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RESISTANCE OF THE MINORITY OTHER AND THEIR COEXISTENCE WITHIN THE DOMINANT GROUP: THE CASE OF MOROCCAN IMAZIGHEN

RESISTÊNCIA DO OUTRO MINORITÁRIO E SUA COEXISTÊNCIA DENTRO DO GRUPO DOMINANTE: O CASO DO IMAZIGHEN MARROQUINO

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Abstract: Resistance of the minority other and their coexistence within the dominant group is one of the oldest striking issues in the social and political ideologies of several Arab countries. It is viewed as a major aspect upon which society's safety, social stability and well being are based. For example the group of Imazighen1 in Morocco has been struggling to be as linguistically and culturally recognized as Arab people; they have been resisting to live as an unimportant minority in the eye of the dominant group or as another whose culture and language do not conform to the relevant ongoing evolution of the society. Accordingly, this paper purports to investigate the notion of minority (Imazighen) resistance and coexistence in the dominant group (Arabs) under the tenets of ethnographic research approach. The study takes place in Ain Taoujdate2 city as the area of investigation, and it opts for the interview and the story telling task as two instruments for qualitative data collection. To that end, two main patterns of result are yielded; concerning coexistence among groups, participants reveal that at the surface all groups or subgroups coexist with each other and no conflicts emerge in this area; however, formal and firm ties characterize their coexistence in the sense that close relationships are reserved merely for members of one's own group. As far as the notion of minority resistance is concerned, interviewees 'stories display that Imazighen's centuries old struggle for recognition results in the officialization of the Amazigh language and its symbolic implementation in the school curricular; yet, such processes are mere words on paper and Imazighen are still underrepresented in most social spheres in the Moroccan society.

Keywords: Minority resistance. Minority coexistence. Moroccan Imazighen.

Resumo: A resistência da minoria e sua coexistência com o grupo dominante é uma das questões mais antigas e marcantes nas ideologias sociais e políticas de vários países árabes. Ela é vista como

[1] The indigenous people of Morocco are Imazighen or the Berbers, as different civilizations have referred to them.

[2] Morocco is divided into 12 regions; Ain Taoujdate belongs to the third region of Fes-Meknes in the province of Elhajeb in the middle Atlas of Morocco. It lies on an area of 446,550 km2 with a population of 216 388 inhabitants, 92 540 are males while females constitute 123 848 from the whole population. Like most of the cities in the province of Elhajeb, this area is known by its agricultural activities which make basic groundwork upon which the economy of the city relies, (Morocco's population census, 2014).

um aspecto importante no qual se baseiam a segurança, a estabilidade social e o bem-estar da sociedade. Por exemplo, o grupo Imazighen, no Marrocos, tem lutado para ser reconhecido linguística e culturalmente como povo árabe; eles têm resistido a viver como uma minoria sem importância aos olhos do grupo dominante ou como outra pessoa cuja cultura e idioma não estão em conformidade com a evolução relevante e contínua da sociedade. Dessa forma, este artigo pretende investigar a noção de resistência e coexistência da minoria (Imazighen) no grupo dominante (árabes) sob os princípios da abordagem de pesquisa etnográfica. O estudo é realizado na cidade de Ain Taoujdate como área de investigação e opta pela entrevista e pela tarefa de contar histórias como dois instrumentos de coleta de dados qualitativos. Para tanto, foram obtidos dois padrões principais de resultados: com relação à coexistência entre os grupos, os participantes revelaram que, superficialmente, todos os grupos ou subgrupos coexistem entre si e não há conflitos nessa área; entretanto, laços formais e firmes caracterizam sua coexistência no sentido de que as relações próximas são reservadas apenas para os membros do próprio grupo. No que diz respeito à noção de resistência da minoria, as histórias dos entrevistados mostram que a luta secular do Imazighen pelo reconhecimento resulta na oficialização do idioma Amazigh e sua implementação simbólica no currículo escolar; no entanto, esses processos são meras palavras no papel e o Imazighen ainda está sub-representado na maioria das esferas sociais da sociedade marroquina.

Palavras-chave: Resistência das minorias. Coexistência de minorias. Imazighen marroquino.

