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Preface by
Federico CRESTI

Edited by
Anna Maria DI TOLLA & Ersilia FRANCESCA

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INTRODUCTION

Berber-Amazigh Movements in North Africa: Identity, New Issues and New Challenges[1]

Anna Maria DI TOLLA - Ersilia FRANCESCA

The political trajectory of the Arab world was shaken by the popular uprisings which burst forth in Tunisia in late 2010 and rapidly swept through the region in 2011. These uprisings produced a glimmer of hope for democratic change in the region, yet six years after their inception their outcome remains highly uncertain, the regional scenario being characterized more by violence, terrorism and civil war than by a democratic transition. In a previous work published in 2012 the editors of these volumes explored some of the economic, political, social and historic factors that led to the Arab uprisings which, at that point, were still optimistically designated as the 'Arab Spring' in the hope that the long-awaited 'blossoming' of democracy in the Arab region would soon happen.[2]

But the hopes for a peaceful 'democratic transition' in the region were soon dashed, turning the 'Arab Spring' into the 'Arab Winter' of authoritarianism, mounting instability, civil war and Islamist terror. Probably the most serious factors which brought to the failure of the uprisings lay in the elites' incapacity to tackle effectively the severe turmoil and the economic crisis the region was experiencing, the absence of a clear political post-revolutionary agenda, and the slow

[1] This introductory chapter has been written by A. M. Di Tolla and E. Francesca from p. 19 to p. 24, and by A. M. Di Tolla from p. 24 to p. 38.

[2] A. M. Di Tolla - E. Francesca (eds.), *La rivoluzione ai tempi di internet. Il futuro della democrazia nel Maghreb e nel mondo arabo*, Università degli studi di Napoli "L'Orientale", Il Torcoliere, Napoli, 2012.

progress in terms of social and economic rights which continues to feed social tensions among the population.

The region's future is uncertain, racked by fragile democratic institutions, weak economic momentum, identitarian issues, and an insufficient level of maturity and/or democratic commitment on the part of some parties or leading politicians. The intertwined set of factors which had been at work before the uprisings are still operating in the aftermath, namely the socio-economic grievance and discontent of large segments of society, women's and youth unemployment or under-employment, the sense of marginalization and humiliation of the poorest strata of the population, and the quest, especially of the educated youth, for genuine political freedoms, social justice and economic security.[3] As Ibrahim Elbadawi and Samir Makdisi point out in their recent book *Democratic Transitions in the Arab World*, today's resistance in the Arab region against advancement into a democratic transition can be ascribed to the same elements which fostered different forms of autocracy in the region in the decades before the uprisings, namely oil, conflicts, neighbourhood effects and external interventions by both regional and international powers.[4]

The most resilient regimes are the 'rentier states' possessing oil wealth, which provides them with the resources necessary to cement ruling coalitions and to co-opt opponents. Also still very resilient are monarchies and other hereditary regimes, where the ruling family can count on long-term legitimacy but also on solid coercive apparatuses, making the political overturn of the sort observed in Egypt and Tunisia unlikely.

These elements are not unique to the Arab region but seem to be stronger here than elsewhere. They are considered to be the main causes for the emergence of what appears to be a region-wide authoritarian counter revolution in response to the uprisings. Further reasons are the lack of a broad-based socio-economic contract and of successful transitional economic and social policies. Nonetheless the process of change initiated by the uprisings of 2010-11 is far from extinguished.[5] According to Gilbert Achcar, the revolutionary

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[3] E. Alimi - A. Sela - M. Sznajder (eds.), *Popular Contention, Regime, and Transition: The Arab revolts in Comparative Global Perspective,* Oxford University Press, New York, 2016, pp. 278-281.

[4] Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2017.

[5] I. Elbadawi - S. Makdisi (eds.), *Democratic Transitions in the Arab World*, pp. 307-312.

potential is still alive and the key to turning it into durable change lies in building a new progressive leadership which has thus far been lacking. This new leadership should be able to overcome the regimes' ability to draw on the structurally determined reserves of loyalty and repressive capacity used by them to fight back challenges or prevent them from consolidating.[6]

The three North African countries (Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt) on which the volumes mainly focus are at very different stages in their political transition relative to one another. Morocco and Tunisia have mostly succeeded in establishing more transparent, more efficient and more participative institutions; Tunisia, in particular, still represents an exemplar for revolutionary change in the region with the new Constitution strengthening citizens' political, social and economic rights.

The main challenges the country has to face are the turmoil of the educated youth confronted with limited economic opportunities, the rising levels of unemployment and growing regional disparities along with a large informal sector which offers low-quality jobs. These problems are generating growing pressures for reform and for the development of a more coherent and more inclusive socio-economic system.[7] In Morocco, the on-going regional protests prove the shortcomings of the government's performance and the need for further implementing the reform process. The new Constitution and the king's reform following the uprisings were welcomed as a peaceful alternative to the chaos spreading in the region, demonstrating Morocco's status as an exception among the authoritarian Arab regimes. Nonetheless, the Morocco 'model' shows several limits. The mechanisms of repression of opponents and co-optation of consensus continue to operate, proving that the feeling that the country was on the verge of a radical transformation, unprecedented since its independence in 1956, is not completely founded. The situation is rendered more complicated by a number of specific socio-political and economic features, such as patrimonialism and the strong control exercised on the country's resources by the

[6] G. Achcar, *Morbid Symptoms. Relapse in the Arab Uprising*, Saqi Book, London, 2016, pp. 17-172.

