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Kabyles' Immigration Experiences and Practices of Home, Language, Identity and Belonging in Scotland: A Reflexive Ethnographic Study

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Abstract

This thesis is a study of immigration experiences of Kabyles, a sub-ethnic Berber group present in Algeria, as an ethnic minority in Scotland. Through the adoption of reflexive ethnographic method: participant observation, in-depth interviews, detailed fieldnotes and full immersion for over a year, this study explores how members of this small community reconstruct a sense of self and a feeling of home in a multicultural transnational space. It also investigates the different ways they maintain local and transnational connections highlighting the role of these networks in the processes of acculturation, identity reconstruction and the preservation of attachments to homeland while forging new social and emotional attachments in Scotland. This study stems from my interest in the ways diasporans deal with the challenges of immigration and reflects my own experienced subjectivities as a Kabyle in Scotland.

By combining reflexive ethnography and thematic and narrative analysis, the findings show that 'home' is not a fixed geographical location or a binary between origin and destination, but a fluid and evolving concept shaped by memory, community, emotion, symbolism, and everyday practice. Participants describe Scotland as culturally resonant with Kabylia, which supports positive settlement experiences and strategic identity positioning: they present themselves as a distinct minority while also navigating broader labels such as Algerians or Muslims. Moreover, as part of understanding the Kabyle immigration motivations in Scotland, this study found that socioeconomic and sociopolitical factors dominate. Despite the absence of formal cultural organisations, attributed to political, religious, and intra-community divisions, robust ethnic networks and cultural continuity are sustained through informal structures. This study contributes to understandings of migration, belonging, and diaspora by illustrating how cultural memory, social networks, and everyday practices underpin immigrant adaptation, identity negotiation, and the ongoing reconstruction of home.

Agzul

Tazrawt-a d anadi ɣef yinig n yiqbayliyen yettidiren di tmurt n Skutland. Taẓrigt-a ad teḥqel deg wamek iqbayliyen bennun tikti-nsen ɣef yiman-nsen akked uḥulfu n wexxam deg wemkan n tgemmi (transnation) deg Skutland. Ad d-tesken amek iqbayliyen yettidiren di tmurt agui xelqen-d assaɣen gar-asen, akked yiqvayliyen niden yettidiren ama di tmurt n leqbayel neɣ deg tmura niden. Tessefrayed daɣen azal n wassaɣen-a deg tmuɣli-nsen n ussemres (acculturation) d usehbiber ɣef iḥulfan sɛan metwal tamurt i ğğan deffir akked iḥulfan sɛan metwal tamurt n Skutland. Tikti-agui tussayi-d mbeɛd mi sɣermeɣ iman-iw deg leqdicat-nsen n tmetti s useqdec n tesnarrayt t etnografitt i tallit n ugar n useggas.

Tazrawt-agui tufa-d d akken 'axxam' ɣer yeɣriben iqbayliyen, ur yelli ara kan d adeg, maccči daɣen d afran gar tmura n uẓaṛ d tmura n tinnubga, maca d tikti i yettbeddilen i yebnan s cfayat, tagrawt, iḥulfan akked leqdic n yal ass. Nufa-d daɣen belli tudert n yiqvayliyen deg tmurt n Skutland d tudert ur nesɛi ara atas iɛewwiqen acku ṛebban-d iḥulfan ɣef tmurt n tinnubga I walan tettak anzi ɣer tmurt n leqbayel. Ugar n wayagi, taẓrigt-a tnuda yef tisebbiwin I yeğğan imdanen agui ad ğğen tamurt-nsen w ad idiren di Skutland. Tufad d-akken d tisebbiwin tidamsanin akd tsertayenin. Daɣen, ɣas akken ulac tiddukliwin n yidles aqbayli, iɣriben iqbayliyen yettidiren di Skutland sɛan assaɣen gar-asen w seḥbibiren ɣef tudert taqbaylit.

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Declaration

I hereby declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, this thesis is the result of my own work and has not been submitted in whole or in part for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

Signature: **Hamid Boudiaf**

Dedication

This work is dedicated to all who have been a source of support, motivation, inspiration, love and care.

To my parents Ourida and Mohammed, who taught me the meaning of resilience and hard work. Your belief in the power of education and your endless encouragement have been the foundation of every step I have taken.

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To all the members of the Wellington Church International Conversation Corner club. Your presence reminded me of the beauty of human connection and the value of listening across languages, cultures, and experiences. You have provided me with a feeling of family and support. You have given me a Kabylia in Scotland.

To Anias and Nélya

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Completing this thesis has been not only an academic challenge but also a profound journey of personal and philosophical growth given my noviceness in Sociolinguistics and Migration Studies as well as my own immigration challenges.

I extend my deepest gratitude to my supervisors, **Professor Bernadette O'Rourke** and **Dr Tatiana Heise,** for their unwavering support and insightful critiques throughout my research journey. Their deep commitment to academic excellence and meticulous attention to detail have significantly shaped this dissertation. Every meeting with them has been both a push on the academic ladder and a therapeutic boost.

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Finally, I am extremely grateful to everyone who contributed to making my experience at the University of Glasgow and in Glasgow city a passionate one: friends, neighbours and smiling strangers.

Above all, with humility and gratitude, I thank God for the wisdom, health, and perseverance that enabled me to pursue and complete this PhD.

This thesis is the thread, but your support was the loom. Thank you for helping me weave it into being.

List of Acronyms

ASIS: Algerian Association in Scotland

BRTV: Berber Radio Television

FFS: Socialist Forces Front

FIS: Islamic Salvation Front

FLN: National Liberation Front

GIA: Armed Islamic Group

HCA: High Commission for Amazighité

MAK: Kabylia's Auto-determination Movement

MCB: Berber Cultural Movement

NA: North Africa

NA: Narrative Analysis

INACE: Inclusive North African Community in Edinburgh

RCD: Rally for Culture and Democracy

RN: National Rally

SNP: Scottish National Party

TA: Thematic Analysis

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Chapter One:

Introduction

1.1 Significance of the Study

"Urgaɣ-k ay axxam, laɛca teccureḍ d imawlan.
Urgaɣ-k ay axxam, ula d inebgawen llan.
Urgaɣ-k ay afrag.
Urgaɣ-k ay afrag, nennejmaɛ am zik-nni.
Nɛawez I yetran, i tmucuha n setti.
Ttxilem a targit, jmaɣten anef-iyi.
Urgaɣ-k ay axxam. …
Argu, tirga n uɣrib,
Argu, tirga n ugujil.
Argu, tirga n uɣrib,
Urgaɣ, ukiɣ-d d awḥid"

(Last night, I dreamt of you oh, house, you were full of parents/ family,
I dreamt of you oh, house, you were full of guests too.
I dreamt of you oh, courtyard.
I dreamt of you oh, courtyard. We were gathering as we used to,
Watching the stars and listening to our grandmother's stories,
Please, oh, dream last long, I miss them,
I dreamt of you oh, house …
Dream, the dreams of an immigrant,
Dream, the dreams of an orphan.
Dream, the dreams of an immigrant,
I dreamt, I woke up alone)

[Akli D, *'Urgaɣ-k ay axxam', accessed via YouTube* 2011]

"Ay a*ɣrib yeğğan tamurt, vezzaf tesɛeddaḍ laɛwam,*
Ddunit-agui t-tebɛitt lmut, xas dewwar-d udem-ik s axxam."