Introduction

Resistance does not simply grow of its own volition in meadows unplanted and unwatered; the 'other' oppressed deploys new weaponry as a ploy preparatory to creating a culture of resistance. The latter flourishes especially when the other is an indigenous group whose culture and language have dwindled over time. This is the case of Moroccan Imazighen who, since the outset of Morocco's independence, have been struggling to live, as linguistically and culturally, as equal as Arabs. They resist to all types of marginalization manifested in their underrepresentation in schools, at work and in all the active sectors. Morocco is a multilingual and multicultural society where different tongues are spoken and different social groups co-exist which make the Moroccan community an exception; as stated by Youssi (29), "the multilingual and multidialectal situation prevailing throughout the strata of Moroccan society seems to be unique". However, such diversity, if not accepted or equally represented, may provoke a ground for cultural heterogeneity, conflict and group favoritism.

1. Imazighen and Arabs' Background

1.1 Imazighen

Literature on North African history is vast in confirming that the indigenous people of Morocco are Imazighen or the Berbers, as different civilizations have referred to them. They spread from the Siwa Oasis on the Egyptian and Lybian frontiers to the Canary Islands in the Atlantic ocean and from the southern coast of the Mediterranean to the northern areas of Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso (Aissati 60). Historically speaking, Morocco was under the control of the Berbers prior to 215 BC, and then it was captured by the Romans. The term "Berber" was used in ancient times to refer to whoever speaks a tongue strange to the one spoken by the dominant groups. The Greek used to call all other peoples, including even those of Latin stock, Barbarians; and when they came to Morocco, they referred to the indigenous people speaking the Amazigh language as Barbarians (Aissati 60; Ouchen 87). This term continued to be attributed to Imazighen even with the emergence of the Byzantine civilisation, the advent of Islamic conquests and during the colonial protectorate era.

However, Berbers used to identify themselves as Amazigh which is imbued with "nobleness, chivalry and a sense of honour", and Imazighen is the plural form (Foucault 673). Officially, the group of Imazighen falls under three categories in Morocco; Bennis (82) states a clear division of these groups and their spoken variety. Accordingly, he highlights the group of "Zénète" as speaking Tarifit and their place of dwelling is located between Al Hoceima and Nador passing by Beni-Snassen in the east as well as "Zénète" of Beni-Ouaraine in the South of Taza. In this study this group is referred to as "Rifi people". The second group is that of "Sheluh" and their variety is Tashlhit; their place of living entails the High and Anti Atlas mountains as well as Souss-Dra; the adopted terminology in this study is "Susi people". The last division includes the group of "Beraber" who speak Tamazight and their place of living includes the following cities: Azrou, Boulmane, El-hajeb, Errachidia, Goulmima, Khemisset, Khenifra, Meknes and Sefrou (Boukous 17). In this paper, the last group is referred to as "Shluh" given the name they are known by in this area of investigation (Ouchen 95). For these reasons, it is deemed worthwhile to mention that the first inhabitants of Ain Taoujdate are Imazighen of the middle Atlas who speak Tamazight. However, given the migration movement that occurred as a process of populating the area, the place has started to contain not only Amazigh but also Rifi and Susi people as well as Arabs coming from different regions in Morocco.

1.2 Arabs

The first arrival of Arabs in Morocco occurred in the early 8th century at the high of the Arab conquest which led to the extension of the Arab-Islamic Empire from Persia to North Africa where Morocco was a case in point. The first group of Arabs who appeared in the region were about 20 000 people and were sedentary urban (Laroui qtd. In Ennaji 10). They defeated the Christian Byzantine power in North Africa, and most of the Jewish and Christian natives converted to Islam. At the beginning of the emergence of Islam, Imazighen (Berbers) who made up the major population, at that time, did not adopt the Arabic language; they maintained their native language. The second wave of Arab conquerors were Banu Hilal, Banu Maaqil and Banu Suleim tribes that were expelled from Egypt in 1050 CE, and they were accepted by the Amazigh society since they had a lot in common with them; the fact that both of them were nomads. Subsequently, most Moroccan people converted to Islam and progressively Arabic has been used as the main language in the coastal areas, whereas the Amazigh language was frequent and recurrent in the mountainous and rural ones (Ennaji 11).