[7] M. Boughzala - S. Ben Romdhane, 'Tunisia: The Prospects for Democratic Consolidation', in I. Elbadawi - S. Makdisi (eds.), *Democratic Transitions in the Arab World*, p. 111.

ruling elites.[8] In Egypt the spectre of counter revolution has emerged due also to the lack of the kind of pluralistic civil society and powerful labour associations which characterized Tunisia. Instead, Egyptian civil society was mainly mobilized by religious associations lead by the Islamist parties which were able to take advantage of Mubarak's ousting, though with dramatic and ephemeral results.[9] The neighbourhood effect has been largely unfavourable to Egypt. External illiberal forces favoured the rise of authoritarian regimes in the uprising's aftermath; in fact, both the supporters of the Muslim Brothers' rise to power (Turkey, Qatar and Iran), and the advocates of Sisi's restoration (Saudi Arabia, UAE and Kuwait) opposed any progressive liberal change in Egypt. The civil wars and turmoil which are plaguing Syria, Libya and Sudan accentuate the adverse neighbourhood effect in Egypt, legitimating the regime's interest in national security and war on terror campaign instead of addressing the revolutionary demands for freedom, liberties and social justice. The only positive outcome to date is the politicisation of the Egyptian population and its resilience in front of the regime's consolidated autocratic instruments of repression, violence and occasional concessions.[10]

Initially the Arab uprising was loaded with the promise of change being realised immediately. The mass enthusiasm was contagious and was further reinforced by the widespread belief that the united population could gain control of its destiny and overthrow the authoritarian regimes, as clearly synthetized in the revolutionary mantra 'The People Want…'. But the people's mobilization proved difficult to turn into a political project capable of succeeding over the political machinery controlled by the elite. Political failures,

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[8] J. Kalpakian, 'Between Reform and Reaction. The Syrian and Moroccan Responses to the Arab Spring', in *The Innovation Journal: The Public Sector Innovation Journal,* 18/1 (2013), p. 15; T. Belghazi - A. Moudden, '*Ihbat*: Disillusionment and the Arab Spring in Morocco', in *The Journal of North African Studies,* 21/1 (2016); pp. 37-49.

[9] J. Brownlee - T. Masoud - A. Reynolds, *The Arab Spring: Pathways of Repression and Reform,* Oxford University Press, Oxford-New York, 2015, pp. 212-215.

[10] N. El Mikawy - M. Mohiedin - S. El Ashmaouy, 'Egypt: The Protracted Transition from Authoritarianism to Democracy and Social Justice', in I. Elbadawi - S. Makdisi (eds.), *Democratic Transitions in the Arab World*, p. 134, 178-180; R. Abou-El-Fadl, *Revolutionary Egypt: Connecting Domestic and International Struggles*, Routledge, London, 2015, pp. 3-5.

disillusionment and a cruel repression campaign led to demobilisation, but also to re-mobilisation in several local upheavals. People in Egypt seem to switch between opposite feelings of empowerment and frustration, but the energies which were unleashed during the uprising are still smouldering under the ashes of repression and disengagement. The 2010-2011 uprising demolished a longstanding barrier of fear: gathering in the streets, protesting, discussing politics are now part of a nationwide tradition in North Africa and they are hopefully signals of an enduring revolutionary process.[11]

A primary objective of these two volumes is to shed light on some of the dynamics of the post-revolutionary period in North Africa. In particular, the case studies taken up in these volumes tackle issues linked to gender mobility and women's political and social participation, social activism, Berber identity and Berber minority rights. The books seek to give space to insights that followed from discussion during the three-day-long international conference titled *North Africa Transition and Emerging Actors. Berber Movements, Gender Mobility and Social Activism,* convened at the University of Naples "L'Orientale" on 23rd-25th September 2014. The conference aimed at exploring the extent of challenges to implementing democratic reform in the years following the upheavals, taking as a starting assumption the fact that successful revolutions do not ensure successful democracies. On the contrary, the democratization process is often uneven and is not infrequently characterized by setbacks or backward steps. The North African uprisings exacerbated many of the region's underlying problems and tensions. The hectic schedule of political events set by the transition road map took place amid continuing and perhaps escalating security and economic problems. Nonetheless, in post-revolutionary North Africa new governance models emerged and existing social actors assumed a new and more effective role. In particular, the conference focused on associationism, gender mobility and Berber activism as crucial factors in the composition of the transition road map in North Africa.

These volumes have purposefully brought together papers by the scholars (both senior and young scholars) who took part in the conference, along with some invited papers in order to give insight into some crucial issues affecting contemporary North Africa, seeking to contribute to a growing body of literature addressing the dynamics

[11] R. Abou-El-Fadl, *Revolutionary Egypt*, p. 9.

of transition from autocracy to sustained democracy in the aftermath of the Arab uprisings.