(Oh, immigrant who left homeland, you've been away for many years,
This life is followed by death, please, turn around to home)

[Taleb Rabah, 'Ay a*ɣrib', accessed via YouTube* 2013, original release date unknown]

Emigration, the act of moving from one's place of origin, and immigration, the acts of moving from one's homeland and settling in a different country, whether forced or voluntary, are central themes in hundreds of Kabyle songs over time. Slimane Azem who is known to be the Kabyle singer of exile (Bedrani, 2024) for his numerous songs narrating his exile in France due to his political secular views. His songs portray loss and displacement as well as his lingering attachments to Kabylia and Algeria proving that migrants maintain certain links and a degree of continuity of their old selves. Others like Akli D, Taleb Rabah,

Akli Yahyaten and Noria report and narrate the emigration-immigration experiences and the different ways these are perceived by the emigrants-immigrants themselves or by their relatives left behind. Immigration can result in loss, disorientation, de-territorialisation, displacement, emotional detachment, uprooting and more affecting the immigrants in the alien host country where familiarity, home and the sense of self take different meanings. Westwood and Phizacklea indeed argue that "Crossing borders has profound effects upon individuals" (2000, p. 15) as well as on the understanding of identity, belonging and the notion of home at large. Emigration also affects the stay-at-home kin and friends who wait for a possible return.

Similarly to most of Azem's songs, Akli D, a Kabyle singer mixing North African folk music with world genres including reggae and blues, poetically sings his exile and conceives the idea of home as an abstract dream and an imaginary (Blunt and Dowling, 2006). His musical career started as a "*chanteur de rue*" (street singer), in his own words, in France where he was homeless for two years due to his undocumented status. After legalising his status, he went to San Francisco, USA, where he got inspired to fuse Kabyle music with other styles. Metaphorically addressing the house in a nostalgic way while recalling the past in the lyrics above, the singer compares the immigrant to an orphan to articulate the significant loss due to displacement and to demonstrate the rupture of the deep attachment between the immigrant (the orphan) and his homeland (the mother) leaving him alone to navigate through life. On the other hand, some artists deliver the stories of emigration as experienced by the family from across the border particularly the mothers proving that the ties are never completely severed. For example, Taleb Rabah, singing the voices of mothers, reminds the immigrant of his years spent away and calls him to return home showing the continuous emotional connections. In both songs above, the word *'axxam'* (pronounced Akham) is the house, the home and the homeland. In the first one, it refers to the physical aspect of the house and its surrounding and the comfort and emotional relaxation felt between kinships and friendships as well as the lived memories. In the second song, *'axxam'* is used as a synonym to homeland and the place where one belongs. Home is therefore a multidimensional concept (Kreuzer, et al., 2018) that includes physical, emotional, temporal and personal aspects. In the study of migrants, the meaning of home stretches through time and space.

Kabyle migration to overseas territories started after the French army completely seized Kabylia during the Insurrection Revolt in 1871 led by Al Mokrani. The defeat resulted in the deportation of many of the militants to New Caledonia and massive land dispossessions that led to the impoverishment of the region. Subsequently, poverty and French military dominance pushed Kabyles to emigrate, mostly temporarily, to Tunisia and then France. During the World wars, the region served as the main source of supply of soldiers to combat with France and then a labour force for the reconstruction of the hexagon. Dirèche-Slimani, the Algeria-France immigration historian, describes Kabylia as a region of emigration (1997, 2004) due to its heavy overpopulation, its rural and agricultural traditions as well as the lack of employment opportunities. The pre- and post-independence eras had known a spread of immigration practices from other parts of Algeria to France for economic reasons, political protection as well as education because France was, and is, a space of freedom and political and intellectual expression.

While France remains the destination par excellence where strong Kabyle cultural diasporic activism and academic, artistic and literary productions emerged, Kabyles have also settled in other European countries such as Belgium. Across the Atlantic, liberal Canada provides home to thousands of Kabyles compiling to form the second largest Kabyle Diaspora community after France's although no official census exists as Kabyles are counted as Algerians in their host countries. The United Kingdom has long represented a less favourite destination for Algerians due to an absence of historical and colonial links, difficult visa appropriations and legalisation of undocumented immigrants as well as linguistic distance. However, the Algerian civil war period known as the 'Black Decade' sparked the immigration movement for economic and educational reasons (Wildford, 2016) and provoked higher rates of female immigration and the immigration of the elites (Guemar, 2019).

Kabyle Diaspora in Britain received the least scholarly attention compared to that of France and Canada regarding its small numbers. Nonetheless, a small number of researchers studied this community from different ethnographic perspectives. Rocheron (2005); Vincent-Jones (2009); Beloufa (2013); Wildford (2016, 2021) and Guemar (2019, 2022) studied Algerians who settled in major cities such as London and Sheffield focusing on the immigration histories, their culturation and the role of women in the artistic landscape of the hosting cities. Vincent-Jones (2009), for example, researched community

formation and the type of communities Algerians created in Sheffield. Beloufa (2013) studied the Algerian diasporisation in London and Spain. He revealed that Algerian women, not specifically Kabyles, come to the UK for several different reasons. Because women have long been discriminated against in Algeria particularly starting from the 1990s, they had more reasons to flee the country including daily death threats (Guemar, 2019) from the Islamic Armed Group, one of the Islamist groups that fought against the Algerian government during the civil war. They also came to the UK to complete a university degree, but education was more of a persuading camouflage to leave (Chachoua, 2018).

While these scholars investigated Algerian communities at large, others however paid special attention to the Kabyles. Collyer (2004a, 2004b, 2008) investigated the political and cultural activism of Kabyles in London and Paris after the Black Spring events of 2001 in Kabylia contributing to the claims of recognition. Hamani (2018, 2019, 2021) was interested in exploring the push-pull factors behind Kabyle immigration to the United Kingdom and their attachments to homeland. She concluded that "Kabyles' decision to migrate to the UK is characterised by two important factors (1) push factors such as social and political factors, and (2) pull factors such as human rights, employment and lifestyle." (2018, p. 46).

Belabbas (2020, 2025) demonstrated Kabyles' strategies in negotiating and maintaining ethnic identity in the new transnational context and on the digital platforms. All these studies applied ethnographic approaches but none of them specifically focused on the Scottish context where one of the national languages (Gaelic) is a minority, similar to Kabyle. Moreover, none of the works mentioned above studied Kabyles' experiences in Scotland and their practices in reconstructing a sense of home. Drawing on auto-ethnographic data, this thesis investigates the narratives of its participants' immigration trajectories and experiences of acculturation and their self-(re)positioning in the new space. It also explores the home (re)making practices of Kabyles in Scotland and the different ways they forge a sense of home and belonging. Furthermore, it sheds light on the construction and maintenance of connections locally and transnationally, both physical and virtual, with a focus on cultural organisations.

Immigration remains a central and often contentious issue in contemporary public discourse, particularly in the UK, where debates over integration, national identity, and multiculturalism have intensified in recent years. In the post-Brexit context, migrant voices

are often marginalised or reduced to statistics. In Scotland, however, the conversation around immigration often takes on a distinct tone, i.e., one shaped by the nation's devolved approach to social policy and its emphasis on inclusion, diversity, and civic nationalism as opposed to exclusionary ethnic nationalism. In fact, as Lewis (2006) and Pallai (2007) have found, the Scottish governmental and public opinions are relatively positive and pro-immigration (cited in McCollum, et al., 2014). Under the governance of the Scottish National Party (SNP) and with population decline and ageing, Scotland has been more in favour of attracting immigrants and convincing them to make Scotland their home and become 'New Scots' (Hepburn and Rosie, 2014; McCollum et al., 2014; Devine and McCarthy, 2018).

