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Chapter II: ‘My Story’: Memory and Cultural Identity

My story is cold fever, my story is cold fever.
I will write it down on roads, I will write it down on roads.

It will neither be washed away by floods nor carried away by waters.
I will sow it in the fields, and it will be cultivated by peasants
It will neither be picked up by a falcon, nor pecked at by craws.
It will neither be washed away by floods nor carried away by waters.
It will neither be picked up by a falcon, nor pecked at by craws.

My story is tomorrow that children are waiting for.
Children will observe it as the crescent of Eid,\(^1\) they will play and be happy.
They will play it Fuleeele in the soil on which they have grown up.\(^2\)
They will play it hide and seek, and the reward is for thy who finds.

It will neither be washed away by floods nor carried away by waters.
I will sow it in the fields, and it will be cultivated by peasants
It will neither be picked up by a falcon, nor pecked at by craws.
It will neither be washed away by floods nor carried away by waters.
It will neither be picked up by a falcon, nor pecked at by craws.

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\(^1\) \textit{Eid} or \textit{Elicid} is the name of the two major Islamic festivals: \textit{Eid} al-Fitr is the ceremony that marks the end of Ramadan; \textit{Eid} al-Adha marks the end of the annual pilgrimage to Mecca (Hajj), and culminates with the sacrifice of a lamb.

\(^2\) \textit{Fuleeele} is a typical Rifian game children played in the past, and has now disappeared. The game consists of making small holes in the ground and uses them for the game.
My story is tomorrow that children are waiting for.

Children will observe it as the crescent of Elɛid, they will play and be happy.

They will play it Fuleɛele in the soil on which they have grown up.

They will play it hide and seek, and the reward is for thy who finds.

[The tempo becomes fast]

My story is tomorrow that children are waiting for.

Children will observe it as the crescent of Elɛid, they will play and be happy.

They will play it Fuleɛele in the soil on which they have grown up.

They will play it hide and seek, and the reward is for thy who finds.

My story is a dream of the future; my story is a dream of the future.

I will write it down with a pen, my heart and blood.

Women will use it to draw henna tattoos on hands.

Women will use it to draw henna tattoos on hands.

Women will sprinkle it on babies as curing water of Marṛu.

…on babies. (Izri, “TaĦeṣṣišt”; my trans.)

Introduction

In this chapter, through Khalid Izri’s song ‘My Story’ (1997), I look at how Amazigh subjects—either in diaspora or in their homeland—strive to articulate their Amazigh cultural identity in an increasingly fast-moving, globalised world. ‘My Story’ not only reflects the intricacy of the livelihood of Amazigh subjects (both in host countries and homeland), but also depicts the way these subjects negotiate their cultural identity in this fragmented and hostile world. Therefore, I look at how cultural elements, such as parts of ‘traditions’, rituals, and memory, represented in ‘My Story’ constitute remedies that assist

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3 The plant of Marṛu is Mentha Aquatica.
Amazigh subjects in articulating their identity in uncertainty and unstable spaces. Here I build on and expand Stuart Hall’s theory that regards identity as a continuous process making use of history and culture in ‘becoming rather than being’ (“Who Needs” 4). I contend that identity is about becoming, being, and belonging. That is, I argue that identity is not only changeable but also keeps fluid markers that provide a sense of continuity (either of a person’s identity or a community), and that subjects, as social beings, have a natural need to associate themselves with their families, friends, cultural groups, and communities.

Khalid Ichou (or Izri) is a well-known artist in Amazigh diaspora and throughout North Africa, who adores music and poetry. The singer began his carrier when he attended the Mohammed V University in Morocco. His artistic drive and the urge to discover the experience of migration encouraged him to venture out of Morocco. His journey first took him to Spain in 1992 and later to Belgium, where he currently lives. He advocates cultural diversity in Europe and has created a musical band that reflects such diversity. His band includes artists from various cultural backgrounds. He is an artist committed to infusing a range of sounds to create innovative Amazigh songs, and won Radio France International’s ‘Prix Decouvertes’ in 1991. He is also the first African artist to participate in the project ‘Le Monde est un Village’, organised by RTBF (Radio Television Belge Francophone) in 2007.

*Taqessist*, the title of his second album, is the outcome of many years Izri devoted to studying new sounds and combining them with lyrics written by today’s famous Amazigh poets. The lyrics of the song ‘*Taqessist Inu*’ are written by one of the best female Amazigh poets in Morocco, Fadma Elouriachi. ‘*Taqessist Inu*’ (‘My Story’) is a song that contemplates Amazigh identity, identity politics, and memory.

This chapter includes four sections. First, I study the role of identity politics vis-à-vis the (re)construction of Amazigh identity and how this identity is negotiated in various spaces and conditions. The second section highlights how these aspects interact and affect the cultural identity of Amazigh subjects through the song ‘My Story’. Here, I argue that ‘My Story’ reflects routes and not roots. In the third section, ‘My Story and My Culture’, I investigate the way the song ‘My Story’ depicts elements like festivities, customs, and

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4 I regard ‘tradition’ not as primordial, but as an ensemble of changing cultural elements continuously shaping and affecting subjectivities as much as they are affected by them.

5 Routes, in this context, means that the story of *Taqessist* addresses identity construction as processes that involve flows and intersections of discourses in various spaces.
traditions as part of an Amazigh culture that informs Amazigh identity. The last section, ‘Music and Amazigh Collective Memory’, highlights memory as an indispensable element in identity (re)construction, since it uses past events and practices to help Imazighen understand their present and construct their future. In addition, this section analyses the music of ‘My Story’ as an extension of the lyrics that mirror the conditions and emotions of Amazigh subjects.

The (re)construction of Amazigh identity and identity politics in *Taqeṣṣiṣt*

*Taqeṣṣiṣt Inu* means, my culture, my words and my identity. (Izri, interview)

When the word *Taqeṣṣiṣt* is translated in English, it literally means ‘story’. Nonetheless, according to the artist, *Taqessist* in the song implies culture and identity. In effect, the context and the way the word *Taqeṣṣiṣt* is constructed in and through the song have shaped its meaning drastically. *Taqessist* has evolved in the song to become a synonym of identity that represents Amazigh culture. Regarding the role of cultural practices in creating and shaping meanings, Stuart Hall argues that meaning is constructed through cultural practices. That is, the way a person, thing, or event is represented is what shapes its meanings: ‘In part, we give things meaning by how we represent them—the words we use about them, the stories we tell about them, the images of them we produce, the emotions we associate with them, the way we classify and conceptualize them, the values we place on them’ (*Representation* 3). Here, Stuart Hall emphasises the role of representation in shaping the contours of objects, subjects, and events. Therefore, it is constructive for any research that focuses on media and identity to first highlight the meaning of identity construction. Identity has been so conceptualised and overconceptualised that it has become incommensurable. Trying to understand the implications of such a concept is challenging; yet, without it, many key questions related to identity construction and culture cannot be addressed.6

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6 The outlining of the concept of identity can vary according to the disciplines in which it is used. In psychology, for instance, identity usually refers to the psychological sense of continuity or what is known as ‘the ego identity’, or the self (Erikson 24). However, identity in social and political theory is distinct from the self in psychology. In *Reasons and Persons*, Derek Parfit writes that there is no separately existing entity, ‘no Cartesian ego’, no sense or substance that constitutes a self. Instead, he emphasises a spectrum of more or less related events of body and mind, and he argues for multiple selves over an individual’s lifetime (Parfit 211-17). Unlike Erikson, Parfit sees no sense of continuity in identity; instead, he argues that identities change over time. He pictures the personality of a subject
For my research the demarcation of cultural identity and identity politics is relevant, since these two concepts will help me to examine the song ‘Taqeṣṣiṣṭ Inu’ and Amazigh consciousness. Although the concept of cultural identity overlaps with identity politics, the two remain different. On the one hand, identity politics refers to the political actions of a ‘minority group’ who struggle against oppression by a ‘dominant group’ (L.A. Kauffman). It implies the empowerment of an oppressed group by articulating their experiences in a process of consciousness-raising. Cultural identity, on the other hand, refers to the feeling of identity of a group or a culture; it is a sense of belonging to a particular group or culture.

