



*Amazigh Culture and Media: Migration and Identity in Songs, Films and Websites*

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## **Amazigh Culture and Media: Migration and Identity in Songs, Films and Websites**

### **Summary**

In the introduction I raise my theoretical question that addresses the roles Amazigh media play in highlighting the uncertainty in which many Amazigh people live and in assisting in the construction and re-articulation of these people identities. I argue that Amazigh people use media to create their imagined community. In light of Benedict's idea of "imagined community" that defies boundaries and geographical distances, I argue that Amazigh media form a common basis for Amazigh people in Morocco and diaspora and play a role in creating Amazigh consciousness and in improving and re-generating a transnational Amazigh identity. Bakhtin's intertextuality serves as a methodological framework that helps me to study my selected objects. My methodological framework is based on Mikhail Bakhtin's idea of the dialogic interaction between what he calls "real and represented worlds". Bakhtin, often regarded as the father of contemporary intertextuality, advocates an approach to reading that allows the simultaneous interaction of divergent voices. In this introduction I reveal the materials I study: songs, films and websites, and thesis division which consists of five chapters.

In the first chapter and in light of Appadurai's model of "community of sentiments" that regards a community as a group that feel and imagine things together I analyze the issue of uncertainty, as part of these sentiments, that characterizes many Imazighen who live in diaspora as they try to articulate their identity. I describe the evolution of the migratory patterns from the Amazigh Rif region since the beginning of the nineteenth century. This description contextualizes the song that I analyze in this chapter, "Come back my son"(1980), particularly the issue of uncertainty and highlights the evolution of Amazigh migration in the rest of the thesis. I study the way Amazigh songs portray the exodus of Imazighen from Rif area. Here I focus on Amazigh songs and their role in the process of migration and its implications. I also look at the condition of Imazighen, especially to their socio - economic and political conditions in Europe and the Rif region, and how both the lyrics and music of the song "Come back my son" reflect these conditions.

In the second chapter and through the song "My story"(1997) I look at how Imazighen either in diaspora or in their home country strive to articulate their identities in an increasingly fast-moving globalized world. I look at how cultural elements represented in the song help and assist these Imazighen to construct and re-articulate their identities in unstable spaces and uncertain conditions. I build on Stuart Hall's theory which suggests that identity is an ongoing process that makes use of history and culture in becoming rather than being. I extend this point to argue that identity is a matter of becoming, being and belonging. Here I study the role of identity politics vis-à-vis the (re) construction of Amazigh identity and how this identity is negotiated in various places and spaces. I emphasize how the aspects of becoming, being and belonging interact in the song and affect the cultural identity of Imazighen. I argue that the song reflects routes, not roots. I also show how cultural elements represented in the song constitute part of Amazigh culture that inform Amazigh identity. This chapter also emphasizes memory as an indispensable element in identity (re) construction, since it makes use of past elements and events to assist Imazighen in understanding their present and in building their future. I analyze the music of the song and explain how this medium reflects the condition and emotions of Amazigh people.

In the third chapter, I examine the film *The City of Wait* (2004). I look at the idea of mobility and immobility in light of Kaufmann's concepts of motility and mobility. I emphasize the idea of wait as another stratum associated with different levels of mobility that create uncertainty. I study the mobility of people in the film, the degree of mobility of different subjects and the obstacles that hinder such mobility. I focus on the juxtaposition between waiting and intention to be mobile in the city of Alhoceima and its cafés. I also highlight the mobility of women in the film and the role of the cafes in the (im) mobility of their visitors. I draw attention to the representation of gender and the issue of (im) mobility in the film. I focus on the association of the idea of freedom with mobility, especially with immigration to Europe.

In the fourth chapter I analyze the film *The Lost Donkey* (1996). I use psychoanalytic theory, particularly Jacques Lacan and Slavoj Žižek articulations of the concepts of desire and fantasy. I argue that the experience of illegal immigration represented in the film is the subject's endless struggle with desires and fantasies. Here I focus on the fantasies of candidates for illegal immigration. I argue that fantasy plays a twofold role, since it serves as a space whereupon desires are manifested and protection for the subject against any

confrontation with the Real. I study the point at which the subject fails to articulate his/her fantasies and how this failure affects him/her. I also reveal some implications of illegal immigration for Amazigh cultural identity. Here I examine the actions of the filmmaker and the implications of his individual political acts for the entire society.

In chapter five and in light of Mikhail Bakhtin's concepts of dialogism and polyphony I argue that the selected websites allocate spaces where different voices express their divergent perspectives on issues that are vital for Imazighen in the Rif area and diaspora such as the issues of home and cultural identity. I show how these Amazigh websites involve in and inform Imazighen, who have access to these sites, on events that take place in diaspora and the Rif area. I also look at the way these sites depict the past of the Rif area and open spaces for discussion of issues such as identity and memory. I show the role of these discussions regarding the idea of home and the construction of Amazigh cultural identity. I look at the use of language in these websites and examine how this complex language system reflects the idea of home online. I also look at the implications of this language system for Amazigh cultural identity.

In the conclusion I give an update on the current condition of Imazighen especially in North Africa. I draw attention to the importance of Amazigh media such as songs, films and websites in the creation of new spaces in which both Imazighen and other communities can interact and seek common ground. My research offers a unique perspective on revolutionary songs, websites and films made by diasporic Rifian Imazighen. These Imazighen left their country, hoping to find a better world where they, their children, and grandchildren can live in dignity, and importantly to be able to create spaces in which they can express their sense of cultural identity without any fear. The process of migration is still active among Imazighen of the Rif region, both legally and illegally, and the production of Amazigh media is on the rise to satisfy the needs of this growing, dispersed, and imagined community.