Arabic did not face any obstacles to get extended in Morocco since there is a remarkable relationship between this language and Islam; as a result, a gradual domination of Arabic over Tamazight started to take place. Indeed, the Arab-Islamic conquest reached a golden age after the great success in integrating and assimilating many non-Arab countries into Islam. However, soon after the invasion of Baghdad in 1258 by the Ottoman Empire, the Arab-Islamic conquest suffered from a 'deep stagnation' and a 'real regression' in the sense that Islam was depicted as entailing religious conservatism and dogmatism. Therefore, the Arab civilization suffered a serious decline and "its rebirth occurred after the campaign of Bonaparte in Egypt in 1798 and the openness of the Arab-Islamic culture to the modern world" (Fitouri qtd. In Ennaji 11).

In addition to the two previously mentioned waves, Bennis (83) refers to two other phases marking the arrival of Arabs to Morocco. The 9th century phase which is characterized by the construction of Fes city, and the last one dates back to 15th century and was characterized by the immigration of Andalusians to Morocco. Such movements, among others, have contributed to the influx of Arabs to the Maghreb, in general, and to the Moroccan territory, in particular.

2. Imazighen and Arabs' Relationships

The population of the Middle Atlas has never been exclusively Amazigh since there has always been an influx of newcomers (Arabs) who "tried to eke out an existence as shepherds, sharecroppers or guard of the grain stores...they started in a position of social inferiority" (Venema and Mguild 37). Before the protectorate era prior to 1912, Amazigh tribes were not under the control of the government (Makhzen); they followed their tribal law system (Azerf or Droit Coutumier) (D. Hart 1967, Waterbury 165, Aissati 72, Ouchen 150). Only the settlers had a right to access to the lineage heritage (land and water) and every lineage had a "jama'," (a council) which managed its land and granted permission of access; however, Arabs were denied this right. Imazighen developed a traditional procedure of adoption which allowed Arabs to settle under the protection of a Berber (Amazigh) tribesman who might ensure that the "newcomer" behaved loyally and according to their tribal customs. The adoption process occurred when the newcomer (generally an Arab) performed the ceremony of "tamghrouste" by slaughtering one or more sheep at his protector's house; a process which would be followed by granting the person full citizenship of Berber society by the village council. This meant that the adopted person would have access to a variety of rights such as land and public pastures as well as some responsibilities like participating in warfare and in collective work (Venema and Mguild 40).

With the influx of the French colonists, such traditions started to disappear since French and Arab people (coming from Fez and Meknes) started to have access to land and other resources independently without performing the "tamghrouste" ceremony and without the control of an Amazigh tribesman. Another event that characterizes the past relationship between Imazighen and Arabs was the elaboration of the Berber Decree (Dahir Berbère) in 1930 which was "the ultimate attempt by France to separate Berbers from Arabs" (Aissati 61). This Decree stipulated "areas with Berber as the dominant language-mostly rural areas-were entitled to carry on their tribal law system". The French colonial power pretended that this decree was elaborated by Imazighen themselves; however, the population of Arab-dominant areas protested against it and called for a national unity between Imazighen and Arabs. A major contributing event that united and strengthened the relationship between Imazighen and Arabs was the will to fight against colonization which was led at two opposite sides. As Aissati (62) puts it "the round tables and discussion sessions between "representatives" of national interests and the colonizing administration were led by the

urban, mostly a non Berber elite, while the fighting on the ground and the armed resistance was more the business of the Berbers".

After the independence of the country in 1956, the first concern was to draw the lines of a constitution and the "Istiqlal" party was the symbol of the nationalist movement for independence. One of the national policies was "to do away with the differentiated Arab and Berber policies of the colonial era, especially the traditions that Berbers had been allowed to retain their customary law" (Venema and Mguild 42). Accordingly, access to tribal lands was no longer a matter of the lineage council for people have the right to settle freely and independently wherever they wanted. In the constitution of 1962, it was made obvious that Morocco is a Muslim state and Arabic is the official language without a single mention of Tamazight either as a language or as part of Moroccan identity. This decision raised resentment among the Amazigh tribes, and in the Middle Atlas two tribal leaders Lahcen Lyoussy and Mahjoub Aherdane called together for a tribal gathering of several hundred Amazigh leaders and their followers to demonstrate their dissatisfaction against the new adopted policies. The call for the recognition of a distinct Amazigh identity was the major concern of many Amazigh activists who viewed the constitution as neglecting the rights of millions of Amazigh speakers since no article mentioned their rights to use their native language in courts or in other administrations.