Within this context, immigrant communities are becoming increasingly visible contributors to Scotland's evolving cultural landscape, yet their voices and experiences remain underrepresented in academic and policy discussions. This thesis contributes to addressing that gap by exploring the lived experiences of Kabyle immigrants, who are carving out new lives in Scotland, where they remain embodiments of 'otherness' (Safran, 2004) regardless of the degree of integration. By foregrounding their narratives of identity, home making, and belonging, this study sheds light on how immigrants actively shape and are shaped by the Scottish social fabric, offering insights that can inform more grounded, empathetic, and inclusive public conversations on immigration. Hussain and Miller (2006) concluded from their study that young immigrants in Scotland of ethnic minorities, particularly Muslims, tend to show Scottish identification due to lower rates of hostility and positive attitudes towards immigration. While my participants did not explicitly label themselves as Scottish, their narratives demonstrate high levels of integration and acculturation and acceptance of the host culture.

1.2 Research Questions

In an era shaped by global mobility, digital interconnectivity, and shifting borders, the meaning of home, identity, and belonging for diasporic communities is being continually redefined as well as the *jus soli*, the right of the soil that grants the acquisition of citizenship based on the place of birth rather than parental lineage, as far as the second generation is concerned. This study explores the lived experiences of Kabyle immigrants in Scotland, focusing on how they negotiate identity, maintain cultural and ethnic continuity, and remake a sense of home in a transnational and multicultural setting. Drawing on Blunt and Dowling's (2006) conceptualisation of home as simultaneously spatial, emotional, and

symbolic, the thesis views home not as a static geographical point but as a dynamic site produced through memory, everyday practice, and social relations. Rather than being reduced to a binary between origin and destination, the Kabyle experience highlights the layered, fluid and contested nature of home in the context of ongoing displacement and cultural negotiation.

To understand how Kabyle migrants reposition themselves in Scotland, the study is informed by Bourdieu's (1977, 1986) concepts of *Habitus*, *Field*, and *Capital*, offering a framework for analysing how individuals carry embodied dispositions shaped by their homeland while navigating new social spaces. These migrants' strategies of adaptation can also be interpreted through Berry's (1997) acculturation model, which identifies various modes of cultural negotiation such as integration, separation, assimilation, or marginalisation. However, acculturation is not a linear or uniform process; it is shaped by context, agency, and power or as Safran puts it, acculturation is not "an all or nothing proposition" (2004, p. 21) meaning that connections with homeland are never fully cut. The field of migration is marked by unequal access to linguistic, social, and cultural capital, requiring Kabyle individuals to continually reconfigure their sense of self and belonging as they engage with both the host society and their transnational networks.

Furthermore, this research incorporates Bakhtin's (1981) notion of the *'Chronotope'* and Fishman's (2001) idea of '*Breathing Spaces'* to conceptualise how time, space, and language intersect in immigrants' narratives and daily practices in the hostland. These frameworks illuminate how Kabyle immigrants construct meaning through multi-temporal and multi-sited experiences, threading together past memories, present conditions, and future aspirations. Their use of language, ritual, and digital communication also situates them within wider transnational circuits, reflecting the importance of virtual and affective spaces in sustaining diasporic ties particularly through the use of social media. By centring these analytical lenses, the thesis contributes to contemporary debates on transnationalism, diaspora, and the geographies of home, offering a nuanced understanding of how mobile individuals negotiate the complexities of identity, culture, and belonging in a globalised world.

This research brings a contribution to the literature around Algerian immigration in Great Britain. It also contributes to the fields of Migration, Sociolinguistics, Human Geography and Sociology with an understanding of diasporic transnational hybrid identities

in addition to bringing a conceptualisation of the notion of home, community, sense of belonging and more through answering the following research questions:

1- How do Kabyles in Scotland (re)construct their identity away from home?

This study seeks to examine the immigration experiences of the Kabyle community within the Scottish context with particular attention to their immigration motives, their mobility trajectories and the acculturation challenges encountered in the host country. Furthermore, this thesis explores the evolving nature of self-perception and identity as shaped by temporal and spatial dynamics, with a focus on how individuals negotiate and reposition their sense of self within a new sociocultural environment.

2- What are Kabyles' transnational home remaking practices in Scotland?

Drawing on the idea of home as a process in the making, this section discusses the different strategies the Kabyle community relies on to reconstruct feelings of home and sense of belonging in the Diaspora while maintaining their cultural identity. In more details, I explore the role that perceived similarities and sentimental attachments with Scotland play in shaping the assimilation experiences of Kabyle immigrants in a multicultural and multiethnic context.

3- How do they forge and maintain connections between themselves and with other Kabyles in the Diaspora and Homeland?

The types of ties immigrants keep with other in-group members are varied particularly in the current digitalised era. In this part, I explore the variety of connections Kabyle diasporans in Scotland maintain with others locally and across borders. Focusing on the role of cultural organisations and social media platforms, I demonstrate how creating bonds contributes to better immigration and acculturation experiences.

1.3 Research Rationale

My interest in Sociolinguistics and minority languages led me to investigate the Kabyle language and identity to which I am attached. Initially, I developed a proposal to research

the vitality of the Kabyle language through assessing the efficacy of the revitalisation programmes in Algeria. Using a comparative ethnographic study lens, I initially planned to explore the Kabyles' contributions to the promotion and preservation of their identity within certain Kabyle villages and cities with a specific focus on intergenerational transmission of orality as a major identity marker. This had stemmed from my interest in the Kabyle culture and history as well as the elder's repetitive claims that the ancestral intangible heritage was dying and the youth's non-interest in their own traditions including a perceived threatening over dominance of other languages.

As this project began to develop during the peak of the global coronavirus pandemic, moving back and forth between Scotland and Algeria for data collection became almost impossible after I moved to Glasgow due to closed borders and strict social distancing. As a newly settled individual, I felt a certain detachment with homeland as every aspect in this new society was alien to my villager's perceptions. I therefore connected with some Kabyles found on Facebook and in public places for the sake of bringing some familiarity and developing a certain feeling of comfort. After one year as an immigrant with no physical connections to my homeland, I became more curious in investigating immigrant communities particularly of minority status and their activism. My attention was particularly set on the Kabyle community in the United Kingdom as I was sharing this characteristic with them, and since the communities in France and Canada have had already been researched though from different perspectives and approaches.

Initially, I was interested in researching Kabyles' immigration experiences and their identity negotiation and preservation all over the UK. However, this had been aborted by a number of circumstantial reasons including the appearance of this community in a number of research papers such as Belabbas' (2020, 2022) and Hamani's (2018, 2019, 2021). Moreover, during the phase of field selection and participant recruitment that I processed on Facebook (see Methodology Chapter), I came across a post of one of the participants profiles where he wrote "*Scotland is my second Kabylia*". This statement changed the course of this study by focusing solely on the Kabyle community in Scotland and individuals who have a relationship with Scotland. It was then that I decided to study the Kabyles' home remaking practices in Scotland. Additionally, I developed an interest in ethnic and cultural identities and how these are manifested in the host country. Similar to my participants, as I will show throughout the thesis, I was always labelled as Arab when I conversed with individuals who are not familiar with the linguistic and the cultural diversities in North

Africa. Hamani's (2021) participants narrated to her the confusion of people between Algeria and Nigeria. In many situations where I had to introduce myself, I found myself telling the history of North Africa to provide background to people and how it is possible to be African but not Black or be from an official Arab Muslim country but speak a totally different language. This had proven to me that in multicultural places, minorities' visibility is weak and that their positioning in new spaces takes time and effort to the community.