Berber-Amazigh Movements and New Challenges

The popular uprisings, which began in 2011 with the events of Tunisia and spread to Egypt, Morocco, Libya, and beyond, caused spectacular regime changes. Most rebellions, generated by their participants' hopes of restoring the potential for democracy in the Arab world, with people calling for dignity, democracy, and social justice, have however not lead to democracy in any shape or form, at least for the foreseeable future.

The history of the North African countries of Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia and Libya since independence connotes them as Arab countries. The policy followed in those countries was the same: Islam was proclaimed state religion and Arabic was made the official language, with a constitution that legitimized both. In addition, the Arabizing policies imposed a linguistic and cultural uniformity which rejected the plurality of languages and cultures in the domestic and private space. The Arabizing policies that these countries adopted over time have thus affected several areas, from the choice of street names to the level of institutions, administration, and schooling.

This was the so-called nationalist post-independence phase, which characterized all decolonized countries. The national elites appropriated the categories of the colonizer but radicalized them. If, on the one hand, the essence of the Arab nation was emphasized, on the other, *Berberism* and every claim of recognition for the Berber identity were politically hard-fought. Berberity was perceived and denounced as an attempt at division, considered to be a threat to national unity.[12]

Nationalist rhetoric in North Africa, as in the Arab world in general, has in fact fully assimilated by the irreducible opposition between the nation, based on the social contract, and the ethnics groups (or communities) that refer instead to the past, primitive society of blood ties. Thus the ethos of the national imperative, erected everywhere as an absolute dogma, imposed the stigmatization of any particularism, baptized according to the circumstances as 'tribalism', 'ethnicism', 'regionalism', 'communitarianism', and its

[12] J. Wyrtzen, 'Colonial State-Building and the Negotiation of Arab and Berber Identity in Protectorate Morocco,' in *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 43, no. 2 (May 2011), pp. 227-249.

exclusion from the field of legitimate policy. In reality, nationalist rhetoric has often served to legitimize the domination of one group over others: either the domination of a majority group over a minority, as in the case of Arabs and Kabyles in Algeria, or that of a minority group over the other groups.[13]

Berber-speaking groups (*Berbérophonie*) involve about ten states in North Africa and the Sahel, but in Morocco and in Algeria the demand for the recognition of the Berber identity has been the most organized because it is based on a strong social base of Berber speakers (more than 25% of the Algerian population and 35 to 45% of that of Morocco).

The Berber-Amazigh identity movement has emerged over the last few decades in many North African states, demanding official recognition of linguistic and cultural rights and challenging the Arabic Islamic hegemonic ideology that supported the full Arabization of society and the association of Berbers with folklore.

The Berber-Amazigh question does not take the same form in each country, or even in each Berber-speaking group. In Algeria, the Kabyles are more combative in their cultural and linguistic demand than the Shawiya of the Aurès or the Mzabi of the pre-Saharan oases. Similarly, the Riffians of northern Morocco, due to their historical and political specificities, are considered more autonomous than the Berbers of the Atlas or the Middle Atlas. The most problematic case is undoubtedly that of the Tuaregs, spread over five nation-states (Algeria, Libya, Burkina Faso, Niger, and Mali) whose policies of assimilation and settlement led to armed rebellions and ferocious repressions, particularly in Niger and Mali since the 1990s.

Since the 1970s Berber militancy has produced a geopolitical map of Berber-speaking regions. In any case, to understand and approach the main benchmarks and the ideological and behavioral bases of the Berber question, some preliminary references are very important. These include the status of Berber-Amazigh language and identity, and the emergence and construction of Berber-Amazigh claims to autochthonous identity.

What about the sociolinguistic situation following independence in Algeria, Morocco, Libya and Tunisia? If, according to the social

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[13] R. Otayek, « Pluralisme culturel et régime(s) politique(s). Un essai de comparaison Afrique-monde arabe », in *Les Afriques dans le monde*. *Revue internationale de politique comparée*, vol. 20, 2 (2013), p. 105.

sciences, these countries are considered multilingual and multicultural, it has never been so for the ideologues of power. Since independences, and for decades, the linguistic situation of these countries has been simplified, and officially they can only be monolingual, with classical Arabic as the official and national language.[14]

The Berber languages, also known as Amazigh languages, spoken by the Berbers in North Africa and in a large part of the Sahara and Sahel, have resisted the destabilizing pressures of the dominant languages, and the successive power structures of the different state formations of the Maghreb, since Antiquity. The other two principal languages are Arabic, which is the liturgical language of Islam, which became the religion of the overwhelming majority of North Africans, following their mass conversion in the Umayyad period, and French, the language in use in these countries as the language of work and education.

