; see also Ruedy, 1992; Stora, 2001 & Davies, 2005)[107].

Tilmatine & Suleiman (1996) state that since the middle of the 19th century language has played a vital role in defining ethnicity in the Middle East. In addition, they maintain that language is the one universal characteristic for the different Berber groups in the region. It is clear that the Berber speaking inhabitants universally experience speaking another language than the official majority language. They form one side of the regional dichotomy.

Holt (1996) concludes that there are two forms of linguistic identities in the Arab world, both of which are independent of the state. The first is tied to Classical Arabic, and by association Islamic, the second is the regional dialectal or vernacular identity which may borrow heavily from pre-Islamic traditions and culture. The first identity is often used by

[106] Part of this majority probably voted against the regime and not necessarily in favour of FIS.
[107] This goes for Egypt in the Nasser era, Iraq both under Qasim but most prominently under Saddam Husayn's Baathist regime.

Arab leadership who favour a Pan-Arab identity. The second is politically marginalized in such nation-states that officially attach themselves to a Pan-Arab identity. The Algerian regime was also inspired by the Pan Arabist projects and of Nasserism in Egypt, which promoted closer relations within the Arab community. Favouring the Arab community was a method for distancing France, and in this way the state tried to manipulate an Arab identity into a version of national identity. However, this has happened at the exclusion and de-valorization of the regional identity that is tied to the vernacular.

7. Concluding discussion: The question of identity and political legitimacy in Algeria

In this thesis I have analyzed *how Kabyle political activists have used the demand for an official status for the Berber language, Thamazight, equal to Arabic, within a broader agenda of political change and democratization but also in an effort to influence the concept of 'Algerian-ness' defined by the state as associated closely with Arabic culture and language*. In the Algerian case, the two issues of political legitimacy and national identity are crosscutting. The construction or re-construction of national identity has served as a source for political legitimacy, and as the purpose of state policy formulations such as the arabicization programs. The state has attempted to monopolize the expression of national identity by controlling cultural expression, and framing the historical understanding of national events. The authoritarian regime's top-down approach on the issues of language and culture in the 1960s, 1970s, and most of the 1980s left little room for maneuver outside the set agenda. Critique was silenced by accusations of 'neo-colonialist attempts to destabilize the national unity'. Cultural plurality was seen as a weakness.

The first Berberist crisis in 1949 developed partly because of internal power struggles, but also because of the decision to promote the independent stat in exclusively Arabic and dogmatic Muslim terms and according to Tilmatine & Suleiman the regime thus rejected "the concept of an *Algerian* Algeria in which cultural pluralism can be allowed as an operative socio-political factor" (Tilmatine & Suleiman, 1996: 167). Due to these factors, the Algerian society is what can be termed 'language-sensitive'. This sensitivity is also due to the French colonial policy of de-culturalization and de-arabicization, which influenced the perceived need to 'salvage' the Algerian identity. Furthermore, Algeria had no royal family or previous ruler to rally around during the colonial occupation. A unifying element was found in the religion and language that denied Algerians a place in French Algeria, namely Islam and Arabic. The concepts of culture and language used by the state were not derived from popular understandings, but from an idealized past that were to be understood as Arab-Islamic, and a

formal linguistic tradition, Standard Arabic. The Berberist movement claims on the contrary that their project is more 'authentic', as it builds on the vernaculars and the popular culture of Algerians. The movement thus advocates what Tilmatine & Suleiman described above as *Algerian* Algeria.

Adamson (1998) argues that while the FLN as a national liberation front succeeded as a nationalistic struggle, their formulation of a nationalist project was merely a continuation of the war ideology. She also maintains that decolonization served to confirm the political and economic order of colonization. The rise of both Islamist and Berberist movements were partly due to the need to legitimize the new realities provoked by colonization and decolonization (Adamson, 1998: 208–209). The opposition movements formed in the post-independence era such as the Berberist and Islamist movements have opened an identity discourse that also has focused on language. The Berberist movement began this discourse with the revolt in 1980. However, response from other parts of Algerian society to Kabyle protests was not significantly noticeable until the revolt in 2001. The Berberist critique has argued that the national ideology promoted by the state has failed as a project. The state policies have, according to Berberist activists, not developed in accordance with the needs and demands of the population, especially after the economic collapse precipitated by the fall in oil-prices, in the early 1980s. Such views also surfaced in 2001, as shown in chapter five. The state version of both the religious message and cultural content seems to have found fewer listeners in the generations born after the liberation war. At the same time, these generations have suffered the consequences of economic decline, which is in line with what Gill (1999) defines as increasing risk for potential conflict.