These demonstrations were backed up by the foundation of L'Association Marocaine de la Recherche et de l'Echange Culturel (AMREC) in 1967, which specialized in promoting research on Amazigh language and culture. Another event of paramount importance was the Berber spring (Tafsut n Imazighen) in 1980 which was a reaction against the Algerian authorities' decision to cancel a lecture which was to be given on Kabyle poetry by the renowned scholar Mouloud Mammeri. This event gained the status of a symbol of the fight for an Amazigh identity and was celebrated by Algerians, Moroccans and other Imazighen of North Africa (Aissati 66). In Morocco, the call for the recognition of Amazigh cultural and linguistic rights was formalized in a chart known as "La 88 Charte d'Agadir" which was signed by six cultural associations in Agadir in 1991. It aimed at the recognition of Tamazight as a national language by the constitution and its implementation in schools. Eventually, the first time the Amazigh issue was dealt with was on August 20th 1994 when king Hassan II talked about the importance of recognizing Amazigh as an important aspect of the Moroccan identity.

In short, numerous are the studies dealing with the relationship between Arabs and Imazighen; only some of them will be mentioned given the limited scope of this research paper. For instance, a piece of research carried out by Venema and Mguild (36), focuses on the ancient relationship between "Settlers" (Imazighen) and "Newcomers" (Arabs) in the Middle Atlas of Morocco. The findings reveal that the relationship between the two groups was tense and volatile in the sense that both Imazighen and Arabs made use of a set of stereotypes to depict each other. Accordingly, the origin of the tensions between the two groups were due to problems related to accessing to land as the authors put it, "in the Middle Atlas tensions between the founding families and newcomers derive from disputes about access to land and other resources". Going back to the case of Ain Taoujdate, the area of investigation, on the surface Imazighen and Arabs seem to coexist with each other as one homogeneous group. This is reflected in the fact that no division between Imazighen and Arabs appears at the level of Douars; in each douar, Shluh, Arabs, Rifi people and some Susi families live together. There exist some mixed marriages between members coming from different groups too. However, observation does not enable us to draw conclusions as far as the coexistence between Arabs and Imazighen is concerned without living in this place and listening to people's stories as the main source of the social reality.

3. Method

3.1 Research Objectives

In line with these theoretical affiliations, this research seeks to set out Imazighen and Arabs' attitudes towards their coexistence in Ain Taoujdate, the area of investigation. Firstly, the main interest, is to investigate Arabs'-a culturally and linguistically dominant group- and Imazighen 's- a culturally and linguistically minority group- attitudes vis-à-vis the co-living among each other. Another concern of this study is to examine the extent to which Imazighen's resistance to social inequality results in some sort of equity between all members of the society. Indeed various studies have tackled the issue of coexistence between Imazighen and Arabs in different regions in Morocco; yet no previous research has addressed the same issue in Ain Taoujdate, an area known by the very ancient co living between Arabs and Imazighen. The guided questions this research purports to answer are as follows:

How do Imazighen and Arabs perceive the co-existence between them in Ain Taoujdate?

Does Imazighen's centuries long struggle for –cultural and linguistic-recognition yield eminent results?

3.2 Participants

For the selection of participants, the study adopts two elicitation techniques; random and purposive sampling. The first criterion is used in the selection of places to be visited which results in four areas: "Ait Moussa", "Ait Mzouz Tinza", "Ait Boubel", "Ait Moussa Himmi" in addition to Ain Taoujdate city. As far as purposive sampling is concerned, such a sampling procedure is mainly used in the selection of interviewees because it is deemed significant to have a varied sample in terms of age groups, literacy level, and gender. This variety gives the chance to each trait in the society to voice their attitudes as far as the issue under study is concerned. The final sample totals 80 participants.