Language, or languages, in North Africa can be considered not only as a significant social marker, but also as a patent factor and a mirror of an identity, be it personal, collective, group, regional or even national. Language as a vehicle of identity is structuring in a meaningful way for a speaking community. The question of its inclusion in a group, a nation, is serious. Berber is, like Algerian, Moroccan, Tunisian, Libyan Arabic, practiced by the masses as vernacular, and it is not legitimate: in the sense of bourdieusian sociology, the conflict between the Arabic and the Berber is a struggle for symbolic power. It is not only a question of communicating but of gaining recognition for a new language of authority and the representation of the social world.[15]

In the wake of the 2011 Arab Spring, Berber-Amazigh identity movements in North Africa came to the fore. In Morocco and in Algeria, in particular, in response to popular demands for greater recognition of their culture, the Parliament drafted a new constitution enshrining Berber as an official language alongside Arabic.

The analysis of the language expressing an ethnic identity used by the actors of social movements shows that this identity could be a collective invention which, while emphasizing its particularism,

[14] G. Grandguillaume, *Arabisation* et *politique linguistique au Maghreb*, Éditions G.-P. Maisonneuve et Larose, Paris, 1983.

[15] P. Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, 1991, p. 48.

negotiates in reality a greater integration in the national and state space.[16] According to Ben Nefissa, 'identity claims reveal the failure of the historical construction of national unity, and demand its renegotiation'.[17]

The 2011 uprisings opened new opportunities for the Amazigh movement not only in Morocco and Algeria, but also in Libya and Tunisia, and among the Tuaregs in northern Mali.[18] Nonetheless, the impact of the uprisings differs considerably across the North African countries and the Sahel. The growing importance of the media and other forms of communication has clearly aided the Berber cause, but these technologies are not the only ones responsible. More generally, in the efforts to shape a modern cultural collective identity, the Berber-amazigh movement is part of a more general tendency that defies hegemonic and nationalist policies.[19]

The Arab Spring has brought to light the new sense of cohesion in Amazigh activists from different states. According to Cleo, this visibility of *Berberité-Amazighité* and its claim to represent a specific minority group requires us to consider several issues, if we are to comprehend the demands of Berber activists during and after the uprisings; if the concept of a transnational Amazigh identity is a historical reality or a political construction; in which manner the growing political importance of this movement challenges the regime and what is the significance of its engagement with hostile governments.[20]

In Algeria, in the last decades, data have evolved in parallel with the events of the "Black Spring" of the years 2001/2002 which took

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[16] L. Zaki (éd.), *Terrains de campagne au Maroc. Les élections législatives de 2007*, Karthala, Paris, 2009, p. 118 ; E. Elizabeth Picard, « Les liens primordiaux, vecteurs des dynamiques politique » in E. Picard (éd.), *La politique dans le monde arabe*, Colin, Paris, 2006, pp. 55-77.

[17] S. Ben Nefissa, 'Mobilisations et révolutions dans les pays de la Méditerranée arabe à l'heure de "l'hybridation" du politique', in *Revue Tiers Monde*, 5 (2011), p. 12.

[18] H. Claudot-Hawad. « 'La question touarègue' : quels enjeux ? », in Michel Galy, *La guerre au Mali. Comprendre la crise au Sahel et au Sahara : enjeux et zones d'ombre*, La Découverte, Paris, 2013, pp.125-147.

[19] B. Maddy-Weitzman, *The Berber Identity Movement and the Challenge to North African States*, University of Texas Press, Austin, 2011.

[20] C. Jay, 'A Berber Spring: the breakthrough of Amazigh minorities in the uprisings' aftermath', in A. Gerges Fawaz (ed.), *Contentious Politics in the Middle East: Popular Resistance and Marginalized,* Palgrave Macmillian, New York, 2015, pp. 331-347.

place in Kabylia. Since 2002, protests in Algeria against the regime of President Abdelaziz Bouteflika have led, at least formally, to a measure of political pluralism and freedom of association, as well as freedom of the press and the freedom to publish in Berber. The Berber language is taught today in two Kabyle universities in the city of Tizi Ouzou and Bejaïa; in 2016 the Berber language was recognized by Bouteflika as an official language.

In Morocco, in 2001, probably because of the impetus of what was happening in Algeria, and because of the need to give a tangible sign of the interest granted to the Berber cause and to legitimize it, the Royal Institute of Amazigh Culture (IRCAM) was created to safeguard and promote the Amazigh language and culture in all its forms and expressions. IRCAM, in collaboration with the governmental authorities and the institutions concerned, has contributed to the implementation of the policies adopted by Mohammed VI and has allowed for the introduction of Amazigh into the educational system and ensured its influence in the social space, cultural and media, at the local, regional and national levels. Despite activists' differences in opinion on these key issues, they share similar visions of national Amazigh identity. These 'imaginative geographies' have re-imagined the Moroccan nation by asserting that all Moroccans are Amazigh while continuing to produce a transnational imaginative geography of 'Tamazgha,' a greater Amazigh cohesion across North Africa.[21]

Massive Amazigh participation in the February 20th movement yielded tangible concessions from the regime with the constitutional recognition of Tamazight as an official language in 2012. The gap between recognition and the practical application of the official acknowledgement remains at least as big as before. This gap will continue to be exploited by the King, who is focused more on the preservation and the consolidation of his personal power than addressing minority protests.[22]

In Tunisia, where the Berbers are estimated to form 1 per cent of the population, the Berber question was for a longer time put aside – due in particular to the influence of Ben Ali's regime – but it found new impetus in 2011. Studies carried out in the 1990s on the Berber

[21] G. H. Cornwell - M. Atia, 'Imaginative Geographies of Amazigh Activism in Morocco', in *Social & Cultural Geography,* 13 **(**2012), pp. 255-274.