It is noteworthy to look at the processes of identity construction in order to comprehend the implications of identity. Scholars like Van Beek argue that identities are constructed according to specific interests, by using traditions and ideas that might have been either regenerated or created for the purpose (119). In view of that, group’s identities are considered as highly situational and not primordial. In ‘The Dialectics of Cultural Pluralism: Concept and Reality’, Crawford Young also argues that identities emerge as a strategic choice that, in some instances, an individual would choose other group membership in order to gain some privileges and power (24). For these scholars, identity is considered the changeable product of an ongoing process of social interactions in which individuals chose particular identities according to their benefits.

Identity cannot only be regarded as either fixed or changeable (where emotions and interests play key roles), but must consider a fragmented process. 7 Stuart Hall asserts as a multiplicity that adapts or changes according to a particular period of time and space. Parfit’s conceptualisation draws attention to the relevance of experience in identity (re)construction, but it disregards the importance of continuity in a subject’s identity. It renders identity hollow, because it portrays it as a process of various phases disconnected from one another. A subject, as a social being, may change a job, house, country of residence, hobby, lifestyle, and name but there are always few cultural elements that link her or him to a particular culture, community and place or space.

7 In Ethos and Identity, the social anthropologist Arnold Epstein states that processes of identity formation cannot be described in terms of the strategic defence of one’s own interests alone. Although he does not negate the possibility of an intentional or unintentional role of interest in the process of identity reconstruction, he undermines its relevance in such process. The US-American anthropologist, Jonathan Friedman, in Cultural Identity and Global Processes, highlights another aspect in identity construction. He claims that affect and emotions are vital in any identity (re)construction process, and he rejects the idea that suggests people take on a new identity according to a costs-benefits
‘Identities are never unified and, in late modern times, increasingly fragmented and fractured’ (“Who Needs” 4). Stuart Hall emphasises an important factor in the construction of identity. He attributes such fragmentation to the current condition in which subjects’ identities are constructed through a spectrum of discourses and abide by globalisation. Indeed, the process of globalisation plays a central role in the (re)construction of identities in the present.

Identity (re)construction is an intersubjective process, and communities and individuals make use of elements that evoke continuity and unity, which are present in the process of expressing one’s story. Identity is the manifestation of an individual as well as a group existence. It determines who an individual or what a group is. It is significant to accentuate the idea that identity is a continuous process of becoming, just as culture is a changeable and a never-ending process. Stuart Hall depicts identity as a process of becoming: ‘Though they seem to invoke an origin in a historical past with which they continue to correspond, actually identities are about questions of using the resources of history, language and culture in the process of becoming rather than being’ (“Who Needs” 4). Stuart Hall underlines the idea of continuity in the process of (re)generating identities. Indeed, identities involve the process of becoming but history forms part of that process as well. Hall frames identity as a process in which elements from history are used without directly linking the two. In effect, past forms to a degree a starting point of any identity construction because without it there might be no identity at all. Importantly, the sense of belonging is a constitutive element in the process of identity construction. People have a natural need to belong because they tend to associate themselves with their families, organizations, linguistic groups, religious groups, nations, and societies. Hall’s conceptualisation of identity construction highlights an important point, especially regarding the role of representations in identity construction. As I discuss later, cultural artefacts like songs play a major role in the process of identity construction, since they balance. Unlike Young, Friedman sees emotions as key elements in the equation of identity (re)construction. Both Friedman and Epstein regard identity as primordial.

8 Is important to underline the fact that narrative identity constructed in the process of creative expression of one’s story is the substance that somehow creates the sense of continuity and coherence in the life story of individuals and groups and provides a purpose for their existence; for more about narrative identity, see Ricoeur’s *Time and Narrative* and *Memory, History and Forgetting*.

9 Here I use the idea of past as an evolving process that provides subjects with the ‘sense’ of certainty as they try to articulate their identities.
affect the dynamic relationship between, on the one hand, variability and unity of such identity, and on the other hand, between continuity and alteration. In effect, I inspect identity politics in Morocco and throughout the Amazigh diaspora through the idea that identity is about becoming, belonging and being.\textsuperscript{10}

Amazigh songs are a means of identification with community. To what extent is there a need for identification through songs and other cultural phenomena? What are the functions of Amazigh songs and what might they enact, or shape? In effect, they construct meaning and transmit it; they are media that create significance that members of Amazigh community can understand, identify with, and make use of in the process of shaping and re-articulating their identities. Identification is, for subjects, a process that gives meaning to existence, and importantly it provides subjects with what Stuart Hall calls ‘sense’ of identity (\textit{Representation} 3).

Various Amazigh movements promote a goal of fostering an Amazigh identity. To promote this identity they tend to underline the importance of cultural elements, such as language, rituals, and artefacts in the process of redefining an Amazigh identity. Many Imazighen of the Rif region in Morocco defend the right of their community to exist against the continuous attempts of the supposed hegemonic group in Morocco (i.e., Arab nationalists, who try to restrict the cultural activities of Imazighen). Therefore, a song like ‘My Story’ becomes an element with which people identify in order to have some relative certainty in their uncertain worlds.\textsuperscript{11} Amazigh subjects both in diaspora and country of origin identify with songs that they consume and appropriate in their daily lives, because these songs adopt and accommodate their stories.

In effect, Amazigh songs not only accommodate diaspora and homeland stories, but also create symbolic boundaries that ‘keep’ threats away.\textsuperscript{12} In ‘My Story’, Izri sings:

\begin{quote}
It is worthwhile mentioning that identity politics can encourage people to rectify their group identities (Fraser). Therefore, few Amazigh movements intentionally or unintentionally promote Amazigh identity as a ‘thing’ rather than a process.
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
Here I see identification as a continuous process; accordingly, I make use of Stuart Hall’s definition of identification, which he regards ‘as a construction, a process never completed—always “in process”’ (“Who Needs” 2).
\end{quote}

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There is wide belief among many Imazighen that Amazigh culture and identity are facing many threats in diaspora and in the homeland, and songs tend to highlight such threats in order to enlighten Imazighen who are supposed to keep these threats away and defend their culture.
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\textsuperscript{12} There is wide belief among many Imazighen that Amazigh culture and identity are facing many threats in diaspora and in the homeland, and songs tend to highlight such threats in order to enlighten Imazighen who are supposed to keep these threats away and defend their culture.
‘[My story] would not be snatched by a falcon nor pecked by craws’. This line evokes a threat looming over the skies of Amazigh culture. It emphasises the fact that there are elements, or craws and falcons, that want to annihilate Amazigh story and identity. This line highlights both the danger that threatens Amazigh culture and the process of identification that creates symbolic boundaries. That is, the process of identification with ‘Taçeṣṣiṭ Inu’ provides the sense of identity to the identifiers or ‘insiders’, and draws virtual boundaries that create the outside where the threat is.13 This outside, which ‘Taçeṣṣiṭ Inu’ represents as a threat, becomes crucial in strengthening a process of identification among Imazighen. Regarding the importance of such process in creating and shaping ‘frontier effects’ and the role of such boundaries in consolidating the process of identification itself, Hall writes, ‘identification is, then, a process of articulation, a suturing, an over-determination not a subsumption… as a process it operates across difference, it entails discursive work, the binding and marking of symbolic boundaries, the production of ‘frontier effects’. It requires what is left outside, its constitutive outside, to consolidate the process’ (“Who Needs” 3). Here the process of identification remains incomplete and obeys the logic of multiplicity. As a process, it shapes and reshapes ‘frontier effects’ and operates across difference in order to continue. Identification as an irresolute continuum requires symbolic boundaries that shape the sense of certainty among insiders, giving them the feeling that they belong somehow and somewhere and share a culture and identity.

