

**Are cultural policies in North Africa (Maghreb)
compatible with the UNESCO Convention on the
protection and promotion of the diversity of
cultural expressions?**

Ammar Kessab
AlgerCulture Group & U40 Africa

Cultural diversity

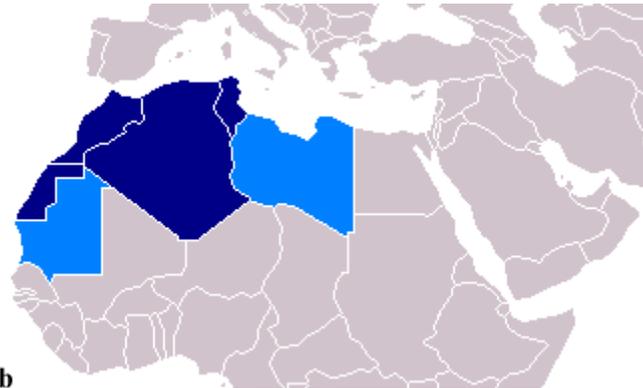
The unique stories of people throughout world History have generated many cultures, more or less different from one geographical area to another. All linguistic expressions, ethnic diversity, epistemic and artistic representations represent what we now call "cultural diversity".



North Africa (Maghreb)

Being at a historic crossroad of many populations, North Africa benefits from a strategic geographical location.

The Maghreb region is at the centre of North Africa and it's formed by Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia (2 991 901 km² for 79 528 048 inhabitants).



- Maghreb
- Grand Maghreb

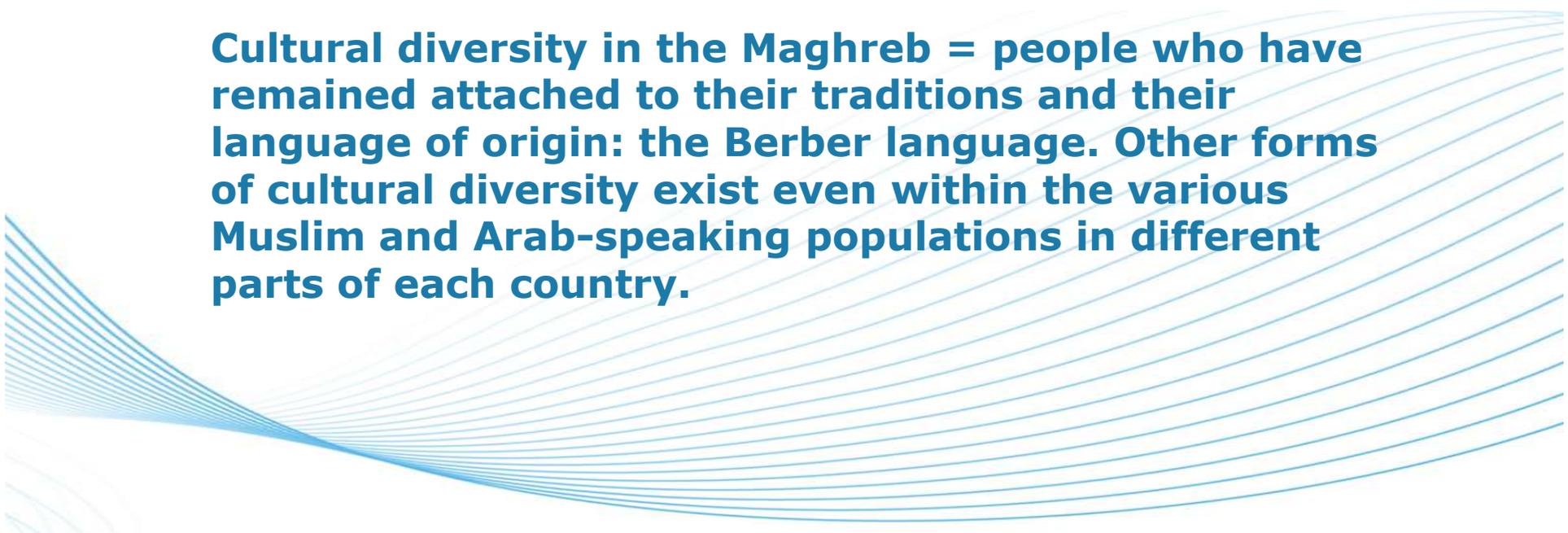


Cultural diversity in the Maghreb

Cultural diversity in the Maghreb is certainly important but it does not have the same implications as in other African regions:

**Common ethnic origin & Islam & Arabic language
+
post-colonial cultural policies
=
standardization of cultural attitudes**

Cultural diversity in the Maghreb = people who have remained attached to their traditions and their language of origin: the Berber language. Other forms of cultural diversity exist even within the various Muslim and Arab-speaking populations in different parts of each country.