[22] B. Maddy-Weitzman - Daniel Zisenwine (eds.), *Contemporary Morocco State, Politics and Society under Mohammed VI*, Routledge, New York, 2013.

language in Tunisia show that the sociolinguistic situation was very unfavourable to Berber. As Salem Chaker wrote there was the need to carry out 'systematic and precise sociolinguistic surveys, [...] thorough field investigations before Berber is completely out of use'.[23]

Some Berber associations have been working since 2011 with UNESCO to build schools for the teaching of Tamazight in an effort to revive the language. In 2012, the African union and the World Amazigh Congress,[24] for the first time in Tunisia, were able to organize a conference on the rights of indigenous peoples in North Africa. Amazigh activists currently feel encouraged to renovate the self-identity of Tunisian people by raising awareness through associations, festivals, and events.

Obviously, the future of the Amazigh question in Tunisia depends on the evolution of the country. Tunisia provides the best hope for the establishment of a sustainable democracy in the region even if the development of Tunisia's transition has at times been precarious. Due to its small cultural and political weight, the local community cannot play a major role in negotiating its own rights with regard to the objectives of the political agenda.

However, openings at various levels created by the constitutional process and the new constitution in 2014, which fostered widespread debate and participation, suggests that the country will be very different from that of previous decades. As far as the rights of minorities are concerned, there is no formal discrimination in the Constitution between ethnic, racial or religious groups. All Tunisian citizens have equal access to the same freedoms and rights.[25]

In Tunisia and especially in Libya, the Berbers have played an essential role in the mobilization. Recent experiences indicate the effective participation of Amazigh associations in a militancy framework. There are, however, many challenges for effective participation in society, in particular, intensifying communication between Amazigh civil society, research centers, local councils,

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[23] S. Chaker, *Berbères aujourd'hui,* L'Harmattan, Paris, 1989.

[24] The World Amazigh Congress (WAC) established in 1995 is an international organization which aims to protect and promote awareness of the Berber people's identity and culture, across North Africa.

[25] J. E. Kruse, *Amazigh-State Relations in Morocco and Algeria*, Thesis, III Monterey, California: Naval Postgraduate School, http://hdl.handle.net/10945/34692.

emerging political entities, and promoting contacts with international institutions and universities.

The Berber issue in Libya can be traced back to the 1970s, since the first years of Muammar al-Qadhafi's rise to power. *Berberism* was regarded by al-Qadhafi as a dangerous movement, and for this reason he took several decisions aimed against the Berbers. In 1973, al-Qadhafi proclaimed a popular revolution: he called for people to take power through the election of popular committees in schools, companies and towns. The five-point program was announced in his historic speech, in which he declared the abolition of existing political structures, and elucidated the orientation of the people's revolution, including measures to accelerate the elimination of opponents of the regime, arming the citizens and suspending the laws of the State. In this speech, he openly attacked the Berber identity as being an 'enemy of the revolution'. Al-Qadhafi considered the Berbers and their identity as a 'vestige of imperialism', a question that prompted the division of the Arab world. In his speech he declared: 'The Berber language is nothing more than the Arabic original'.[26]

In parallel with the Berber activism carried out by Mouloud Mammeri and the Berber Movement in Kabylia, in Libya, the Berber question had previously risen to the fore through the work of a poet, famous among Berbers, who became one of the pillars of Berber culture: Sifaw Saïd al-Mah'rouq. Originally from the Berber city of Jadu, in the Jabal Nafusa region, his commitment to the recognition of Berber identity through his work is credited with creating Libyan Berber cultural consciousness. In those years, the Berber militants of Jebel Nafusa (especially Yefren) published the Berber magazine *Ussan* ("Days"). The publication was distributed clandestinely and continued to be printed until the early 1980s, when many members fled from Libya to live in exile.

The collapse of the al-Qadhafi regime in 2011 had a significant impact on the implementation of the various political power structures in Libya. Suppressed and reduced to silence during the regime, Berber identity was eventually revealed to the world in an impetuous way, and the Berbers played an important role in the uprising and in the

[26] A. M. Di Tolla, 'I Berberi del Gebel Nefusa tra rivoluzione e identità culturale', in Anna Maria Di Tolla - Ersilia Francesca (eds.), *La rivoluzione ai tempi di internet: il futuro della democrazia nel Maghreb e nel mondo arabo, op. cit.,* pp. 79-91.

struggle against al-Qadhafi's militias which led to the fall of his regime.[27]

The revolutions which spread across North Africa in early 2011 led to an increase in regional instability in the Sahel. The Libyan war and the end of the *Jamahiriya* activated a geopolitical chain reaction, bringing the country to the brink of implosion and stressing local political and ethnic fragmentation. Mali is a key case in point. After the Tuareg declaration of independence of the Azawad in April 2012 and the 'narco-Jihadism' which threats this area, the French-led military intervention in January 2013 pushed Jihadi forces back to their desert strongholds.[28]