‘Taçeṣṣiṣt Inu’ creates the idea of a threatening outside to emphasise a sense of identity. In ‘The New Mass Media and the Shaping of the Amazigh Identity’, Amar Almasude argues that an Arabo-Islamic ideology constitutes a major threat to the culture of the Amazigh people in North Africa (19). Although Almasude’s claim has some truth to it, it includes elements that are not quite accurate. For instance, the majority of Imazighen in Morocco are Muslim, and the threat against Amazigh identity does not stem from all Moroccan Arabs. Rather, the so-called Arab nationalists are those who actively try to eliminate Amazigh identity. The mentioning of these threats recurs in many Amazigh songs, and they are usually countered by defiance and emphasis on one’s identity. For instance, in his song ‘We Are Imazighen’ (1998), Amazigh artist Allal Chilah sings: ‘we are Imazighen, either they like it or not, we have always been Imazighen, we will die as Imazighen’ (my trans). The tone of defiance is clear in this verse and the pronoun ‘they’ in

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13 ‘Insiders’ refers to subjects who feel that they belong to a certain culture; they become insiders in relation to that particular culture.
it refers to those who try to deny the existence of Amazigh identity. Importantly, this verse emphasises the sense of identity: ‘we are Imazighen’. This tone of defiance characterises many Amazigh songs. Regarding the reasons for selecting the poem ‘Taqeşṣiṣt’ to be sung, Khalid Izri affirms that it reflects the defiant character of Imazighen (Interview). Throughout Europe are Imazighen who feel their identity is marginalised and constantly under threat. Consequently, many of these Imazighen see the promotion of Amazigh culture as a constructive step to enhance Amazigh identity.\(^\text{14}\)

Many Amazigh associations and groups organise events that promote Amazigh culture and contribute to a process of constructing and re-articulating Amazigh identity. Bouya and Tafsut (Morocco), Syphax (the Netherlands), Telëlli (Belguim), CADE (Spain), Association Culturelle Amazigh (France), Awaswa (England), Awal Imazighen (Germany), and the Amazigh Cultural Association in America (USA), are few examples among hundreds of Amazigh organizations active in Morocco and throughout the Amazigh diaspora. They create a network that arranges meetings and activities, such as Amazigh festivals, lectures by Amazigh academics, and debates. There are several key ideas on the main webpage of Syphax association, for example, that are significant: ‘It is constitutive that we are aware of our culture and identity … and we regard Amazigh culture both as a reflection of the past and a perspective of the future’ (my trans.). The majority of Amazigh associations promote and advocate a similar message that Syphax broadcasts. The past of Imazighen is taken as a flowing background against which to construct the future for next generations. Here, Amazigh culture, including works of diasporic artists, help to enhance Imazighen senses of identity in the present.

The song ‘Taqeşṣiṣt Inu’ is part of what is called ‘cultural memorization’ (Bal).\(^\text{15}\) It articulates the idea of temporal fluidity at present. That is, a line in the song highlights the extension of the past into the present and further into the future: ‘My story is tomorrow’. This is not to be understood as a simple repossession of the past. Instead, the song refers to the past as a constructive element that helps in the process of constructing the present and future. This verse interestingly correlates, in a delicate plot, the past with the future. People usually tend to associate the idea of a story with events that belong to the past. In other

\(^\text{14}\) For more information on this process of promoting Amazigh culture, see Salem (20-25; 54-56) as well as Merolla’s Gender and Community (28-31).

\(^\text{15}\) In the introduction of Acts of Memory: Cultural Recall in the Present (1999) Mieke Bal, defines Cultural memorization as an activity that takes place at present in which the past is continuously modified even as it continues to shape the future.
words, even though there are stories regarding the future (like science fiction), people seldom speak of their future stories or stories of their future. In fact, the story in ‘Taqeṣṣiṣt Inu’ not only bridges the past with the future through the present, but also becomes the future itself, my story is tomorrow. Yet, this moment in the song is indeed problematic, because by the use of the present tense it may evoke the idea that Amazigh identity is static. Nevertheless, the same line implies change when the emphasis is on the word ‘tomorrow’. That is, apart from the word ‘story’, which is associated with the past, there is no mentioning of past tense in either ‘my story is tomorrow’ or in the whole song, and the present is ‘cold fever’. Thus, the future provides an improved alternative in which ‘children will play and be happy’. In this context, ‘Taqeṣṣiṣt Inu’ occurs in the present and it adjusts a past that gives birth to a better, new future. Khalid Izri accentuates this point and argues that ‘Taqeṣṣiṣt Inu’ is about future and hope (Interview).

The interplay of tenses in ‘Taqeṣṣiṣt Inu’ is an intriguing detail that may shed light on the line ‘my story is tomorrow’. The song begins in simple present tense, then shifts to the present continuous and concludes in the future. This chronology is telling, and when this shift in tenses is explained in light of Stuart Hall’s point that identities are constantly in a process of change and transformation, it implies that the song simultaneously underscores the idea of change and continuity. The (present-present, continuous-future) formula indicates that Imazighen continue to be equal to themselves in light of a changing temporality. In effect, this chronology suggests that regardless of whether Amazigh culture is constantly in a process of change, Imazighen continue to believe in their past and ‘joint’ belonging. Ayawen’s song, ‘We Are Imazighen’ (1992), highlights this point too:

We are Imazighen, we are the sons and daughters of this land,

We, men and women shall die for Tamazgha,

Let us focus on the future, the past is gone…

keep your way to yourself, we, Imazighen will walk on the path of our ancestors.

(my trans.)

There are few interesting elements in these verses. The first part underscores the idea of belonging, and Tamazgha (Maghreb, or North Africa) represents a space many Imazighen believe they belong to. The second part evokes the past as something trivial, while the last part underscores the path of ancestors. These last two elements seem contradictory, but they
are not. Indeed, the past is gone and nobody can reinstall it, therefore the focus should be on future. Still, there are important elements in making this future identity or ‘story’ of ‘tomorrow’, and these elements are inherited from ‘ancestors’ like language, traditions, customs, and arts.\textsuperscript{16}

In effect, any culture is imminently exposed to change, especially in today’s globalised world, and Amazigh culture and identity are no exception as far as the affects of globalisation are concerned. The world has become a globalised village. People become involved in activities that occur across nations and continents. Amazigh culture and identity are, indeed, shaped by events that are the result of globalisation. In \textit{The Consequences of Modernity}, Anthony Giddens argues that currently distant localities are linked in a way where local happenings are influenced by events taking place thousands of miles away and vice-versa (64). The interactions of Imazighen with other cultures contribute to the formation of current Amazigh identity and bring uncertainty with them. On the impact of migration and globalisation on peoples and cultures, Hall argues that globalisation and migration are processes that disturb and affect relatively ‘stable’ characteristics of many populations and cultures (“Who Needs” 4). This disturbance is partly responsible for generating the sense of uncertainty among diasporans. Globalisation affects Imazighen senses of identity, as with the case for many other identities.\textsuperscript{17}

Mobility, which is another aspect of the phenomenon of globalisation, considerably affects Amazigh identity. Many Imazighen are able to access multiple places and spaces, and the Amazigh diaspora has been encouraged to attach itself to multiple locations and spaces. In ‘Diasporas’, Clifford argues that diaspora is usually understood as a phenomenon that promotes ‘multi-locale attachments, dwelling and traveling within and across nations’ (306). This raises the question as to how diasporic Imazighen understand or perceive the idea of ‘belonging’. In effect, identity might be addressed as a process that evolves in relation to what Grossberg names ‘ways of belonging’ (102). That is, an Amazigh identity is the result of interactions of places and spaces and the distribution of

\textsuperscript{16} Here, the idea of belonging to an Amazigh community means belonging to a porous community ‘routed’ through the Maghreb and diaspora. It is a transnational imagined community that makes use of cultural elements represented in media like songs to construct and redefine its identity and provide it with relative certainty in this endless route and this globalised world.