1.4 Thesis Structure

This thesis is structured into eight Chapters, including the Introduction and Conclusion. Following the introductory Chapter, Chapter Two provides an overview of the Kabyle population and examines the historical literature pertaining to their place within the broader ethnocultural landscape of Algeria. It begins by offering a background on the North African Berber region, referred to as *Tamazgha*, to which the Kabyle people assert their indigeneity. The Chapter then explores their political and cultural movements both within Algeria and across the diaspora, before addressing the minoritisation of the Kabyle language in the national context. It concludes by tracing the historical trajectories of Kabyle immigration and the emergence of immigrant communities abroad.

Chapter Three presents a critical review of the theoretical literature relevant to this study, focusing on the concepts of diaspora, emigration, and identity. The Chapter is divided into two parts: the first part critically discusses the distinction between emigration and immigration and introduces key theories of transnationalism and acculturation. The second part outlines the theoretical foundations underpinning the research, drawing on Bourdieu's concepts of *Habitus* (1972) and *Capital* (1979, 1986), Miller's (2001) and Blunt and Dowling (2006) theorisation of *Home*, Bakhtin's (1981) notion of the *Chronotope*, and Fishman's (1991) idea of *Breathing Spaces*.

Chapter Four details the methodological approach adopted for this research. It begins with a brief discussion of the definitions and forms of ethnography, specifying the particular approaches employed in this study. The Chapter outlines the stages of the ethnographic research process, including site identification, sampling strategies, and participant recruitment. It then provides an in-depth account of the data collection methods, namely participant observation and interviews, and discusses the analytical strategies utilised, which include narrative analysis and reflexive thematic analysis. The Chapter concludes by reflecting on the researcher's positionality, addressing issues of

trustworthiness, and discussing the ethical challenges encountered throughout the research process.

Chapter Five serves as a transition to the analysis of the data collected throughout the research process. This Chapter centres on the motivations underlying Kabyle immigration, the trajectories of their migration, and their experiences within the Scottish context. Drawing on the theoretical frameworks outlined earlier, it presents and critically analyses the participants' narratives, identifying key patterns and drawing preliminary conclusions. Particular attention is given to the processes of self-(re)positioning and identity construction among Kabyle migrants as they navigate life within a multi-ethnic and multicultural society.

Chapter Six examines the home-making practices of the participants within the Scottish context. It begins with an in-depth analysis of the motivations underlying the selection of Scotland as a place of residence and as a second home. Building on the notion that the concept of "home", particularly for immigrants, home extends beyond the physical space of a house. The Chapter explores the various ways in which Kabyles recreate a home-like environment, fostering a sense of belonging and attachment with a focus on environmental, cultural and rural landscapes.

Chapter Seven concludes the data analysis chapters and focuses on connections and community building. Emphasising the role of cultural organisations and social media, it investigates the types of relationships Kabyles in Scotland maintain among themselves and with Kabyle communities in their homeland. The Chapter also considers the factors contributing to the absence of a formal Kabyle cultural organisation in Scotland bringing up historical events and the roles of a potential organisation for this community.

Chapter Eight presents the overarching conclusions derived from the analysis of the empirical data and evaluates the applicability and effectiveness of the theoretical frameworks employed throughout the study. By foregrounding the narratives of the participants, this Chapter underscores the contribution of the research to a deeper understanding of the complex dynamics of Kabyle immigration and its motives to Scotland. It offers interpretative insights into the processes of home making and identity reconstruction among Kabyle immigrants in diaspora, highlighting how these practices are shaped by displacement, cultural memory, and transnational belonging. In doing so, the

Chapter proposes a nuanced conceptualisation of "home" as informed by the lived experiences of the participants, thereby advancing scholarly discourse on diasporic identity and migrant subjectivity.

Chapter Two:

Contextualising the Research

2.1 Introduction

In this Chapter, I set the context of the research by introducing the Kabyle people and reviewing Algeria's most important historical events that shaped Kabylia's image that encouraged emigration. From post-colonial Algeria, the Kabyles have been subjected to strict state policies that led to the minoritisation of the Kabyle language and the weakening of their indigeneity, through which colonised and minoritised populations claim rights and recognition (Harris, 2018). I bridge Kabylia's past and present history of political and cultural movements both in the homeland and the host land spaces with a view on Kabyle migration through time. I touch on events such as *Tafsut Imaziɣen* (Berber Spring) and *Tafsut Taberkant* (Black Spring) during which the Kabyles were both the source of Berberism (political movement across North Africa) and the targets of oppressing governmental policies and Islamist groups. These events appeared in most of the narratives of the participants of the current study expressing a traumatic reaction even decades later. Additionally, I review one of the most interesting concepts related to Kabyle that exists in the literature and that showed up as an overarching theme from the data: the Kabyle Myth. This is a colonial divide and conquer strategy that seems to have important sequels among the people studied in the current research.

The discussion subsequently moves from the homeland to the contexts in which Kabyle migrants have established new lives. Particular attention is given to Scotland as the geographical, sociocultural and linguistic setting of the present study. This includes consideration of Scotland's changing immigration landscape, the development and diversity of migrant communities, and the country's distinctive linguistic and cultural context. This chapter establishes the foundations upon which the theoretical discussion in Chapter 3 and the empirical analysis in the subsequent chapters are developed.

2.2 Tamazgha: The Berber Territory

The origin of *Imazighen,* known as the *Berbers* among the Western scholastic community, is still unknown despite the numerous archaeologists' and historians' attempts to trace their pedigree. However, the majority of papers written on the Berbers agree that they are the native population of North Africa (Lacoste-Dujardin, 1996; Dirèche-Slimani, 1997; Scheele, 2009; Roberts, 2014; Harris, 2018, etc.) particularly drawing on the results of radiocarbon tests on the paintings and objects found in caves which trace them back to at least 5000 B.C. As for Algeria, Achab (2012), Aïtel (2014) and others identify Imazighen as

its indigenous inhabitants, estimated to account for a quarter of the whole population (Ethnologue, 2012). In the 'Encyclopédie Berbère', Chaker (2010) states that no possible answer exists to the question on the origin of the Berbers and asserts that in North Africa, the Berbers lived for at least a dozen millennia. Therefore, the origin of these people remains an enigma.

The Amazigh people, known as the *Berbers* among the Western scholastic community, constitute the indigenous people of North Africa (Lacoste-Dujardin, 1996; Dirèche-Slimani, 1997; Scheele, 2009; Roberts, 2014; Harris, 2018, etc.). The Berbers' name is said to be given by the Romans to identify North Africans during their presence there. It is a Latin word that means barbarians, used to distinguish Romans as civilized and the labelling of others as savages and speakers of unintelligible languages. In other words, any language other than Latin was deemed to be spoken by savage backward people. Ibn Khaldoun, considered the Berbers' historian (Kahlouche, 2001), was the first of the medieval authors writing in Arabic to propose a synthesis of the theories on the origins of the Berbers. This elevated the status of these people by classifying them as a race (see also Wehr, 1994 and de Slane, 2003) and subsequently justifying their right to exist as a nation and a civilization similar to other nations at that time. Ibn Khaldoun's works on the origin of the Imazighen are frequently cited. He considered the Berbers as being a civilization when he wrote about "what they had of events and battles and dynasties and kingdoms" (cited in Mouhelb, 2005, p. 27). However, the former stigmas continued to exist.