To return to the Berber movement, the leaders make use of the cultural argument to achieve political gains, since their demands are also political, including political representation of Berbers,[29] the consolidation of democracy, rule of law, social justice, and gender equality. As Kymlicka and Patten (2003) argue, the rights of linguistic minorities are linked to a claim for their recognition as part of the nation. Their demands strengthen the plurality of the nation and its diversity at the linguistic, cultural, and political levels.[30]

To conclude, the events of the Arab Spring include an important Berber-Amazigh dimension and the Berber-Amazigh question is becoming a significant political issue. Following the Arab Spring, the objectives of the movement have raised the profile of the issue of Berber identity.[31] The Berber-Amazigh identity project is entering a new era, one that poses new opportunities and also new challenges, particularly in the face of influential Islamist movements.[32]

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[27] S. Chaker - M. Ferkal, « Berbères de Libye : un paramètre méconnu, une irruption politique inattendue » in *Politique Africaine*, 125 (2012), pp. 105-126.

[28] D. Cristiani - R. Fabiani, 'From Dysfunctionality to Disaggregation and Back? The Malian Crisis, Local Players and European Interests', in *IAI* Working Papers 13 | 08 – March 2013, p. 3, www.iai.it/sites/default/files/iaiwp1308.pdf

[29] M. Ennaji, (ed.), *Multiculturalism and Democracy in North Africa: Aftermath of the Arab Spring,* Routledge, London, 2014, p. 108.

[30] W. Kymlicka - A. Patten, 'Language Rights and Political Theory', in *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics,* 23 (2003), pp. 3-21.

[31] M. J. Willis, *Politics and Power in the Maghreb: Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco from Independence to the Arab Spring*, C. Hurst & Co Publishers Ltd, London, 2012, p. 229.

[32] M. Errihani, 'Nationalist and Islamist Discourse and the Socio-Political Implications of Recognizing Tamazight (Berber) in Morocco', in Nabil Boudraa - Joseph Krause (eds.), *North African Mosaic: A Cultural Reappraisal of Ethnic and Religious Minorities*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Newcastle, 2007, pp. 252-

Layout of the second volume

The essays collected in this volume seek to address some questions concerning Berber identity and cultural rights discussed during the three-day international conference titled 'North Africa Transition and Emerging Actors'. The Conference concluded with a panel discussion titled *Amazigh/e – Amazighity – Tamazgha – Berber – Berberity: Linguistics practices and metalinguistic analyses*, in honour of Francesco Beguinot (1879-1953). Thanks to him and his scientific activity, a glorious tradition of Berber Studies was introduced in our country. He was the first Berber professor in Italy whose contributions to Berber studies are widely known and appreciated.

The book, consisting of three sections, traces the evolution of these new social actors, the Berbers, and discusses some of the key themes that have relevance to the contemporary Amazigh movements before, during and after the uprisings in North Africa.

In section one, *History, Identity issues, recognition and claim*, the first article by Mansour Ghaki, **L'histoire du Nord-Ouest de l'Afrique durant l'Antiquité: La question de la terminologie,** attempts to comprehend the historical link between Berber-Amazigh and North African identity and the landscape of the original territory of the Berber peoples. Berber-Amazigh ideology stresses the long history of marginalisation and sufferings of the Berber people, whose territory has been constantly invaded. Although the Berber populations are fragmented within national territories, ideas of historical unity are strong beyond state borders and the use of nationalist terminology. The article focuses on the question of terminology and periodization in the context of historical studies. The terminology used usually expresses an ideological choice. An originally mostly local appellation moves over time, eventually to the point of becoming regional, and may even end up covering a large part of the 'country'. The examples are numerous, *Libyan, Moorish, Afri*... In order to better understand the history of ancient North Africa, it is necessary to specify the period, the date and the place.

The contributions by Noura Tigziri (**L'identité amazighe entre le déni et la reconnaissance**) and Mohand Akli Salhi (**Militantisme et champ littéraire kabyle. Des années 1970 à nos jours**) present,

257; B. Maddy-Weitzman, 'Arabisation and its Discontents: The Rise of the Amazigh Movement in North Africa', in *The Journal of the Middle East and Africa* (JMEA), 3, no. 2 (2012), pp. 109-135.

respectively, the evolution of the discourse of the Algerian authorities on the identity of the Algerian nation and the role of the militant postures of authors and publishers in the Kabyle language in the emergence and institutionalization of the contemporary Kabyle literary field.

On the other side, in Morocco, Miloud Taïfi in **La « cause berbère » entre la pléthore discursive et la réalité socio-économique,** poses some interesting questions concerning the role of Berber intelligentsia with respect to representations, ideological positions and social and political attitudes regarding the 'Amazigh cause', and the future of Amazigh-speakers. He attempts to trace whether the Amazigh people really are stakeholders in the political projects and societal orientations that the intelligentsia develops for itself and in its name.