Governance of cultural diversity in Algeria

At independence in 1962, the Algerian cultural policy was based on an exclusive Arab-Islamic definition of the national culture, ignoring any Berber cultural expression (original culture)

**In 1996, the Amazigh (Berber culture), was recognized and enshrined in the Algerian constitution.
In 2002, the Berber language is recognized as a national language.**

Today, the various components of Algerian identity enjoy institutional recognition: several independent cultural events are organized; Ministry of Culture organizes every year 7 big festivals to disseminate cultural diversity.

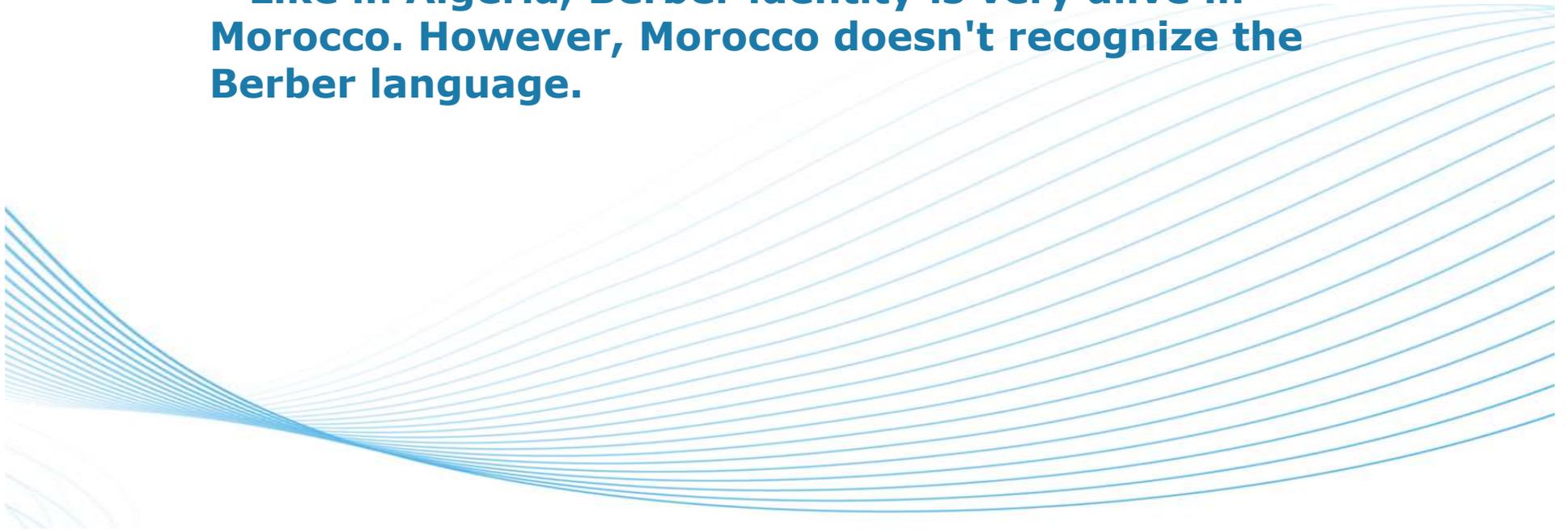


Governance of cultural diversity in Tunisia and Morocco

Tunisia is the country that is the least confronted with cultural diversity with only a few thousands of Berbers people.

Since the early 1990s, Tunisia and Morocco have both put on emphasis on their cultural diversity for economic reasons (tourism).

Like in Algeria, Berber identity is very alive in Morocco. However, Morocco doesn't recognize the Berber language.



Conclusion

Since the early 1990s, the Maghreb states have recognized the importance of cultural diversity because of economic reasons (cultural tourism) as far as Tunisia and Morocco are concerned, and for political reasons (identity claims) in Algeria.

In our opinion, the UNESCO Convention shouldn't be difficult to implement in the Maghreb countries Because cultural diversity has already been incorporated in their cultural policies.

The lesson we can draw from this analysis is that governments will only put on emphasis on cultural diversity when there is something else involved (i.e. economic reasons, political reasons...). Otherwise, any bill, statement or other text has little chance of being adopted.

THANK YOU

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