\textsuperscript{17} For more information on the issue of Amazigh identity and globalisation see Hoffman and Gilson’s anthology.
Imazighen within this multiplicity. In these new delirious spaces, in which various discourses interact and clash, Amazigh identity is articulated and redefined. Speaking of such new spaces and identity construction, Hall argues that identity becomes a constantly changing process created in and affected by a range of discourses and practices which often crisscross and are opposed to one another (“Who Needs” 4).

Examining the different aspects of identity, it is worth mentioning that identities are never fixed; they change and transform to suit a given situation, but that does not mean that any change is a conscious, well-calculated act. In other words, identity can neither be described in terms of the promotion of interests alone nor entirely about emotions and affections: it is an outcome of interacting factors and processes. Identity is a question of being, belonging, and becoming.

‘My Story’: Being, Belonging, and Becoming

Many Imazighen regard their shared past as an important basis for their sense of identity. Almost all the lines in the second stanza of ‘My Story’ start with negation: It [story] is not going to be taken by flood; it [story] is not going to be snatched by a falcon. By using negation at the beginning of each line, the song hints to the fact that it is impossible to deny Imazighen beliefs in their shared story and belonging. Allal Chilah, in his song ‘We Belong To This Land’ (1998), sings: ‘We have always lived here, we did not come from the Middle East, they are lies, they are lies’ (my trans.). These lines refute the claims of the Moroccan Arab-nationalists who allege that Imazighen are Arabs in origin, and the verses accentuate the fact that Imazighen ‘belong’ to the supposed North Africa, and that they did not come from the Middle East. Importantly, these verses reassert the sense of belonging among Imazighen. Speaking of the psychological security that accompanies identification with one community, Eugeen Roosens argues that this type of community identification provides a sense of belonging and a belief that one knows one’s origin (16). Roosens emphasises identification’s positive role: that it creates a kind of certainty among the identifiers, who are living in constant uncertainty.

It is important to note that the story or the stories that inform Amazigh identity and the sense of belonging are here represented in the songs ‘My Story’ and ‘We Belong To This Land’. The titles of both songs are significant, since they include the words ‘belong’ and ‘story’, linking one another and reflecting the nature of spaces and processes in which identity is constructed. Hall argues that the idea of ‘belonging’ that binds an identity-
creating story partly occurs at an imaginary and symbolic level, and therefore identity is partly constructed through fantasy (“Who Needs” 4). Here, Hall not only shows the role of belonging in making identity-shaping stories but also introduces another word important to any identity construction: fantasy. Fantasy, which is generated by desire, partly contributes in creating spaces in which identity is articulated. The desire to have a space to which Imazighen can belong has created the fantasy of ‘soil’ in ‘My Story’. In creating this ‘soil’ on which ‘children play Fuleeele, hide and seek’, the song is not an exception as far the creation of imagined spaces to which subjects refer or belong. For instance, Tamazgha is invoked in Ayawen’s ‘We Are Imazighen’ and ‘land’ in Chilah’s song ‘We Belong To This Land’. In fact, the term ‘soil’ in ‘Taqeeṣṣiṣṭ Inu’ is the most complex and significant word in the entire song. It represents the idea of belonging that an imagined Amazigh community shares. The term soil in the song becomes a space ‘routed’ in representations.

Yet, this Amazigh-‘routed’ belonging evokes its counterpart: closure. Every cultural group has visible and invisible rules that regulate the inclusion and exclusion of individuals and other groups. Therefore, difference is inherent in the process of identity construction, and anyone who does not share that sense of common belonging may feel excluded. In his reflection on the nature of identity process, Hall argues that the unity that identity asserts is not primordial but adopted through a process of closure, and what is left out constantly challenges and weakens this identity (“Who Needs” 5). The falcons and craws in ‘Taqeeṣṣiṣṭ Inu’ are instances of what are left out, constituting not only a challenge but also a threat to Amazigh identity. Still, these virtual boundaries do not stop the interaction of various groups with one another, and art usually plays a role in bonding communities. Regarding the role of ‘Taqeeṣṣiṣṭ Inu’, Khalid Izri argues that it is not a message sent exclusively to the Amazigh community but to the entire world; and it is an Amazigh cultural product to be enjoyed by everyone (Interview). Although Izri claims ‘Taqeeṣṣiṣṭ Inu’ is to be enjoyed by everyone, this does not refute the fact that the subtexts of the song are exclusionary. For instance, the Moroccan Arab-nationalists cannot enjoy a song addressing them as threatening ‘falcons’ and ‘craws’. Nevertheless, everyone can enjoy the musical aspects of the song, and the idea of being Amazigh suggests similarities with innergroup or ‘insiders’. 
Being Amazigh evokes similarities with members of one’s own cultural group. \(^{18}\) There are norms, values, beliefs, languages, cultural symbols, and practices that members of the Amazigh community share and tend to accentuate. In ‘Living Apart Together’, Snauwaert and colleagues argue that the perception of belonging to an ethnic group leads people to highlight shared similarities with members of the innergroup (136). The song ‘Taqeṣṣiṣṭ Inu’ presents few examples that highlight perceived similarities among the innergroup. The expressions ‘Fuleellɛ’ and ‘Maṛṛu water’ are two elements that draw attention to and compel a sense of belonging among the Rif Amazigh community. Fuleellɛ is a traditional game played by Rifian children. \(^{19}\) Maṛṛu water is an essence extracted from the Maṛṛu plant (\textit{Mentha aquatica}, which grow widely in the Rif region) known for its medicinal benefits; this essence is used on various illnesses that affect infants and children. These two examples are mentioned in the song as specific elements from the Rif region for Imazighen to identify with. These two elements are evocative, as they represent how real places and elements shift and change to become images and ideas represented in media and consumed by diasporans.

Many Imazighen make use of Amazigh songs to enhance their cultural traditions and renew their cultural identification. \(^{20}\) The consumption and appropriation of these songs not only enhances cultural identity but also raises the importance of these cultural products in people’s daily lives. Hall argues that the consumption and appropriation of cultural elements both gives and raises the value of these elements (\textit{Representation} 3). Here, songs become important and significant since they draw attention to elements that evoke Amazigh culture. Songs are cultural elements themselves and represent other Amazigh cultural elements that may help Imazighen to articulate their identity. ‘Taqeṣṣiṣṭ Inu’ is a creative reconstitution of an Amazigh past that transforms into a unique image for the present. In his comment on the game of Fuleellɛ in the song, Khalid Izri claims, ‘I would love to see Imazighen in Europe remember Amazigh “traditions”’. I put traditions in inverted commas

\(^{18}\) Here the idea of ‘being’ is an ongoing process, and not a finished static phase. It relies partially on cultural elements represented in media such as songs to highlight and articulate identity.

\(^{19}\) The song highlights \textit{Fuleellɛ} as a cultural element that has disappeared from reality and kept alive in Amazigh media.

\(^{20}\) It is worthwhile mentioning that there is a population of Imazighen who subvert the narrative of a unified imagined community and a coherent Amazigh identity. These Imazighen teach Arabic to their children because, since it is the language of the Koran, they believe it more important than Tamazight.
because traditions such as cultures are dynamic; I want Imazighen to honour the elements that make them who they are: Imazighen’ (Interview). Izri underscores the importance of elements represented in Amazigh songs, such as dress codes, festivities, language, and Amazigh games, in celebrating Amazigh culture and redefining cultural identity. Many of these cultural elements are constantly changing and few of them are on the verge of disappearance, but there are usually new elements that appear and become important in the livelihood of a community.