One can argue that today's generation live in a different economic and social reality than the intellectualist Berberist movement of the 1970s. In Algeria today, the majority is below thirty years, while unemployment is at 15.3 percent. Moreover, 75 percent of the total number of unemployed is below the age of thirty[108]. There is a shortage of housing, electricity, and running water. The government no longer subsidises society to the extent it did previously, and state offices and schools are deteriorating. While Berbers in the 1970s maybe feared the FLN or the state apparatus, they possessed perhaps a more positive vision for the future. Today's Berberist activists appear more disillusioned. Many seem to have lost faith in both the governmental bodies and the prospects for a sustainable future.

In terms of mobilization and patterns of grievances, Gurr stated that conflicts, which originally arise from political and material inequalities, might be intensified or reinforced by

the tension between the communal groups (1993). In the case of Algeria, one can understand the Kabyle movement's desire for cultural recognition and the state's insistence on assimilation together with little possibilities for political participation has caused a coinciding of cultural and material/political conflict. This has shaped the demands and the experienced grievances by the communal group. The arabicization laws of 1991 and 1996 seem to have shadowed the 1996 and 2002 inclusions of Amazigh culture and language. This since the 1996 and 2002 amendments do not alter the premises for Algerian society in general. In other words, the amendments have no impact on other factors already established by the state.

Other research (such as by Bates & Rassam, 2001) also suggests that the state response to internal conflict is critical to understanding the dynamics of conflict. There is evidence that the Kabyle cause is closer to a national cause now, than in the 1980s due to the general easing on political constraints and the concurrent poor national economic situation. This may have contributed to the cause gaining support on a national level. The independent press in Algeria may also have contributed by distributing other images and views of the state, and thus participate in forcing the state to act or engage in a negotiation process rather than in suppression. Riots and the media focus on the social issues may have made it difficult for the state to crack down on the insurrection as a regional attempt to 'disrupt national unity'. Gurr also argues that alleviation of perceived grievances does not necessarily make a group identity become less salient. In fact, it may induce further contestations. The socio-political and economic grievances have not been alleviated during the same period and this may perhaps have influenced the level of mobilization. Communal demands are seldom unitary, since different activist groups will claim to represent the entire communal group. They often differ in size and popular support. This was evident in the case where the two largest political parties in Kabylia – the FFS and the RCD – where outmanoeuvred in 2001 by the CADC a new and predominantly young grassroots organization. The fact that it was the 'young' CADC, which gained most of the support, may have been a result of a general feeling of distrust to any political parties, and a generational shift.

As argued in chapter six, ethnic factors can play a significant role in terms of mobilization and thereby, conflict dynamics. It is often difficult to establish to what extent socio-political and 'ethnic' factors overlap or outweigh each other. I have tried to show some of the representations present in Algeria. The issues of identity and linguistic rights have been very prominent, and closely connected to the issue of democracy. In many ways they have become identified with the struggle for democracy and attained a symbolic identity as the

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[108] Numbers released from the National Office of Statistics (ONS) and cited in *El Moudjahid* 27 November

'voice of democracy' as the comments, made to the ICG of how Kabyles were in a 'vanguard', showed. In the case of Algeria, it seems plausible that the continuous politicization of language and identity by the state has contributed largely to what is experienced as an ethnic or cultural dilemma. The Berberist movement has at times adopted an equally uncompromising a stance as the state regarding what constitutes 'authentic Algerian-ness'. However, the main demands concern the recognition of Berber culture and language as part of the national culture rather than the creation of an autonomous state. In addition, while the Kabyle political groups have managed to draw support from across generations and the social classes in Kabylia, they have not drawn any long-term support from secular Arabophone groups or co-ethnic (Berber) groups. The support they received in 2001 was mainly directed at material and socio-political issues included, to a very little degree, a discussion of a revised national cultural agenda that would include a stronger focus on Berber culture.