3.3 Instruments

To get deep insight into informants' attitudes towards the coexistene of Imazighen and Arabs in Ain Taoujdate, the semi-structured interview and the story telling task are used so as to reach out social reality/ies from the source. In this regard, different techniques are adopted to well run the interview. First of all, informants are made, aware of the topic under study and the nature of the questions to discuss with them. They are also explained the simplicity of the task; the fact that there are no correct or false answers and their stories and attitudes are of paramount importance to the findings of this study. The interview starts with general questions such as: How long have you been living here? What are some of the connotations of the name of this place? Who comes first Arabs or Imazighen? In this way the interviewees are motivated to narrate their life stories concerning broad issues. Such techniques comfort them to answer specific questions related to the topic under research. The level of the questions and the spoken language are also made up to the interviewees' level. In case some interviewees deviate from the issue under investigation, the strategy adopted is listening carefully to them, sharing and feeling their stories, providing advice if possible then inviting them to come back to the topic under study progressively.

3.4 Research design

Investigating the resistance of the minority group and their coexistence within the dominant group "to understand another way of life from the native point of view" situates the present study within the ethnographic approach. One of the tenets of such a design is that people are meaning makers of the world where they live and the social reality is revealed in their own terminologies and perceptions (Spindler and Spindler 65; Goldbart and Hustler 16; Ouchen 105). Advocators of the ethnographic tradition believe that "rather than studying people, ethnography means learning from people" (Spardly 3). Accordingly, it is believed that "human behavior cannot be understood without incorporating into the research the subjective perceptions and belief systems of those involved in the research, both the researchers and subjects" (Nunan 53). Equally important, the study adopts the narrative or the realist tale model for data collection and analysis; this creates an encouraging and motivating realistic atmosphere where interviewees could narrate their stories and life experiences related to the issues under study.

4. Results

4.1 Imazighen's attitudes towards the coexistence between them and Imazighen

Most Imazighen interviewees' stories reveal that there are no conflicts between Imazighen or Arab people. They deal with each other homogeneously, they share all public spheres, and they live in the same neighborhoods. In formal relationships, Imazighen seem to deal with members coming from other groups normally; yet in close ties, things seem to differ. For instance, most informants state that Rifi[3] or Susi[4] people prefer dealing and getting in touch with members of their groups; they do not attend out-group members' ceremonies or gatherings in general. It is very rare for Susi or Rifi males to get married with females coming from an "outgroup". For them, mixed marriages push people to get influenced by another culture which they perceive as a kind of immigration from one's own identity. Many interviewees assume that different stories happen just nearby when a Rifi male would like to marry an Arab female and his family would ban such a relationship. Accordingly, some of the stories may end dramatically either the head of the family may kick

3 Imazighen of the north
4 Imazighen of the south

out the son if he is not to obey his order, or the son may choose to cut ties with his relatives. The same pattern is found in Susi people's customs; they do not invite members of other groups to their celebrations and they would prefer their sons to marry Susi females. Such intra-relationships are considered as a way of protecting one's own tradition, culture and identity. Various stories are narrated, in this respect, the following one is told by a 32 years old Rifi male;

> This story happened to me. My father was working abroad; when he came back he asked me to get married with a member of my family. As far as I am concerned I was against that idea; I didn't want to get married from my family because I didn't like their way of thinking. I wanted to change a bit. One day, a man, not from my family, came to ask for my cousin's hand for marriage, my uncle informed my father asking him whether to accept this marriage or keep my cousin for me. My father ordered me to marry her but I didn't accept; I told him frankly: "whatever would happen I will never marry that girl" because I don't want to marry from family. Some years passed when I wanted to get married, I chose an Arab woman; but my father didn't accept pretending that our customs are different from theirs and that we can't deal with them. I insisted on my decision telling them that it's me who would get married and not another one. So we got married, let's say, out of their permission. So far, whenever they may notice a behavior different from ours they may say: "this is what we warned you about before".

This story among a number of other ones displays that at the surface Imazighen and Arabs co-live with each others; no conflicts emerge in this area. However, formal and firm ties characterize such coexistence; close relationships are reserved merely for members of one's own group. In short, the major finding is that there is no apparent conflict neither among Imazighen nor between them and Arabs; however, the main trait that endorses relationships between Arabs and Imazighen is formality since members identify better in their own in-groups. As Venema and Mguild (38) claim "there is no Berber-Arab ethnic conflict because social realities offer scope for overcoming traditional ethnic boundaries".