The imagery in the song ‘Taqeṣṣiṣt Inu’ reflects Amazigh traditions and the Riffian scenery. For instance, the verses in the second stanza take an Amazigh diasporic listener into a world and a dimension that are hard to experience in a present-day cosmopolitan city. The artist sings: ‘I will sow it [my story] in the fields, and it will be cultivated by [Riffian] peasants’. This line evokes Riffian countryside scenery in the imagination of the listener, and, by underlining specific words, creates another layer of suggestions. In this line, the speaker promises to sow his story in fields. Here, the song, as media, fulfils its own promise of sharing its story, which signifies a narrative of Imazighen, with people living in North Africa and Amazigh diaspora. Therefore, the song becomes the first field in which the artist cultivates the story; after, this story will be cultivated in other ‘fields’, which may be places, spaces, or discourses.

The second part of the line—‘and it will be cultivated by [Riffian] peasants’—includes some polysemous keywords. The word ‘cultivate’ is one of these keywords. The majority of peasants in the Rif region cultivate small amounts of barley and wheat in the autumn and, in the summer, harvest enough grains to sustain families for months and sometimes even for years. People cultivate little in order to harvest a lot. Therefore, the cultivation of an Amazigh story in the song is significant. There are two particular social actors awarded the task to cultivate ‘the story’: Riffian artists and peasants. In this verse Izri, the singer who cultivates the story in his song, represents artists. Peasants are explicitly mentioned as the second category that holds the burden of cultivating an Amazigh story. Both the words ‘cultivate’ and ‘peasants’ occur regularly in Amazigh songs. For instance, in another song, Elwalid Mimoun sings:

Our dear land, we will take care of your soil,

We will water your trees with our sweat,
We will cultivate you and create farms,

We will take care of you and protect you with all our might. (“We Belong”)  

Similarly, in their song ‘Imazighen’ (2009), the band Sorif sing: ‘This is our land, we will cultivate it, and if it rains peasants and babies will be happy, our sun will rise, we are Imazighen, we have always been Imazighen’. Here, Sorif sing about identity and land. They put emphasis on peasants and babies because they evoke continuity. Peasants are the current cultivators and babies will cultivate the land in the future. Yet, reasoning behind the selection of peasants and artists in ‘Taqešṣišt Inu’ still needs clarification. One answer may lie in the contemporary history of the Rif region, in which Rifian peasants and artists have played critical roles. Peasants fought the Spanish colonial army in the Rif at the beginning of the twentieth century and rebelled against the tyranny of the Moroccan regime in 1958. Amazigh artists are fighters of another category, as they use their artefacts ‘to highlight the cultural, socio-economic and political condition of Imazighen in North Africa and elsewhere’ (Izri, interview). Yet, the cultivation of the story in the song raises more questions than answers, as the audience may wonder about the kinds of possible harvest(s).  

The seeds planted in the song suggest the upcoming harvest for the listener. The artist sowed his story in ‘fields’, and he is now observing the results. We know that ‘story’, as mentioned above, plays an important part in identity construction. There are three key words: ‘story’, ‘cultivate’, and ‘fields’. The last word is plural, for it is not in one field that the story is cultivated, but in fields. This reminds us again of the process of identity construction, in which various discourses interact to shape and reshape identities. On this process, Hall argues that identity is the articulation of the subject into the flow and intersection of discourses (Representing 1). Here, ‘fields’ becomes synonymous with evolving, intersecting, and changing discourses. It is in this flow that the story arises to shape and redefine an Amazigh identity.  

The act of sowing the story of ‘Taqešṣišt Inu’ is to enhance the process of identity (re)creation (i.e., becoming). The artistic, discursive practice creates the space in which identity is redefined. On the role of discursive practices in identity construction, Stuart Hall argues that identities are ‘points of temporary attachment to the subject positions which discursive practices construct for us’ (“Who Needs” 6). Here, Hall reflects on both the relevance of discursive practices in the process of identity construction and the provisional character of such process. Amazigh culture has been sidelined for a long time, and
Amazigh artists now act and perform in order to (re)create this culture. Commenting on ‘Taqessiṣṭ Inu’, Khalid Izri states that the song is as an identity card revealed to the whole world, for it reflects Amazigh culture and identity (Interview). Therefore, revealing the process of constructing and articulating an Amazigh identity is part of the intended harvest in ‘Taqessiṣṭ Inu’. The story (Taqessiṣṭ) in the song is part of the process of creating, or re-creating, an Amazigh identity, since it highlights a specific group (i.e., Imazighen). That is, the song brings into light a story/identity of Imazighen. Amazigh language and art are two explicit mechanisms involved in the cultivation of ‘Taqessiṣṭ Inu’ that not only benefits artists and peasants, but also a larger Amazigh community.

Imazighen can neither be categorised as marginal nor as ethnic minorities. In effect, Imazighen are a community, whose civilisation is ‘routed’ through North Africa for thousands of years, and whose cultural fabric is part of contemporary Europe while continuing to evolve and spread throughout the world. Taqessiṣṭ is a seed planted and cultivated in the song and in the imagination of the audience that seeks to create a moment of reflection on the culture of Imazighen.

**My Story and my Culture**

Amazigh culture is a structure that unifies the Amazigh community under what Benedict Anderson terms an ‘imagined community’. Imazighen are a community who do not necessarily share a piece of territory, but share an idea of a ‘nation’ and what it stands for. In fact, there are nationalist Imazighen who dream of a geopolitical Tamazgha, which is represented in various Amazigh songs. While this modern conception of an Amazigh nation will not likely see political self-determination as a nation-state, there are many Imazighen throughout the Maghreb who cherish the idea of Tamazgha for its symbolic, unifying value in representations (i.e., a virtual nation). Amazigh culture, and especially media, is a powerful source of ideas and meanings that constitute Imazighen identities in a globalised world. Regarding the circulation of ideas in a current globalised world, Stuart Hall argues that meaning is ‘produced in a variety of different media; especially, these days in the

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21 It is important to note that Amazigh culture has been sidelined since Moroccan independence (1956). However, during French and Spanish occupation of Morocco France promoted Amazigh culture in order to create two poles that might collide in the country, Arabs and Berbers. The occupiers attempted to “devide and rule”. See, Maddy-Weitzman (153).

22 Here the idea of nation means a borderless nation united under the umbrella of Amazigh culture.
modern mass media, the means of global communication, by complex technologies, which
circulate meanings between different cultures on a scale and with a speed hitherto unknown
in history' (Representation 3). Hall alludes to the speed of circulation, the complexity and
the flow of media in our current world, in which both media and the meaning they carry are
affected by events occurring at various spaces. Amazigh media—particularly songs—are no
exception. They are renovated spaces that provide people who identify with the Amazigh a
continuous flow of meanings that give shape and significance to their ‘present’ lives.23
‘Taqeṣṣiṣt Inu’, as a cultural production, is full of ideas that imply the sense of togetherness
of the Amazigh community and constitute and enhance their cultural identity.

In light of this unstable temporality, Amazigh culture highlights Amazigh identity
and provides provisional certainty. In his definition of the notion of culture, Stuart Hall
argues that the culture of a group or class is the particular way of life of that group or class,
and among the crucial elements of that mode of life are the meanings, values, and ideas
reflected in their system of beliefs, customs, and the uses of objects (Representation 3-4).
These values, ideas, and objects are the elements that assist many Imazighen to acquire
some certainty vis-à-vis their identity and direction among the uncertainty that strikes their
existence. Izri’s song, ‘World’s Boat’ (1992), reflects both the uncertainty that globalisation
brought with it and Imazighen persistence to continue and adapt to this new condition. The
speaker addresses the boat and sings:

On your back we are sailing to the outside world, we are trying to stop you, we are
patient, your paths are intertwined at crossroads, your sea is lost and you lost your
sails, the cold air from the sea affects our bones, your wooden bones are insensible
to the cold.