Although pejorative interpretations of their culture continued to exist, Berbers' "modern ethnonational consciousness deepen[ed]" (Maddy-Weitzman, 2011, p. 2). The Berbers decided to call themselves *Imazighen* which is an Amazigh word that can be translated to English as 'free men' or 'noble men'. This can be seen as a way of identity reclamation and cultural and political self-definition. Most importantly, the decision to call themselves *Imazighen*, conveyed their desire to free themselves from the stigmatisation. The term *Imazighen* became a connotation for political freedom. Throughout this thesis, I employ the terms Berber and *Amazigh* interchangeably to refer to the people of North African origins though Amazigh will be favoured as an acknowledgement of this community's self-designation and Berber will be primarily used when referring back to the literature.

The Berber territory, historically known as *Tamazgha* (Silverstein, 2004b; Maddy-Weitzman, 2011; Harris, 2018) covers the so-called Greater Maghreb. It extends to the Siwa in Egypt in the East to the Canary Islands West and from the Mediterranean Sea North to the Sahara South (Brett and Fentress, 1997). The different Berber people are scattered across this territory with each group maintaining a distinctive culture and way of life. The language spoken is referred to as *Tamazight* which "belongs to the African branch of the Afro-Asian language family, also referred to as the Hamito-Semitic in the literature" (Achab, 2001, p. 1). Tamazight refers to a group of closely related languages and varieties rather than a single homogeneous linguistic system. These include Kabyle, Chaoui, Tarifit, Tashelhit and Tuareg varieties, among others. The linguistic diversity within Amazigh-speaking populations is significant, and speakers may identify simultaneously with a particular ethnolinguistic group, such as Kabyle, and with the broader Amazigh category. Amazigh-speaking populations are internally diverse, with different ethnolinguistic communities distributed across North Africa. Among these are Kabyle and Chaoui communities in Algeria, Rifian and other Amazigh communities in Morocco, and Tuareg communities extending across parts of the Sahara.

Within Algeria, the Kabyles constitute one of the country's largest Amazigh-speaking populations, though there exists no governmental census based on ethnicity, and have played a particularly prominent role in Amazigh cultural and political activism. Kabylia, the region associated with the Kabyle people, therefore occupies an important place in the history of Amazigh language activism, cultural mobilisation and political movements in Algeria. The next section turns specifically to Kabylia and the Kabyle people, examining the geographical, historical, linguistic and sociocultural characteristics that are central to understanding their subsequent migration

2.3 Algeria's Linguistic and Cultural Landscape

The sociolinguistic landscape in the Algerian modern society is rich and diverse with four main languages co-existing with each other though on uneven levels of prestige. The first and most advantaged language is Arabic. While Modern Standard Arabic is the official and national language used in domains such as government, religion, education and the media, Colloquial Arabic or what is referred to as *Darja* is used for communication by most Algerians in the Arab-speaking cities with different variations from East to West. The second is Tamazight which holds the second position in the constitution both as a national and

official language. However, it is used only for communication in the areas where the Berber people live. Similar to *Darja*, *Tamazight* accounts not only geographical variations but also differences within the same group and region (Goodman, 2004). For example, it is not uncommon in Kabylia to observe linguistic variations between one village and another one located a few miles away on one single mountain. Standard Arabic and Tamazight are stated on the constitution as official and national languages though Tamazight only appears after the 2016 revision.

The third language in Algeria is French. It is the first foreign language and is used in the same domains as Modern Standard Arabic though less in everyday interactions. Among the population, French holds the title of the language of the coloniser and attitudes towards colonial legacies are divided. Speaking a more dominant language provides more opportunities but simultaneously, Algeria had been trying to recover from the effects of colonialism by attempting to reach a certain national unity. Finally, as a second foreign language, English is gaining ground among Algeria's youth. Recently, in 2022, the government decided to replace French with English, removing the national status of the former. This decision was said to be an opportunity for Algeria to open up to the global market where English is the lingua franca although political motives cannot be neglected. Nevertheless, French remains more widely used in Algeria than English.

2.4 Who are the Kabyle People?

The Kabyle people live in the coastal region in the Northeast of Algeria which is known as *Kabylia,* "a (geographical) distinction that evolved under French colonial rule" (Maas, 2014, p. 4). Hanoteau and Latourneux (1893) referred to the region as Kabylia of the Jurjura which at present has no administrative delimitations but comprises the *Wilaya* of Tizi-Ouzou, Bejaia, and Bouira and some parts of Boumerdés, Jijel and Sétif. A *wilaya*, the main administrative division in Algeria, is the equivalent of a 'state'.. The Kabyles dominate the other Algerian Berber groups with over 5 million speakers (Ethnologue, 2012) and a significant number of them live in Europe, nearly half of them according to Al Rousan and Ibrir (2018, p. 181). While such statistics present the Kabyles as the largest population of Kabyles in Algeria, they remain a minority considering the entire population totalling over 47 million and the dominance of Arabic.

The idea of a unitary national identity in Kabylia is complicated by the religious diversity of its people. Today, most Kabyles describe themselves as Muslims, the religion of

the government. Religiously, Algeria is an officially Muslim country. However, historically, the Kabyles, like all the *Imazighen,* practiced Judeo-Christianity for centuries before becoming Islamized and Arabized in the seventh century by the Arabo-Islamic conquests and even more starting with the Arabisation policies post-independence in 1962 contributing to the marginalisation of the Kabyle identity. Silverstein (2002, 2004) and Scheele (2009) stressed their distancing from religion quoting Hamelin who argued that Kabyles' "religious notions are rather obtuse" (1833, p. 15) and Daumas and Fabar who stated that Kabyles "have accepted the Koran but they have not embraced it" (1847, p. 77). From 1963 to the present day, the Algerian government has maintained Islam as 'the religion of the state and the people' in its second amendment neglecting religious diversity. For example, in an attempt to foster religious unity, 47 protestant evangelist churches had been closed, leaving church goers to opt for a clandestine mode since 2017 (Le Figaro, 17 January 2025).

Even after accepting Islam, the Kabyles kept some pre-Islamic and vernacular ritual practices. Such rituals address different gods or spiritual entities and serve different matters. For instance, during periods of drought, particularly during late autumn and winter seasons, they come together and invoke the god of rain *Anzar* by sacrificing an animal, generally a home-raised rooster. In carnival like costumes, they start roving around in the village and knock to every house's door while chanting. Each family would give something that is food based or money as a charity and will then be offered to the most vulnerable people of the village, the poor, widows and orphans. It has been said that the moment the widow feeds her children from those donations, the clouds gather up and rain starts pouring.

2.4.1 Kabylia and the Village Life

Although Kabyle cities are growing in size, the Kabyle people originally lived in villages dispersed in the Tel Atlas Mountain chains. Most villages are elevated on top of the mountains for security purposes. This is the most striking feature of Kabylia to sociologists and anthropologists, particularly the French who had a close meticulous study of Kabylia such as Hannoteau and Latourneux (1814); Tocqueville (1837); Daumas and Fabar (1847) and Howard (1939), Bourdieu (1958) and later Lacoste-Dujardin (2006); Scheele (2009); Goodman (2014); Roberts (2014) to name but a few. The houses were traditionally grouped closely together with their back facades to the outside forming an enclosure which is barely

accessible and therefore making it easy for the villagers to defend themselves (Bourdieu, 1958). The structure and organisation of the village allowed the Kabyles to protect themselves and their lands from any potential attacks from invaders. However, the French made the area more accessible by investing in tarred roads for easier circulation of the army and installing military bases such as the Fort National in the *Larbaa n'Ath Irathen* region.