4.2 Arabs' attitudes towards the Co-existence between them and Imazighen

On the differences of accounts about Arabs' perceptions of the coexistence between them and Imazighen, the main significant point is similar to what Imazighen interviewees have stated in the previous section. Most of them assume that Arabs and Imazighen cohabit with each other homogeneously; no apparent conflict is noticed, but the relationship is limited to formal dealings; it is very rare that members of such a group accept individuals of another group into theirs. The following story is told by a 92 years old male;

> I came here in 1930, at that moment there were very apparent conflicts between Imazighen and whoever came to settle in their land. There was a kind of hatred between Arabs and Imazighen; they used to hate Arabs or even dealing with them. They even asked the French colonialist to separate them from Arabs. They wanted to stay just among themselves; no one intervened among them. I am speaking about the first Imazighen. They didn't accept to deal with Arabs; they didn't attend their ceremonies nor invited them to their special occasions. They did not even accept their children to get married from them. Imazighen deal with us merely in business; we can never visit them home. They are selfish; they do not like anyone.

Based on Arabs' stories, the main theme that emerges is that in the past conflicts between Arabs and Imazighen were so noticeable not only in Ain Taoujdate but also in other different areas in Morocco. A very important point that should be mentioned is that, in Ain Taoujdate, Arabs make clear distinction between the three subgroups of Imazighen shluh[5] (Imazighen of the middle Atlas), Susi and Rifi. Interviewees' stories talk about the Arabization of Shluh; the fact that their members get married with Arab people; they have become acculturated with new traditions which is viewed as a loss of one's own culture and identity. At the same time, interviewees insist that Susi and Rifi people reject close relationships with members of other groups as a way to preserve their own customs, wealth and identity. Many of them consider intermarriage as getting involved in a mixed marriage with a foreigner; it is a sort of immigration from one's own culture. Such mindset is not specific to inhabitants of Ain Taoujdate but it has dominated different towns and villages in Morocco. Many stories contend that Imazighen resent close relationships with Arab people because they believe that Arabs has stolen their culture and identity. Imazighen are the indigenous inhabitants of Morocco and their language and culture are supposed to be the most dominant but they are the most marginalized. They did not accept to shift from the status of leaders into followers; they think that their past acceptance of Arabs makes them lose their own identity. In brief, Arabs' stories on this issue reveal that no serious conflicts can be said to exist between Arabs and Imazighen; apart from the traditional way of thinking that still dominates the social life of some; Arabs and Imazighen coexist with one another homogeneously.

[5] Imazighen of the middle Atlas

4.3 Resistance of the minority other and their coexistence within the dominant group

There are no exact statistics about the number of Imazighen in Morocco; no study can claim this group as minority or dominant. Most urban as well as rural areas witness coexistence of a variety of people coming from different social groups. However, the use of minority in this research stems from the fact that Arabic language (in reference to Arab people) is the mostly used language in society. It is well represented in all the different fields, at schools, work, administrations, court, and hospitals; yet Amazigh language (in reference to Imazighen) lacks equal status. The following story is narrated by a 55 years old Arab female;

> I was born here and I have been living here for more than 50 years. Imazighen do not want any close relationship with Arabs. They want their children to talk just the Amazigh language because they see that their language is dying. Really Amazigh is a dead language. What's this language for? Where can our children use it? They can teach this language, only, to Imazighen. I think we live in one country and it should be one language to avoid separation and racism.

Accordingly, most Arabs' stories display that Imazighen should not struggle for separation. They think that Amazigh language is not that important to be implemented into the society because it is a dead language; it is not a language of science or social-economic growth. It was the language of our ancestors but it should only be used by native Imazighen and not imposed on those coming from an Arab origin. Nevertheless, Imazighen voice different attitudes and perceptions. They believe in the importance of implementing the Amazigh language into society's different sectors. They feel a sense of marginalization whenever they witness a total absence of Amazigh in their life. This story is told by a 24 years old Amazigh female;

> We live this problem daily because we are Imazighen. My mother speaks only Amazigh; when she has to deal with an administrative affair, nobody understands her. There should be someone with her. Last time, she has a case related to heritage in the court; my father went with her to translate to her. Amazigh is our language and it should be, actively, present in the society in all the fields. Recently, Amazigh has become an official language; this language should be as representative for us as Arabic.