Here the song depicts Imazighen sailing a rough sea of globalisation, and ineffectively
trying to slow their boat down in order to take a breath in this fast-moving ship. They are
affected by the winds of globalisation, but they still have patience. They are confident that
they will survive and adapt. In these rough conditions, ideas and common beliefs are
relevant in providing guidance and temporal certainty.

23 Here the term present is not stable, it is a continuity.
Rituals and beliefs are important to provide a ‘sense’ of identity and belonging. In the second line of the second stanza of ‘Taqeṣṣiṣṭ Inu’, a common belief emerges: Islam. Islam is the main religion of Imazighen in North Africa or diaspora, and the Eid Crescent (and the joy it creates among Amazigh youth) represent the significance of this faith in the song. The use of religious terminology is current in Amazigh songs. In their song ‘Henna’ (2010), which revolves around a bride’s henna ritual, the band Tifyur, sing: ‘My henna is blessed, may God bless it, in the name of God we will begin’. Here, we see how Islam implicates the old tradition of the henna ritual among Imazighen. The examples of Henna ritual and Islam are among other elements that help Imazighen in coming-to-terms-with their ‘routes’. In effect, these elements are not only important in the process of identity construction but also in the politics of recognition.

Exerting control over the right to write one’s own story remains one of the priorities for Imazighen in their process of cultural struggle. In the second line of the last stanza, Izri sings: ‘I will write it [my story] down with a pen, my heart and blood’. In this line, the speaker insists that an Amazigh should record Amazigh stories, and not anyone else. Similarly, the band Thifridjas sing:

Give me a mallet, I have a chisel in my left hand,

I will carve Tifinagh, I will write them on rocks,

I will measure words, and season them with a chisel

With wisdom and allegories I will weave a Taqeṣṣiṣṭ [story]

Come and sit with me sister, we will write our letter and leave it behind to babies

We will explain sayings and give them good advice. (“Tifinagh”)

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24 In addition to Islam as the majority religion of Imazighen, Christianity and Judaism are two important religions too. Judaism and Christianity were the main religions among Imazighen in Morocco before the arrival of Islam and Arabs (Njoku 34-36).

25 I borrow this expression from Hall, who emphasises ‘routes’ instead of roots since current identities are constituted inside representations, and therefore, constantly shifting (“Who Needs” 4).
This stanza highlights the insistence of many Imazighen to write Amazigh stories themselves. It also asserts that men and women together should participate in the process of writing and that Tifinagh should be the alphabet used. In the past, Arab nationalists decided how and what accents of Amazigh culture should be represented. Currently, many Imazighen want to represent and record their own (hi)story. This process is part of a decolonisation of the mind, or in Franz Fanon’s words, ‘the veritable creation of new men’ (36). Thus, when Izri sings about writing an Amazigh story by an Amazigh, it underscores a conscious liberation strategy among the Amazigh community. On the one hand, there are Imazighen who want to prevent the misrepresentation of Amazigh culture; on the other hand, this group wants to utilise Amazigh cultural productions in their struggle for cultural liberation in North Africa and throughout the Amazigh diaspora. Izri argues that the Amazigh community, especially artists, might contribute to decolonising minds, or what he calls ‘to allow Imazighen to lead a life of an Amazigh’ (Interview). Importantly, diasporic Imazighen can play a major role in such a decolonisation given that they live in quite liberal countries.

The coexistence of tradition and innovation for diasporic Imazighen has contributed to the diversification of European societies and cultures. No one can deny the fact that contemporary Europe is more diversified than it was five decades ago.26 With the arrival of Imazighen and other so-called ‘ethnic minorities’ to Europe, Amazigh cultures and traditions have interacted with ‘European’ cultures and traditions to create what is known as ‘multiculturalism’ or cultural diversity.27 Current Amazigh culture is a mix of innovation and tradition. It is formed in a way that enables Imazighen to be culturally marked but not exclusionary. Thus, this old and new Amazigh culture forms part of a diversified Europe where communities cohabite and continuously interact to form new cultures.

Despite the fact that diasporic Imazighen remain open to innovations, they tend to bring into play their traditions to counter any attempt of assimilation. Izri, for instance, supports the idea of cultural interactions between various communities and what these interactions yield (Interview). Nevertheless, diasporic Imazighen may strongly resist any

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26 Although Europe has never been homogenous, as indicated by many internal and international conflicts, there are many groups in the continent who advocate homogeneity.

27 On a migrant’s creative expression and his or her role in reshaping European identities, see Ponzanesi and Merolla.
attempt by a so-called majority to try to assimilate them. Here, Amazigh diasporas are inclined to defend their cultural identity by clinching to traditions. That is to say, Imazighen tend to maintain their cultural practices in their ‘host’ countries without being saturated by them, but whenever they feel confronted with assimilation their level of attachment to tradition increases.

There are European Imazighen who want to be treated with justice, concurrently coupled with the demand for the recognition of their cultural identity. Currently, many Imazighen live in Europe and, by bringing their own culture into play, aspire to affect host society. Speaking of the arrival of migrants to Europe and its implications, Kevin Robins remarks, ‘These new and various global mobilities and movements brought with them new kinds of cultural diversity and complexity into the western societies, involving new kinds of cultural encounter, exchange and mixing’ (276). The idea of cultural encounter between host and guest is an important process as far as cultural diversity in Europe is concerned. The important elements cited by Robins are ‘exchange and mixing’. They indicate interactions that take place among cultures and their effects. Amazigh culture, in combination with other so-called ‘minority’ cultures, has created complex cultural connections that interact and, when necessary, challenges the modes of cultural productions and distributions of the so-called dominant majority in Europe. In fact, cultural diversity of ‘minorities’ have elements, such as stories, images, and art that might drastically affect any future European societies. The manifestation of cultures of the so-called minorities throughout Europe highlights the emphasis of these minorities on their rights to be treated as equals and for their cultural differences to be respected.

Given that culture is produced through representation, understanding and practicing Amazigh cultural repertoire is indeed a necessary step toward engaging other cultures. Hall claims that representation is a practice that produces culture (Representation 1). Amazigh songs, as examples, are media through which thoughts, ideas, values, and emotions are represented in Amazigh culture. Here, the cultural repertoire is the ensemble of the artistic productions and cultural phenomena of Imazighen who live in North Africa and Amazigh diaspora. The story of ‘Taqeṣṣiṣṭ Inu’ is a metaphor that evokes the story of Imazighen. The song has overcome spatial barriers to reach audiences worldwide. Likewise, Amazigh cultural repertoire is currently available everywhere. It is there for those who seek to study, understand, and practice it. In effect, common characteristics from
an Amazigh cultural repertoire with other repertoires may help Imazighen engage other traditions and find common ground.

My Story, Music and Amazigh Collective Memory

In the song ‘Taqeṣṣiṣt Inu’, the second line of the third stanza depicts religious emblems that are significant for all Muslims. The artist sings: ‘They [children] will witness it [Taqeṣṣiṣt] as the eid crescent; they will enjoy it and be happy. Both eid (Eid) and the crescent are indeed symbolic. The importance of eid for Muslims can be compared to that of Christmas for Christians. It is an event that brings relatives close to one another and creates a moment of joy among families. The crescent stands as a symbol of Islam.