Observers have described Kabyles are as "bitterly warlike people … killed by the thousand, they were often defeated but not destroyed" (Howard, 1939, p. 3), as suggested by Scheele (2009) in her extensive ethnographic study in Kabylia. Kabyles "knew the pleasures and responsibilities of individual property" (Goodman, 2005, p. 71) as all around the village, there were fields and vegetable gardens as Kabyles were farmers and mostly arboriculturists relying on olive and fig production (Howard, 1939; Bourdieu, 1958; Lacoste-Dujardin, 1996). Every household owns a garden and a piece of land, sometimes borrowed from others, where they grow crops. To Kabyles, mountains are a source of income while providing a sense of safety.

In the centre of every village, they have an area called 'tajmaɛt' (pronounced *tajmaat),* where regular assemblies are held. During these gatherings, presided by the oldest men and committee, male adults and elders discuss potential problems that can affect the harmony of the village. The *tajmaɛt* is then similar to a court or parliament, where a 'mountain democracy' is practiced (Howard, 1939). At the village level, *tajmaɛt* is a room built apart, mostly with open access. The French colonial administrators were charmed by the Kabyle village for they saw in it a "romanticized reflection of Europe's own rural past" (Williams, 1973 cited in Goodman, 2005, p. 71) and this is reflected in Pierre Bourdieu's comparison between Béarn, his place of origin, and Kabylia. Bourdieu conducted a detailed description of the Kabyle house and how it constituted the most important cell of the Kabyle universe (Bourdieu, 1958 cited in Goodman, 2005). Nowadays, the Kabyle village has modernized, and the traditional stone houses replaced with more contemporary designed houses.

Goodman considered that "the village has turned into a figure of culture that bears witness to a collective Berber heritage" (2005, p. 69). In fact, the traditional Kabyle village saw the emergence of countless traditions, expressions, practices and customs that characterise the Kabyles. Conversely, the contemporary modern ways of life are considered to have a threatening influence on the Kabyle traditional social values (Goodman, 2005). In

other words, urbanization allowed the erection of cities resulting in a change of the Kabyle lifestyle and identity, that is: those who have once been traditional mountain dwellers became townsmen. Urbanization resulted also in a shift from traditional family model to a more Western nuclear family model in which intergenerational interactions are more limited. The nuclear families adopted a modern way of life in urban areas and the grandparents remained in the villages. This phenomenon of social mobility is an obstruction of the chain of transmission (Ait Hammou Ali and Sini, 2020) and is often seen as a factor endangering language, culture and identity.

2.4.2 The Kabyle Myth: A Colonial Legacy

The French colonial presence in Algeria, which spanned from 1830 to 1962, profoundly impacted the social fabric of the region, particularly in terms of the relationships between the Berber and Arab populations. The colonial strategy intentionally fostered divisions between these two ethnic groups, creating a social and racial hierarchy that was designed to weaken national unity and reduce the likelihood of collective resistance. This policy of division became especially evident during the Kabyle insurrection of 1871, which marked a significant resistance movement in the Kabyle region. The French response to these uprisings was swift and brutal, as many Kabyle individuals were forcibly displaced and made to work in colonial landholdings (Collyer, 2008) and many deported to New Coledonia.

The French colonial administration's differentiation between the Arab and Kabyle populations was not merely a reflection of racial prejudice but also a deliberate tactic to fracture Algerian society and mitigate the strength of nationalist movements. This process gave rise to what is referred to as "The Kabyle Myth," a concept that emerged as part of the colonial discourse to further entrench the colonial divide coined originally by Ageron in 1960. The Kabyle Myth was framed as an intentionally divisive tool of colonial domination, one that portrayed the Kabyle people as more economically pragmatic, loyal, and non-aggressive in contrast to the perceived fierceness and volatility of the Arab population (Collyer, 2008, p. 692).

This racialized categorization was reinforced by French scholars and administrators, who employed these stereotypes to portray the Kabyles in a more favourable light relative to the Arabs. According to Ageron (1971), as cited in Tilmatin (2016), French intellectuals described the Kabyles as straightforward, loyal, and possessing sound economic instincts, traits that were seen as more compatible with the colonial agenda than the perceived

rebellious nature of the Arabs. In other words, colonial discourse represented Kabyles as potentially being more prone to accept French-ness through the '*mission civilisatrice*' [civilising mission] aiming to sow western culture in Algerian territory.

A significant outcome of the operation of the 'Kabyle myth' and its various manifestations was the disproportionate representation of Berbers, and more specifically, Kabyles (Collyer, 2008). The initial conceptualization of Kabyles as racially distinct from Arabs can be traced to Abbé Raynal and his alias Peuchet. They portrayed the Kabyles as "Nordic people, descending directly from the Vandals, handsome with their blue eyes and blond hair" (cited in Lazreg, 1983, p. 384-5). This racial distinction was later reinforced by French historian Alexis de Tocqueville, who, in 1837, further emphasized this separation by describing the Kabyles as religiously "less faithful" (p. 46, cited in Silverstein, 2002, p. 135). Tocqueville also noted that the Kabyles were more open to engaging in commercial relations with the French, signalling a perceived cultural and social openness.

Scholars such as Silverstein (2002, 2004), Lacoste-Dujardin (2006), Lorcin (2006), Collyer (2008), and Aïtel (2014) have identified the Kabyle myth as a quintessential example of a "divide and conquer" strategy, one that was pivotal to the French colonial project - a territorial rape. While ethnic, linguistic, cultural and historical distinctions existed between the two groups, the Kabyle Myth put one in a more favoured position to further the division and create disunity. Silverstein (2002, p. 135) quotes Tocqueville's assertion that "[While] the [K]abyle's country may be closed to us, the [K]abyle's soul is open and it is not impossible for us to penetrate it," further illustrating the colonial intent to exploit perceived divisions within Algerian society. Tocqueville's reference to the 'Kabyle's country' also corroborates the claims of Hugh Roberts (2014), who contends that Kabylia was a politically independent region with a distinct polity prior to French colonization. This may explain why the French occupied Kabylia only thirty years after seizing Algiers.

Further contributions to the Kabyle myth were made by Colonel Daumas and Captain Fabar (1847), who highlighted the Kabyle community's economic acumen, portraying them as more attuned to the value of money. Additionally, they argued that Kabyle women enjoyed a more advantageous social status in comparison to their Arab counterparts, claiming that they "have a greater liberty than Arab women" and that "they count more in society" (Daumas and Fabar, 1847: I, 40, cited in Silverstein, 2002, p. 142). This portrayal of Kabyle women served to reinforce the colonial image of the Kabyle as more

‘civilized’ and more ‘open’ to French influence, further deepening the racial and cultural divides between the Berber and Arab populations within the colonial framework.

Silverstein (2004) asserts that “the Kabyle Myth served to underwrite a two-hundred-year rape of Algeria’s resources and cultures” (p. 55), encapsulating the central role this constructed myth played in the French colonial project. The Kabyle Myth, in this sense, was not simply an ideological construct but a strategic tool employed by the French colonizers to further their political, military, and cultural domination over Algeria. By constructing a narrative that depicted the Kabyle population as distinct, "civilized," and more easily assimilable into the colonial framework, the French colonizers sought to legitimize colonial rule. Furthermore, it played a critical role in the cultural imperialism of the French, fostering a hierarchical racial and cultural schema that positioned the Kabyles as "superior" to other Algerian ethnic groups, thereby facilitating a divide-and-rule strategy. French scholars and academics, in their studies of Kabyle society, often linked notions of civilization with industriousness and a settled way of life. Accordingly, they contended that the Kabyles, who were sedentary, embodied a higher degree of civilization than the Arabs, who were primarily nomadic (Aïtel, 2014, p. 27). In this way, the Kabyle Myth functioned as both a psychological tool for the colonizers and a means of constructing an Algerian identity that was amenable to French domination, undermining both the unity and resistance of the larger Algerian populace.