7.1 Nationalist agenda versus regionalist demands

Building the state and building the nation are two different things. The Algerian state favoured a one-cultural national agenda in a bi-cultural setting. This attempt by the state to favour only one culture and the fact that there was no debate regarding this decision have perhaps made it easier for other groups to challenge the regime's legitimacy. At the time of independence, consensus was achieved from above and not through discussion. In combination, this is why language and cultural issues are so much at the forefront of Algerian political conflicts[109] as well as in other post-colonial Arab countries such as Iraq.

The second question I have discussed in this thesis is *to what degree the Berberist movement succeeded in nationalizing their cause.* While ethnic and Kabyle regional expression may have functioned as a mechanism to sustain the revolt and mobilize support in Kabylia, it may also have cost the cause considerable support on the national level, from Arabophones as well as from other Berber groups. The 2001 riots in Kabylia started in April but did not spread outside of Kabylia until June. This means they were contained for over a month in Kabylia. However, in June they spread quickly and in Arabophone areas as much as Berberophone areas. Interestingly, the news coverage in June hardly mentions any other reasons for the riots than power abuse or corruption (*al hagra* or *la hogra*). In the midst of this expression of common national grievances, a controversial manifest, the *El Kseur*

2005.

[109] Kabylia has been involved in internal conflicts in 1963-64, 1994-95, 1980, and 2001-. The Islamist conflict of the 1990s is now largely over, though a few groups remain fighting. All of these conflicts have targeted, among other issues, the national cultural agenda and language policies of the regime, in one way or another.

platform, was drawn up on 11 June by CADC, the principal activist group in Kabylia. The platform included demands of both democratic and cultural nature, as well as regionalist demands that concern Kabylia specifically. The movement gives same importance to linguistic-cultural, social issues, and regional demands, and defines them as all nonnegotiable. In an analysis of the Kabyle movement in 2001, it is not possible to discount the message in the *El Kseur platform* since all points are said to hold the same importance. In this manifest, ethnic or cultural-linguistic demands are not subordinate to other demands of social or economic nature. It would therefore be wrong to exclude ethnicity as simply instrumental in this context. However, it can be said that it in the national press was taking a backseat for a while. National newspapers in the period 12–14 June 2001, tended to focus on the material grievances and issues regarding political participation or acts of abuse committed by the authorities. The Kabyle cause was to a large degree depicted as an outcry against such phenomenon and not as a movement concerned with particularly ‘Berber’ grievances. This may imply that the support generated at the national level was not directed at the movement, but rather at a temporary coinciding of interests. It is impossible to gauge the national support for the cultural agenda as it was rather obscured in the media. However, the mere fact that the newspapers chose not to focus on the cultural issues may suggest that they found the cultural agenda not to be of interest to a national audience at the same level as the material and socio-political grievances were.

I find that in Algeria it is not the divide between ‘Berbers’ and ‘Arabs’ that is the largest issue of contention. We have seen in the earlier chapters that the largest political divide is between Kabylia and the regime in Algeria. Arabophone newspapers such as *al-H̱abar* did not report differently on the riots than Francophone newspapers did, apart from the regime loyal newspaper, *El Moudjahid* Kabyle activists have a specific grievance toward the regime and the state, regarding political influence. Kabylia has in the post-independence era increasingly carved out a social-political identity and activism tied to cultural as well as political issues. Their goals centre principally on recognition of Kabylia and Kabyle needs, even though left-wing activists prefer to play this down, as Roberts has pointed out (1981). Roberts argued for the presence of a Francophone Kabyle bourgeoisie that had its economic and cultural focus away from the Arabic urban centres such as Algiers. The existence of such elites, may also have contributed to the level of political activism in Kabylia. In addition, as seen by the RCD’s aim to reinstate the 1956 *Soummam Charter*, there are internal issues in Algeria, from the war with France, that are unresolved. This sentiment is also heard through some of the statements and quotes in the ICG report (2003).