For Imazighen, eid and the crescent evoke another layer of meaning. The use of these two symbols in ‘Taqeṣṣiṣt Inu’ as means of identification shows that Islam is part of an Amazigh identity. In addition, the mentioning of these symbols suggests that they are part of Amazigh collective memory. Islam is an active process of identification Imazighen use to make their identity visible. Certainly, the act of being visible is important for both the eid crescent and Imazighen. Imazighen use media like ‘Taqeṣṣiṣt Inu’ as a means to divulge their cultural identity. Trying to detect the eid crescent can be a difficult task indeed, especially if the sky is cloudy. Apparently, the difficulties of witnessing the eid crescent are used in the song to highlight the difficulties Imazighen face in order to be visible in North Africa or Europe.

The eid crescent suggests both visibility and invisibility at the same time, for the eid crescent appears shortly at dusk and then disappears. In the song, the eid crescent is linked to the story of the Imazighen. Therefore, ‘Taqeṣṣiṣt Inu’ becomes entangled by visibility and invisibility. The idea of an Amazigh being invisible in North Africa and Europe can be compared to what Kobena Mercer describes as the invisibility of Blacks in Britain as a consequence of marginalisation and imposed silence (7). There is a long-standing history of invisibility of Imazighen in Morocco and Europe. For instance, there are many people in Europe who have never heard of the Amazigh community.

In effect, ‘Taqeṣṣiṣt Inu’ emphasises the idea that cultural memory is a generational endeavor in which generations establish a kind of continuity. However, this continuity requires cultural elements that establish an imaginary thread that links these
generations. In addition, to have this continuity, generations should somehow be able to understand cultural codes embedded in this thread to correctly interpret and develop these elements. On this issue Hall writes, ‘members of the same culture must share sets of concepts, images, and ideas which enable them to think and feel about the world, in roughly similar ways. They must share, broadly speaking, the same cultural codes’ (*Representation* 4). Hall underscores the importance of cultural codes in transmitting meaning between members of the same community. This also applies to the process of transmitting significance from one generation to another in the same community. Here, the role of songs, as media, is crucial both in transmitting and highlighting the significance of elements represented to various generations. ‘Taqessist Inu’ presents categories that correspond to various generations of Imazighen. The second line of the second stanza describes peasants or ‘ifedjahan’—who are usually grown men—plowing fields. In the first line of the third stanza, the song depicts children (‘ihejiren’) playing games. The last stanza the song describes young women—‘Tihramin’—with henna on their hands. In the same stanza, another line portrays babies—’iseyman’—cured with Maryu water. In sum, the song describes babies, children, young women, and grown men. Each of these categories represents a Riffian generation, and their presence in ‘Taqessist Inu’ is telling.

Amazigh generations in the song represent a sense of continuity for Amazigh cultural memory as well as agents of change. This statement may seem anomalous, since change is supposed to be the opposite of continuity. Nonetheless, this is not always the case, since many generations of diasporic Imazighen have witnessed change. That is, these generations are, after all, responsible for negotiating the past in a constantly shifting present. In addition, the image of generations suggests that some elements from older generations may be transmitted to current and future ones. In their song ‘Abdelkarim’ (2002) the group Thidrin sing: ‘I still remember what my grandmother told me about our grandfather’. This line is an introduction to the story of the heroic acts of the Riffian leader Mulay Muḥend (AbdelKarim Elkhattabi, or the grandfather against the Spanish colonialists during the Rif war at the beginning of the twentieth century). It is valuable for the Rif to transmit this knowledge from one generation to the next, either in Morocco or throughout the Amazigh diaspora, and songs are among the cultural vehicles that transmit this knowledge. In *Migrant Belongings: Memory, Space, Identity*, Anne-Marie Fortier implicates the importance of generations for migrants with the idea of continuity and change:
Generations, in migration, are the living embodiment of continuity and change, mediating memories of the past with present living conditions, bringing the past into the present and charged with the responsibility of keeping some form of ethnic identity alive in the future. (150)

Fortier highlights an important task as far generations in migration are concerned. These generations represent continuity in the sense that they are bridging the past, present, and future, and they are agents of change since their own identity is continuously redefined. As with many migratory groups, Amazigh generations in diaspora are vital for the survival of Amazigh cultural identity in the present and future. In other words, the livelihoods of these Amazigh generations are continuous acts of (re)living one’s own cultural identity.

The use of memory in ‘Taqeqṣṣiṣt Inu’ allows Amazigh subjects to witness their cultural identity in the making. In fact, the past in the song is re-lived and (re)membered through a set of practices: the henna ritual, the witnessing of an ēid crescent, and playing games with children. These acts help the Imazighen to come to terms with understanding their own cultural identity. For instance, Tifyur’s song ‘Ṭamza’ (‘Ogress’, 2006) recounts one of the scary oral stories for children in the Rif. Similarly, Banaman’s song ‘Nunja, mani ṭedjiḏ’ (‘Where Are You, Nunja’, 1992) recounts the sad story of a beautiful girl, Nunja, and her jealous stepmother. The majority of the Riffian oral stories for children have disappeared in cities. They vanished because they are not recounted as they used to be in the past, and many Amazigh songs try to draw attention to these neglected stories that form part of an Amazigh collective memory. Thus, the act of singing about Amazigh rituals, forgotten children stories, and legends cultivate in Amazigh subjects a sense of identity and belonging.

With regard to the sense of belonging and identity, the allusion to Marrụ water in ‘Taqeqṣṣiṣt Inu’ is significant. People cannot extract the water of Marrụ unless the plant is fresh. Therefore, mentioning the use of Marrụ water suggests that people should visit the Rif and collect fresh Marrụ in order to extract its essence. Here, this plant becomes a symbol of continuity and collective memory. The invitation is directed to all Imazighen, but

28 Oral stories for children are still popular in the Riffian countryside.
particularly to those who do not regularly live in the Rif region. The tradition of using the *Maṛṛu* plant and its link to the Rif area is what creates the sense of common history for the Amazigh (Riffian) community at present. In ‘Beyond Culture: Space, Identity and the Politics of Difference’, Gupta and Ferguson argue that senses of belonging, continuity, and common history are created by a community’s link to places imagined or real (10). *Maṛṛu* is a plant found in abundance in a real place (the Rif), but it remains a symbolic element in current Amazigh diaspora.

In ‘Ţaṛeṣsiṣṭ Inu’, *Maṛṛu* also functions as a site of memory that has lost its physical character outside the Rif region and has been re-created in the song. Here, the represented Rif becomes a virtual space a listener can visit and make use of its medicinal plants. The presence of *Maṛṛu* in ‘Ţaṛeṣsiṣṭ Inu’ raises the question of whether non-physical elements may still be classified as sites of memory. Definitions of sites of memory can be intriguing. Revealingly, Pierre Nora’s definition sheds light on ambiguities of *lieux de mémoire*. Nora writes, ‘*Lieu de mémoire* is any significant entity, whether material or non-material in nature, which, by dint of human will or the work of time, has become a symbolic element of the memorial heritage of any community’ (17). Nora clearly states that under certain conditions any object—physical or not—can function as a site of memory. Accordingly, *Maṛṛu* is a site of memory because of its symbolic value to Riffians in Morocco and diaspora despite that it has lost its material nature outside the Rif region. *Maṛṛu*, as a site of memory, is a cure against forgetting; it has become the side effect of a fast and changeable present.