However, this myth, and the ideas underpinning it, was not merely an intellectual exercise. It contributed to a protracted and harmful narrative that framed the Berbers of Algeria as a colonial creation, a label that has persisted throughout Algerian history. As Aïtel (2014) notes, these colonial constructions created a “never-ending polemic,” with the implications of such categorization deeply embedded in Algerian society. The notion that “the Berber is a colonial creation” has been advanced by several Algerian leaders, reflecting a critique of the way the French project distorted indigenous identities (Chaker, 1989-1990, in Sini, 2015, p. 455). In the diasporic context, the Kabyle myth travelled through space and time and led Algerians to create distinct communities based on ethnicity as hundreds of Kabyle associations had been created in France. As far as this study is concerned, I will demonstrate in Chapter Seven that such ethnic differentiations persist representing a major reason behind the absence of a Kabyle organisation in Scotland.

This "divide and conquer" strategy employed by the French served to weaken Algerian unity and facilitate the colonial process. Yet, after Algeria's independence in 1962, the enduring effects of this myth became apparent. It accentuated the distinctions between the 'self' and the 'other,' and reinforced the social and political fractures between different ethnic and cultural groups within Algeria. While Lorcin argues that the Kabyle Myth "was a myth that never became policy," (2006, in Aïtel, 2014, p. 27), it nonetheless contributed to the divisive forces that shaped post-colonial discourse. The myth did not function to benefit the Kabyles; rather, it perpetuated a framework that kept them marginalized within the larger national context, complicating the process of national unity after independence. The persistence of this colonial legacy underscores the continuing tensions surrounding identity, ethnicity, and historical memory in antebellum Algeria.

The significance of the Kabyle Myth for this thesis lies not in treating contemporary Kabyle-Arab relations as a simple continuation of colonial divisions, but in recognising how historically produced categories of difference can acquire new meanings in postcolonial and diasporic contexts. As later chapters demonstrate, these inherited distinctions continue to inform some participants' perceptions of cultural, linguistic and religious belonging in Scotland, while their everyday interactions also provide opportunities to negotiate, reproduce or transcend them. The diaspora therefore constitutes a new social field in which historically sedimented identities are reworked rather than simply reproduced.

2.4.3 The Kabyle Language

The language spoken by the Kabyles is one of the different varieties of Tamazight. With its slightly large number of users, Brenzinger (2008) classified the Kabyle as a stable language according to the framework suggested by Michael Krauss (2008). However, though it is spoken and learned as a mother tongue, it is threatened by external factors, including the influence of Arabic along with French as the most dominant languages in schools and administration. As Saoud (2017) observed, a new phenomenon can be seen in Kabylia where children's first socialisation is in French, either in the house or in the private schools they go to. Due to the psychological colonial effects such as the '*complexe du colonisé'* (the colonised complex), as written by Frantz Fanon (Costa-Lascoux, 2001) and the view of anything that is French as a symbol of civilisation, some parents prefer to give their children a 'French' upbringing to ensure them better opportunities in the future. Public universities

and private schools offer most of their programmes in French particularly natural sciences, computing and engineering.

The impact of the exponential development of new technologies is also identified as an external factor affecting the use of local languages. While it could be said that the Kabyle language can continue to be learned by new speakers given that it has a documented grammar and dictionaries and is starting to be used in domains such as mass media, the authentic culture it traditionally carries may be influenced. In fact, young people show very little interest in learning about the culture of their mother tongue that they have normally acquired in the home. Dirèche-Slimani, (1997) showed that Kabyle culture and history were secondary in the eyes of Baccalaureate candidates. Such non-interest is confirmed by Ait Hammou Ali and Sini (2020). According to the INALCO (*Institut National des Etudes et des Civilisations Orientales*), Algeria is linguistically diverse but with some varieties declining including Kabyle as concluded by Hocine Toulait (2018), a specialist in official and minority languages in Canada and a representative of the provisional Kabyle committee. A community's assimilation and integral absorption of the other language and the culture represent a danger to its initial identity in favour of the most dominant one according to him.

In the past few decades, the concept of 'new speaker' emerged particularly as part of endangered minority languages revitalisation literature. New speakers are individuals who consciously and willingly acquired a language and use it not through family intergenerational transmission but rather through education or language revitalisation programmes (O'Rourke, Pujolar and Ramallo, 2015). One of the features of these individuals is that, in some contexts such Galician (O'Rourke and Ramallo, 2013), they take agency in social change though their legitimacy is often questioned and compared to native speakers. O'Rourke et al. (2015) argue that these new speakers usually take an activist role and demonstrate a pronounced sense of responsibility towards safeguarding the language. Uli Rodhe (German) and Stina (Finnish) are two of the 'new speakers' of Kabyle who actively promote the Kabyle language and Berber culture in general. Uli is particularly known via her interpretations of famous Kabyle songs and collaborations with figures like the singer Idir as well as her activist engagements during protests and her presence in different conferences.

Although nowadays Kabyle has a strong written tradition, a decline in intergenerational transmission and use amongst a younger generation is likely to affect the future use of the language. However, one must not deny that both in Algeria and other countries of NA as well as the diaspora in Europe (France in particular) and Canada, cultural and political activism is on the rise towards what Lacoste-Dujardin's (2006, p. 97) calls a "Berber Cultural Renaissance". Different organisations were established to work with great determination for the promotion of the Amazigh language and culture in the homelands.

The *Académie Berbère d'Échange et de Recherches Culturels*, shortened to Berber Academy, is a Paris-based organisation created in 1966. It is the first Berber organisation ever created and that funded different events in Kabylia (Goodman, 2004). Its objectives were twofold; first, raise the Berber ethnopolitical awareness and rehabilitate the Berber identity across *Tamazgha* (Bessaoud, 2000) and "force the Algerian state to recognise the specificity of Berber culture (and language) and acknowledge it as a component of Algerian identity" (Aïtel, 2013, p. 63). Some of its innumerable achievements are the development of the Neo-Tifinagh alphabet and its standardisation (Collyer, 2008), the conception of the Amazigh flag and the publication of academic works with the contributions of intellectual figures such the renowned Mouloud Mammeri and the artist and author Taos Amrouche. While other organisations emerged like the *Mouvement Culturel Berbère* (MCB) created in Algeria in 1980 as a reaction to the government's decision of reinforcing Arabic teaching across the country as well as the *Haut Commissariat de l'Amazighité* (HCA) [High Commision of Amazighity] (1995), the diaspora in France receives the merit due to its early activism.

Kabyle is not simply a minority language threatened by dominant languages; its social meaning and function change across different spaces. In Algeria, it is closely associated with Kabyle identity and cultural continuity, while French and Arabic have historically occupied more powerful institutional domains. In the diaspora, however, these linguistic resources can be reconfigured: French, despite its colonial history, may become useful for Kabyle home-making, while English becomes associated with participation in Scottish society, and Tamazight/Kabyle functions as a marker of intimacy, belonging and cultural continuity.