The lack of actual consequences brought on by the constitutional amendments on the Amazigh culture and language (1996 and 2002) has made it vital to continue the cultural struggle for recognition. The language laws, which still forbid the official use of any other language than Arabic, have not changed in accordance with the new amendments. Yet, this does not explain the lack of support from other Berber groups and the fact that the struggle has been confined to Kabylia. According to the ICG (2003: 12), Dr. Khaoula Taleb Ibrahimi stated that many Algerians "have the impression that the Kabyles want to give lectures to everyone" and that Amazigh activists from other places resent the Kabyle hegemony. The problem is that while officials and activists in Algiers are reluctant to give in to a 'Kabyle hegemony', the activists in Kabylia are reluctant to be 'out maneuvered' as they see it, after having paid a heavy price for leading the struggle for so many years. It is questionable whether the Kabyle movement does represent a cross-regional Berber movement. That said the language issue has become so prominent in society that it cannot be ignored as merely instrumental for other political demands. Rather, it has become a demand that groups can oppose (as the Islamists did in the 1990s) or support. It has become a key question regarding the 'paradoxes' of Algerian identity. An official recognition of the Amazigh culture and language may perhaps open up the question of the status of Algerian Arabic dialects.

One argument is that the ethnic dimensions of such conflict in Algeria are attempts to challenge the legitimacy of the earlier-established nationalist agenda and the political legitimacy of the state in order to replace it with what they perceive as a more authentic identity, and thereby gain access to the levers of state and political representation. In other words; cultural pluralism in a pluralistic state. Within the movement's program, the issues of ethnic demands are connected to the issue of democracy. As we saw, several of the slogans in 2001 were directly aimed at the lack of transparent and accountable authorities. In particular, one slogan *ulac smah ulac* (literally 'no pardon, none'), exposed the frustration at the state. Under this slogan the population forced the Gendarmerie to abandon their barracks in Kabylia, which still stand empty. The slogan was furthered as *ulac el vut* 'no vote' during the 2002 electoral boycott in Kabylia. There was a strong campaign for a political boycott that demonstrated the lack of belief in the current political system. Although the issue was a common complaint throughout the country it was specifically mobilized by Kabyle activists.

Based on these factors, a conclusion could therefore be that the conflict took place in Kabylia due to issues reflected in a regional identity construction – not just cultural as Berbers, but political as national political vanguard that opposes central authority. This statement is supported by several citations in the ICG report (2003) that describe how the

events in Kabylia express the national crisis as much as they express the struggle for formal recognition by the national assembly and the president. This was based on the view that there was a convergence of several issues on the national level with Kabyle issues, namely the problems with corruption and power abuses by the authorities.

7.2 Whither the Berberist movement

While organizations like HCA or an NGO like *Iqr'ā*, are favourable to a national concept of Amazigh culture as part of Algerian national culture, they reject a Kabyle hegemony, and what they partly see as an attempt to dominate a national definition of Amazigh culture. The state is also moving towards an acceptance or discussion about the existence of this (and other) aspects in Algerian nationalism. However, they are (more than HCA or *Iqr'ā*) sceptical to the role of the Kabyle movement in such a potential project. Kabylia on the other hand is reluctant to compromise. There is a strong feeling of having sacrificed a lot in the struggle for recognition. However, if the Berberist movement cling too much to a Kabyle identity concept, it may continue to hinder support from other Berber groups, as well as from Arabophone groups. The lack of a more common agenda on the cultural level with other groups in the country may cost them the political momentum gained first in 2001 and later by the state negotiations in 2005.