The contribution by Abdellah Bounfour on **L'identité berbère et ses noms. Parcours de lectures**, attempts to define the representations that actors are making of the Berber identity within the framework of the national state. To do this, he relies, as a first step, on the discourses produced by different actors: academic discourse, testimony or autobiographical discourse, journalistic discourse, hybrid discourse, etc. He illustrates then, through these various forms of speech, the complex dynamics of state-civil society relations in Morocco, and the power relations that exist there. The Berber-Amazigh issue lies in a substantial representation of identity and not in a structural process. For this reason, state institutions have been able to incorporate or channel movement strategies towards either militancy or accommodation. This power is largely illustrated through Morocco's reliance on cooptation as an initial response to expressions of protest, which has ended up producing a milder form of activism.

The last paper in this first section, **Relire l'histoire. La Tunisie entre revendications berbères et enjeux identitaires** by Marisa Fois, concerns the development of the Amazigh issue in Tunisia. The aim of the author is to provide a historical excursus starting from 1956 – the year of independence – until today, paying particular attention to the changes of 2011. The Tunisian specificity lies essentially in the fact that, compared to Algeria and Morocco, there is no politicized Berber-Amazigh elite. On the one hand, this allows its militants to take on an apolitical image, perhaps even to play a neutral role on the transnational Amazigh stage. In parallel, this element also represents a weakness. In other words, demanding the rehabilitation of the mother

tongue and asking for the recognition of a fundamental element of Tunisian culture both mean accepting the multiple facets of diversity as an agent of a request that is not only cultural but also political.

In part two, *Berberity-Amazighity, New Struggles and New Strategies*, the contribution on **Berberité/Amazighité (Algérie/ Maroc): la « nouvelle politique berbère »** by Salem Chaker compares the two situations in Algeria and Morocco by investigating some convergences and divergences marked in the management of the Berber language. Although there are significant nuances between different countries, the linguistic and cultural policies of the independent states have had as their main thrust the implementation of the founding Arab-Islamism. The author notes a strong parallel in the experience of the two countries, with strong convergences, but also flagrant discrepancies in several emblematic aspects.

Concerning the current situation of conflict in Sahara, **« Libérer l'Azawad ». La reformulation des luttes politiques touarègues**, Hélène Claudot-Hawad analyses how the semantic register of the Tuareg struggles of liberation has evolved. The numerous resistance uprisings that Tuaregs in Sahara carried out against colonial and postcolonial powers share many similar grounds. Nevertheless, they have been re-formulated according to successive historical and ideological contexts, marked by the violence of confrontations with the established order, by the creation of new administrative and State entities and by the rough or negotiated constraints which led the Tuareg people to profound internal social change.

The article by Maddy Weitzman titled **Is the Ethnic Genie out of the Bottle? Berbers and the 'North African Spring' five years on**, deals with issues related to ethnicity and its impact on the politics of the region following the post 2011 events in North Africa. The emergence of Morocco and Algeria as modern nation states following their independence marked a constant tension between each state and its ethnic Amazigh minorities. This study analyses the protests during 2011 in Morocco and Algeria by investigating the relative achievements, limitations, and grievances and instability in the peripheries of the two countries. In Morocco, one of the limitations of the Amazigh movement, and of social and political movements in general, has been the discontinuity between urban-based organizations and activists and the Moroccan periphery, mostly Amazigh villages and towns, who confront tangible health, economic, infrastructural

and environmental problems. In Algeria, while in the Kabylia region the absence of anti-regime protests was particularly evident, in the south, inter-ethnic tensions between Mzabi Berbers, who practice Ibadi Islam, and the Sunnite Chaamba Arabs exploded in a series of violent episodes. The causes were a combination of local factors and state policies, even if the ethnic factor, according to the author, became the central reference point of the conflict. This contribution approaches also some themes concerning Libya and Mali. In these countries, the issues are different and the principal question is whether or not a state, unitary or federal, can be re-established.

In Lybia, during and after the fall of al-Qadhafi's regime, the Berber-Amazigh civil society played an essential role, emerging as a cultural and political player during the revolution on the upper hills of the *Infusen* (Nefusi) mountain range in 2011. This is the main argument of Madghis Buzakhar, Mazigh Buzakhar, and Nasser Buzakhar's joint article, **The Role of Amazigh Libyan Civil Society in the Tamazgha Spring**. The Berber-Amazigh movement progressed during the post-revolutionary period as a cultural and political advocate seeking reconsideration and recognition within the country's constitutional framework. The paper seeks to present the methods used to mobilize people with highly ambitious goals of social and political transformation.

Remaining in Libya, Masin Ferkal, in the article titled **Tamazgha orientale : émergence/renaissance du combat amazigh après 2011. L'Amazighité en Libye et en Tunisie,** compares the Amazigh movement in Tunisia with that of Libya. It seems clear to the author that the fall of Ben Ali's regime allowed the emergence of Amazighity in Tunisia. On several occasions the Amazigh have had to remind the Tunisian political class that Tunisia is also Amazigh. The civil war of the Libyan neighbours and the way in which they performed Amazighity was not without its influence on the awakening of the Amazigh in Tunisia. The author hypothesizes that the direct contact with the refugees in Tunisia could play an additional role for Libyan Amazigh.