Uncertainty and forgetting are epidemic in a current globalised world. Forgetting, which is another factor that triggers uncertainty, is an aspect of work of memory that seems worrying in ‘Ţaṛeṣsiṣṭ Inu’. The artist sings: ‘I will write my story down on roads, I will write my story down on roads’. This line raises many questions vis-à-vis remembering and forgetting. The emphasis on recording the story reflects a deep concern about Amazigh stories and identity, rooted in a fear that forgetting and uncertainty will prove disastrous for Amazigh identity. The song’s line ‘my story is tomorrow’ indicates that there are Imażighen uncertain about the future of their shared story; therefore, they want to keep records to help them to remember. One of these records is the song ‘Ţaṛeṣsiṣṭ Inu’ itself, which represents several cultural elements that may help later generations understand their routes. Still, the writing of ‘Ţaṛeṣsiṣṭ Inu’ may be for other reasons.
The emphasis on writing the story in ‘Taqessist Inu’ reveals the need to translate Amazigh memories into words. In *Memory against Culture*, Johannes Fabian argues that memories cannot be narrated except as stories, and that one way of having access to the study of memory work is through narration (84-85). Accordingly, the aim behind the interest in narrating memories in ‘Taqessist Inu’ is to allow people to study the memory work of Imazighen. In the last stanza of ‘Taqessist Inu’, Izri sings, ‘I will write it [my story] with a pen’. This line corroborates the idea that the artist wants to narrate and carve a few Amazigh memories in the song. The idea of writing in Tamazight has a political significance, because the act promotes this language to join the club of other languages considered prestigious since they are ‘written languages’ (Chaker 20). In effect, the song’s emphasis on memory leads one to think of memory in terms of temporality.

Memory in the song functions as a link that relates past with present and future, articulated by combining tenses and events. The song, for instance, describes both the act of curing babies with *Maṛṛu* water and the henna tattoo ritual. The song describes events that occurred in the past, but they are delivered in present- and future-tense sentences. In ‘Fragments of Fictional Memory as Building Blocks of Identity’, Christine de Lailhacar describes the intricate relation of memory to time: ‘Memory is one of the most complex phenomena, philosophically speaking, because it participates in both present and past and has a future dimension’ (253). The projection of the past into the present and future is what keeps memory alive and updated. In the last line we hear, ‘my story is a dream of tomorrow’; here, memory is presented as a mode of re-presentation that belongs to the present and the future rather than the past. The singer Izri states, ‘I found myself in ‘Taqessist Inu’ and it is a song which is full of elements that speak of future; when I reconsider ‘Taqessist Inu’ I see the image of hope before my eyes, a future in which our [Amazigh] children and community lead a normal life, without subjugation’ (Interview). ‘Taqessist Inu’ can be compared to a seed that has grown into a tree with its ‘routes’ in past, its trunk in the present, and its branches projecting into the future.

Memory is reflected in ‘Taqessist Inu’ as a motor of change with a ‘stabilizing’ factor on identity.\(^{29}\) In the third stanza, the artist sings: ‘My story is tomorrow that children are waiting for’. Amazigh children are waiting for tomorrow, which, according to

\(^{29}\) Here the idea of stability is relative. My use of the word stabilizing in combination with memory and identity can be here misleading, because it may give false impression of identity being fixed.
`Taqeṣṣiṣṭ Inu`, should be better than the past. Here, memory is portrayed as an element that promotes a blossomy future for Amazigh children. Yet, memory, in the same song, seems to have the function of re-articulating Amazigh identity. In fact, memory shapes identity by reworking past at present. In *Gendered Memories*, John Neubauer and Helga Geyer-Ryan argue that ‘memory has a preserving, maintaining and stabilizing function on identity’ (6). In effect, memory functions as a means to bind experiences and create the sense of continuity in the process of identity construction and redefinition. In the last stanza of ‘Taqeṣṣiṣṭ Inu’, we hear: ‘I will write it [my story] with a pen, my heart and blood’. There are three important dualities in this line: the artist or subject, pen and writing, and heart and blood. This line suggests that remembering through artefacts is an act that helps to shape and re-shape Amazigh identity in the present and future. A pen helps subjects or artists to keep writing, and it is blood that keeps hearts beating. The artist or subject uses a pen to rework Amazigh story, and, to keep Amazigh identity alive, a beating heart with flowing blood. That is, the Imazighen’ past is reworked in ‘Taqeṣṣiṣṭ Inu’ to shape the present and future of Imazighen.

Music

In addition to the content of lyrics, the music of ‘Taqeṣṣiṣṭ Inu’ enhances and underlines the themes discussed in the song. The tempo of the music is one element that contributes to transmitting lyrics to the listener. At the beginning of the song the tempo is *andante*. In his comment on the slow tempo at the beginning, Khalid Izri argues that he uses *andante* tempo to allow the listener to digest the content of the lyrics and enjoy the delicacy of Amazigh music (Interview). Here, the *andante* tempo allows listeners to reflect on the issues of identity and memory present in its lyrics. In the middle of the song the tempo shifts to *allegretto*. The change in the tempo emphasises the hopeful future depicted in the lyrics of ‘Taqeṣṣiṣṭ Inu’ in which Amazigh babies are well and children are happy. In addition, Izri alleges that the tempo is fast at the end of the song because Imazighen want to hasten the process of cultural liberation in North Africa (Interview).

Instrumentation is another intriguing aspect of ‘Taqeṣṣiṣṭ Inu’. Two types of instruments are used: percussion instruments, such as a drum kit and congas, and melodic instruments, such as an acoustic guitar, a bass guitar and a flute. Khalid Izri reports that his selection of these instruments, especially the acoustic guitar and flute, is mainly to create an
acoustic music that is easy to penetrate the ear, the heart, and the mind of the listener (Interview). Many emotions in the lyrics of the song are not precisely translatable; however, music is a medium that can translate feelings and emotions (Hertz 51). For instance, at the beginning of the song through the rhythm and the overall music, we can feel a distressing tone. In addition to the capability of music to translate emotions, the music of ‘Taqeṣṣiṣṭ Inu’ embodies innovation and traditions. While the flute is one of the traditional Amazigh musical instruments, the drum kit and bass guitar represent innovation. This marriage of innovation and tradition is an aspect that not only characterises the majority of Amazigh songs but also the identity of Imazighen. It is an identity that develops and changes but at the same time keeps cultural markers fluid and give it its fleeting distinctiveness. In effect, the whole song ‘Taqeṣṣiṣṭ Inu’ represents an image of a community that cherishes its values and ideas and strives to improve its life condition and that of the coming generations. Here, we see innovation goes hand in hand with respect to ‘traditions’.

**Conclusion**

Though cultural identities have a fluid character, they always keep some cultural elements that shape subjects into what or who they are. The song ‘Taqeṣṣiṣṭ Inu’ is an example of this fluid character and of Amazigh cultural elements. This song not only reveals how identities evolve and the role of cultural artefacts—particularly songs—in the process of shaping and reshaping these identities, but also depicts elements that form part of Amazigh collective memory that provide some certainty in this globalised world.

It draws attention to neglected or forgotten elements that have characterised the livelihood of Imazighen of the Rif region. The act of listening to ‘Taqeṣṣiṣṭ Inu’ renders forgotten elements such as *Fuleele* and *Marru* water alive. That is, they are remade and recreated as representations in the song to be remembered and enjoyed at present by Imazighen worldwide. In addition, ‘Taqeṣṣiṣṭ Inu’ shows how cultural productions utilise ideas, meanings, and values to inform Amazigh identity, and how music plays a role in transmitting these ideas and reflects feelings and emotions.

Through the song ‘Taqeṣṣiṣṭ Inu’, I demonstrate that diasporic Amazigh identity is a continuous process that uses history and culture in being, becoming, and belonging. Cultural elements help to sustain this identity and create continuity in this fragmented and
fluid world. Importantly, cultural elements and the idea of belonging help to alleviate, even temporarily, uncertainty as a side effect of the journey of migration.

While in chapter one Elwalid Mimoun’s song ‘Come Back My Son’ highlights the uncertainty in which many Imazighen live, especially in diaspora, in this chapter the song ‘Taqeṣṣiṣṭ Inu’ represents cultural elements that give some guidance and enlighten the journey of Imazighen through the labyrinth of uncertainty and assist them in articulating their identity. In the coming chapter we will see the role of another media, film, in highlighting other factors that contribute to uncertainty (especially among local Imazighen in the Rif region) and affect the process of identity construction and re-articulation.