I have concluded that the Berberist movement did not succeed in making a national issue out of the cultural and linguistic question regarding Amazigh culture and language. There may be increasing awareness – political parties have been particularly apt to include electoral slogans in Thamazight (as well as French and Arabic) on posters and pamphlets (for instance the Algerian worker's party). Still, the regional label does stick with Thamazight, represented by the fact that the majority of the total student mass enrolled in Thamazight classes is found in Kabylia. Furthermore, the only university centres that study Thamazight are located in Kabylia. There is no way to avoid a certain regional label, since Kabyle associations have been at the forefront for so long and even several of the key personnel in the national organ, HCA, are Kabyle by origin. It is not very likely that the Algerian state will give up its connection with the Arab world. *Al-ʿarabiyya al-fuṣḥā* is and will most likely remain the dominant linguistic form of expression officially. The chance of even the Algerian Arabic dialect attaining a more than cursory role in a national charter is slim. The Berberist struggle may achieve a national debate, but the implications of putting *al-ʿarabiyya* aside are unthinkable for a declared Arab country today.

What may be of particular interest for future research on Algeria is the fact that the political climate today allows such a debate to enter the public domain. Algeria is one of the

larger Middle Eastern and North African states, and their political and economic processes are carefully watched by the other states. The cultural debate on the role of Amazigh culture and language is particularly important for the other Maghrib states that also have Berber groups in their populations.

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8.3 Interviews

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Interview with Yussuf Merahi, Secretary-General of the High Commission for Amazighté, Algiers, 24 and 28 May 2005.

Interview with Mme Barki, leader of *Iqr'ā*, Algiers, 30 May 2005.

Interview with Mohammad Laʿrbi, Ministry of Education, Algiers, 28, 30 May, and 5 June 2005.

Interview with Assad Si El Hachemi, responsible for the promotion of Amazigh culture, High Commission for Amazighté, 24 and 28 May 2005.

Interview with members of the High Council for the Arabic Language, Algiers, 30 May 2005.

Interview with lecturer at the Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi Ouzou, 4 June 2005.

Interview with persons in Tizi Ouzou, 23 May–6 June 2005.

In April 2001, the Berber region of Kabylia exploded in a series of violent riots that led to the death of 123 civilians and the withdrawal of all the Algerian Gendarmerie forces from the region. Algerian society seemed on the verge of a new destabilizing conflict only shortly after the disarmament of the majority of the armed Islamist groups. The riots spread to Eastern and Western Algerian cities in June 2001. What initially was viewed as an ethnic uprising suddenly took on a socio-political agenda. To what degree was the uprising motivated by ethnic or socio-political concerns? The 'Kabyle project' has represented a quest for cultural and linguistic rights in the Kabylia region, but also for the recognition of the Berber identity as the basis for a new and more *authentic Algerian identity* to replace the state-sanctioned national Arab identity. I analyze how Kabyle political activists have used the demand for an official status for the Berber language, Thamazight, equal to Arabic, within a broader agenda of political change and democratization but also in an effort to influence the concept of 'Algerian-ness'. I also discuss to what degree the Berberist movement succeeded in nationalizing their cause.

I find that in Algeria it is not the divide between 'Berbers' and 'Arabs' that is the largest issue of contention. The largest political divide is between Kabylia and the regime in Algeria. One conclusion is that the ethnic dimensions of such conflict in Algeria are attempts to challenge the legitimacy of the earlier-established nationalist agenda and the political legitimacy of the state. Furthermore, that the conflict took place in Kabylia due to issues reflected in a regional identity construction – not just cultural as Berbers, but political as national vanguard that opposes central authority. I also find that while the state is moving towards an open discussion about the existence of Berber (and other) aspects in Algerian nationalism, they are sceptical to the role of the Kabyle movement. Kabylia on the other hand is reluctant to compromise. The Berberist movement cling to a Kabyle identity concept, which hinders support from other groups in the country. I therefore conclude that the Berberist movement did not succeed in making a national issue out of their cause, despite raising an increasing awareness. What may be of particular interest for future research on Algeria is the fact that the political climate today allows such a debate to enter the public domain. Algeria is one of the larger Middle Eastern and North African states, and their political and economic processes are carefully watched. The debate on the role of Amazigh culture and language is particularly important for the other Maghrib states that also have Berber groups in their populations.