The articles in this book also provide a reflection on internationally recognized issues that have repercussions and implications for the societies of the countries under study. The theme of women's social, cultural, and political role is one of them. The article titled **The Big Absent in the Moroccan Feminist Movement: The Berber Dimension** by Fatima Sadiqi is a scholarly reflection on the twenty-

first century emergence of Berber identity, its meaning and implications for the feminist discourses in Morocco. The emergence of Berber identity poses major challenges for the Moroccan feminist movements, both secular and Islamic. It is true that secular Moroccan feminism has only had about four decades or less of existence to acquire political dexterity and know-how, but it has nonetheless overwhelmingly focused on urban women and ignored the country's pre-Islamic heritage. As far as Islamic feminism is concerned, it seems, generally speaking, to reduce multiple identities of Moroccan women to religious identity. Accordingly, it does not seem to perceive language issues as crucial. These two feminisms tend to read the resistance of women to oppression in a masked, conflictual, limited way, sweeping away other ways in which women understand and express resistance. Since pre-Islamic times, Berber women have always been real agents of change in their communities and societies. In this contribution, the author attempts to highlight the central role of Berber women in preserving their language and culture, as well as their role in religious affairs and the leadership of Berber armies, and in the creation and safeguard of orality, rituality, literature, art and symbolism that underline the way of life of Berber women in all North African countries. The story of the agency of Berber women is characterized by continuity and change, but it has been remarkably absent in the Moroccan feminist movement.

In the final section *Berber Movements, Evolution and Challenges*, in his carefully crafted essay**,** Ahmed Boukous (**Amazigh Constitutionalization in Morocco: Stakes and Strategies**) attempts to analyse the new stakes and challenges which are becoming more and more visible on the Moroccan political scene after the unprecedented historical event of Amazigh being made a national language.

The paper by Anna Maria Di Tolla, **Mouvements de revendication amazighe entre luttes de reconnaissance identitaire et reconciliation / justice démocratique au Maroc** discusses how the Berbers have been able to survive and preserve their linguistic and cultural identity as the result of constant negotiations, even if it has often had a delayed effect on interactions with the various regimes that have been in place since independence. The Berbers have supported and strengthened the defence of their traditions, their language and their personality only through determined and constant resistance. They have succeeded, as the progress in Morocco and

Algeria shows, in bringing about the development of Berberity-Amazighity in a socio-cultural domain and even at the political level. On the other hand, at the local and regional levels, the movement, which has a largely urban origin (intellectuals, academics, etc.), has not been able to gain greater consent in rural areas, where unemployment, poverty, and other social problems have become endemic, as is the case with the Moroccan South East region. Today, the Berber rural population, in particular the youth, has greater identity awareness, but it does not always identify with an urban movement that makes choices in their name.

According to the paper by Kamal Naït Zerad, titled **Évolution de la revendication berbère en Afrique du Nord**, the situation of the Berber language in North Africa is evolving: after several events and crises, it became an official state language first in Morocco, and then in Algeria. This paper focuses on Kabylia and on the transformation process of the Berber movement's demands, which became political rather than culturalist.

The paper **The Berber Movement in North Africa: Evolution and Challenges** by Moha Ennaji focuses on the changes in the status of Amazigh, from a non-recognized spoken language to a national written language, and on how the Berber movement leaders, in Morocco and in the diaspora, make use of transnational and cultural arguments to achieve political gains, since their demands are also political, including the political integration of the Berbers, the consolidation of their plural identities, the rule of law, social justice, and gender equality.

In his paper titled **La construction d'un mouvement national identitaire kabyle : du local au transnational**, Mohand Tilmatine argues that the process of claiming and constructing a Berber identity consciousness began being articulated at the beginning of the 1980s. The nature of the ideological choices of the governance system already installed in the North African countries since independence, and the limits inherent in them, showed their incapacity to engage with a plural linguistic and cultural reality. The consequences of this ideology have been a policy of exclusion and persecution of Berber activists who reacted with a strategic repositioning of human rights. The inclusion of their action within the overall framework of contemporary global processes allowed the Berber movement to redefine its symbolic values and objectives in a transnational space.

This volume, as well as the 2014 international conference, is part of the research program PRIN 2010-2011: *State, Plurality, Change in Africa* financed by the Italian Ministry of Education, University and Research.[33] The preparation process included one round of peer reviewing by anonymous readers to whom we are very much obliged for helping us in the difficult task of editing a book. The articles presented in this volume have been formally standardized as far as possible in order to facilitate the readers' comprehension of Arabic proper and place names. Some differences in the spelling of names have been maintained where it seemed important to respect the individual character of each contribution. Our thanks are also due to Sara Borrillo and Valentina Schiattarella, postdoctoral research fellows at the Department of Asian, African and Mediterranean Studies (DAAM), who helped us in the editing of the volume. Last but not least, we want to thank David Ginsborg, Barbara de Lutzinger and Sarah Pinto for their competence and patience in revising the English and French language throughout the volumes.

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