On the differences of stories, Imazighen believe that they are, linguistically and culturally, a minority other because the officialization of the Amazigh language is no more than a written strategy that society displyast. Despite the centuries old struggle of Imazighen

to achieve recognition and social equity, the social reality reveals that they are marginalized. They feel themselves in the position of a minority other since no real practical attention is paid to their language and culture. Big initiatives have been taken by the government to lift Imazighen's spirit through the officialization of the Amazigh language and its implementation in the school curricular. But Imazighen contend that constructive steps should be taken to make the status of Amazigh as equal as the Arab language. There are some native people (Imazighen) who cannot communicate in another language except Amazigh. Consequently, the implementation of the Amazigh language should represent Imazighen in all the social fields. In brief, the findings of this study reveal that there are no over or covert conflicts between Imazighen and Arabs; both groups coexist with each other homogeneously. However, such coexistence is characterized by portraying Imazighen as a minority other (linguistically and culturally) in the dominant group (Arabs).

5. Discussion and Conclusion

Imazighen and Arabs dwell together in different regions of Morocco; the same situation has prevailed in the Middle Atlas, Ain Taoujdate is a case in point. Research reveals that such an area has never been exclusively Imazighen since there has always been an influx of "newcomers", the Arabs who "tried to eke out an existence as shepherds, sharecroppers or guard of the grain stores [...] they started in a position of social inferiority" (Venema and Mguild 37). Literature is consistent in showing that past relationships between Arabs and Imazighen were tense due to problems related to land access and other resources (Hoffman 62). Similarly, in this research, informants' accounts state that in the past, conflicts between Arabs and Imazighen were very apparent not only in the form of attitudes but also behavior. Individuals coming from both groups did not use to share neither happy gatherings nor sad ones; one informant said there was also a statement that used to be very popular in Imazighen's speech when an Arab person died "'laš tbki ɣas ta'rabt tmutən" (why do you cry it is just an Arab person who died).

According to the context of this study, despite what has been approached, there are no overt or covert conflicts between Imazighen and Arabs in Ain Taoujdate; nearly all the groups cohabit peacefully. Yet, as far as close relationships are concerned group favouritism shows strongly especially for Susi and Rifi people. They believe that wives from their own groups understand better their traditions and customs, their mentality and their way of living.

This result pattern replicates previous findings; for instance, a study carried out by Hoffman (70) in the Anti Atlas of Morocco, displays that "Ishelhin [Imazighen] seldom married Arabs", "the fact that their being Arabs made their Ishelhin neighbors distrust them". Although Arabs and Ishelhin cohabit within the same boundaries of land, especially a territory which used to be that of Imazighen, relationships among them are characterized by caution and distrust on the part of Imazighen. The latter considers Arabs as intruders into their own way of life, and they have become co-owners with them in land. For Imazighen, keeping away from other groups is a way to prevent intermarriage with them; however, sometimes if not most of the times, such barriers are broken by the new generation which rebels against their parents' traditional way of thinking. As one informant states "lḥub tləf had wlad ljum li ħna bɣinah matlaw bɣawh" (Love misleads this new generation; they do not want what we want).

The second finding reveals that centuries old resistance of Imazighen for recognition results in their coexistence as a minority, linguistically and culturally, in the dominant group (Arabs). They are marginalized linguistically especially many of them are monolingual speaking just the Amazigh language. As Ennaji (3) puts it "there are individual differences in language proficiency; the range is from monolingual Moroccan Arabic or Berber speakers to those who can use written Arabic as well as one or two foreign languages for special purposes or everyday conversation". Such a reality pushes policy makers to take those citizens into account at the level of information spread, entertainment, advertisement, etc. For instance, Moroccan TV channels broadcast advertisements, serials or shows in the Amazigh or Moroccan Arabic to target every member in society. However, activists and scholars interested in the Amazigh issue feel that there is still too much effort to be done to find a sort of equilibrium in society that involves and satisfies all living participants. The implementation of the Amazigh language in the Moroccan society should shift from representing a symbolic value of native people into an important element of their own identity and existence in society.

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