2.5 Indigeneity, Language Planning and Marginalisation

Considering indigenousness, most linguistic minorities are indigenous to the land they share with the dominant group; however, not always. The United Nations (2010) define indigenous peoples as the "descendants of the peoples who inhabited the land or territory prior to colonization or the establishment of State borders; they possess distinct social, economic and political systems, languages, cultures and beliefs, and are determined to maintain and develop this distinct identity; they exhibit strong attachment to their ancestral lands … and identify themselves as indigenous peoples" (2010, p. 3). Indigeneity is therefore articulated with claims to territorial, economic, cultural and linguistic rights (Hale, 2005; Engle, 2010; Radcliffe, 2010; Postero, 2013; Li, 2014 cited in Harris, 2018).

Busekist argues that "institutions should confer linguistic rights to individual members of minority or vulnerable communities" (2018, p. 423) in diglossic countries where more than one language and culture exist. In fact, the enforcement of a common language could have adverse effects on minority language communities that are marginalised and deprived of any prestige and political power. Such position could ultimately lead to 'Linguicide' (Crystal, 2001) or 'Linguistic Suicide' (McNulty, 2023). For example, a monolingual educational system creates students that are "agent(s) of linguicide" (Saadi, 2002, p. 46 cited in Rouabah, 2020, p. 18). In Gaelic speaking parts of Scotland, the Penal Laws and the Act of Union (1707) marginalized Gaelic confining it nowadays to some schools and designated events (Ó Giollagáin et al., 2020; Nance & Moran, 2022), prioritizing English as the language of government, law and education

The 'English Only' schools of the eighteenth century created monolingual assimilated citizens who shifted from Gaelic to English moulded by the British colonising policies. As a new resident of Glasgow, though I knew about the linguistic landscape of Scotland and Ireland in history, what I heard from local people made me aware of the similarities between political struggles of Gaelic in 18th century Scotland and Kabyle in late 20th century Algeria. In fact, I joined the International Conversation Corner at the Wellington church in Glasgow where elderly Scots weekly volunteer to converse with international migrants to help in English proficiency. As I introduced myself and told them about the language policies in Algeria, they asked more questions. They told me stories narrated to them by their parents or grandparents who they reported were physically and verbally

assaulted for speaking Gaelic. As I will explain below, Kabyles' endeavour was similar. Additionally, more references to Scotland will be made in Chapters Five and Six.

Standard-language ideologies can associate standardised varieties with greater institutional prestige, while minoritised languages may be constructed as less prestigious or confined to particular domains. With language planning being intentional and deliberate (Cooper, 1989, p. 45 cited in Hult and Johnson, 2015, p. 33), implementing language planning policies requires essential ethical considerations. Language planners and the organisms issuing such policies at the national level need to pay particular attention to the ethical principles when creating them and when implementing them as well as thinking for the long-term consequences and anticipating potential challenges. For instance, Hult and Johnson (2015) explain that language planners' linguistic ideologies and politics need to be kept distant so that to avoid affected views of the people helping to shape the language policies. Von Busekist adds that one of the objectives of language planning is to "lay out preferential treatments to protect speakers of vulnerable language communities" (2018, p. 422). The United Nations Organisation defends minority communities' rights and encourages self-identification for the promotion of their language because, as the statistics show, around 96% of the world's languages are used by 4 percent of the whole population (Crystal, 2000 cited in May, 2012). While some countries such as Switzerland ensure to acknowledge and give importance to language and ethnic diversity, others neglect heterogeneity, maintaining 'national unity' claims, i.e., national identity is determined by the commonality of a single language used by all.

Moreover, language planning aims at creating policies that work for the selection, codification, standardisation and officialization of languages with the collaboration of institutions and academies that "formulate the rules and publish the documents" (Garvin, 2009, p. 42). Minority languages or what can also be referred to as 'heritage languages' may be kept for symbolic functions and are, therefore, only given the national status to ensure their preservation. However, as language is power, the more powerful group always "exercises most symbolic power" (Zamyatin, 2014, p. 112) and the most important presence in different domains. Minority indigenous languages that are confined to small numbers of "low-status and private domains" (Sallabank, 2012, p. 117) of use are subject to neglect. Clearly stated, standard language is a signifier of more prestige while a minority language

is associated with inferiority and backwardness. As a consequence, standard language ideologies can be seen as factors reinforcing language and social inequalities.

In the North African context, Merolla (2020) argues that the minoritisation of Amazigh languages and communities is a colonial and postcolonial phenomenon in relation to the nation state building process. There existed no school in Berber and the only Berber teaching were meant to train interpreters in order to conquer the Berber speaking areas. In this respect, on the Berber minoritisation, Merolla writes that "Berbers were depicted as the '*bons sauvages'* [savages] of North Africa and as the Roman civilization's heirs [and] the Berber society was stigmatized as being more retrograde than the Arab one was in addition to the view that the Berber language and culture expressed a backward sociocultural position". (Merolla, 2020, p. 30). After Algerian independence, the Arabisation policy was adopted to reach national unity and Berber activists who demanded recognition "were accused of 'localism' and French 'acculturation'" (Merola, 2020, p. 31) that endangered the national order. This goes against Von Busekist's view that, "every language should be a 'Queen' in its own territory" because territoriality "provide[s] language stability and language security" (2018, p. 426) echoing UN (2010).

2.6 Arabisation: Towards the Minoritisation of Kabyle

On the aftermath of independence, Algerian leaders announced that Algeria is an Arab country neglecting all sorts of ethnic or linguistic diversity. In short, they aimed at establishing a stable monolingual nation. That was done without considering the factor of legitimacy, and to compensate that, three ideologies were relied on namely, Socialism, Nationalism, and Islam, Ben Rabah (2004) explained. According to him, the policy of Arabisation failed in the efforts to reducing conflicts and "to unite the people within a homogeneous national community" (2004, p. 61) mainly because of resistance from the Amazigh groups, particularly the Kabyles. The famous threefold saying of one of the leaders of the FLN (Front de Liberation National), Ahmed Ben Bella, holding the position of the head of the state after independence until 1965, who proclaimed, "we are Arabs, we are Arabs, we are Arabs!" lead to tensions between non-Arabs and the state.

To eliminate the French linguistic imperialistic influence, "Algeria has since independence engaged in some of the most extensive and strict Arabicization programs in the Maghreb" (Mouhelb, 2005, p. 9). The Algerian authorities at that time (1964) asked Egypt ruler Djamel Abel Nasser to hire around a thousand "Egyptians as Arabic-Language

Instructors" (Ben Rabah, 2013, p. 56). The demand could not be met statistically but, Ahmed Ben Bella insisted on Egypt and asked Egyptians to be sent to function as teachers "even if they were greengrocers" (Grandguillaume, 2004, p. 28 cited in Ben Rabah, 2013, p. 56). Different commentators confirmed that the imported individuals were craftsmen with no training in teaching and with no knowledge on Algeria's social reality (Ben Rabah, 2013). The wrongs done to minority languages in the name of national unity are undeniable (Hornsberger, 1987; Benham and Cooper, 1998; Argenter and McKenna Brown, 2004; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000 cited in Sallabank, 2012, p. 110) and Tamazight in Algeria is no exception. In 1963, Hocine Ait Ahmed (1926-2015), a Kabyle member of the FLN, split and created the FFS (Front des Forces Socialistes) to oppose Ben Bella's government and work towards a secular nation. He had led a ten-month armed rebellion (Silverstein, 2004b) that the government's army quickly controlled.

Bearing the language of the Islamic faith, Arabisation was seen as a 'sacred' cause that was focal in the process of decolonization "(Gill, 1999 cited in Mouhelb. 2005, p. 10). Therefore, Arabisation was thought to be the necessary tool for modernization and a shared political and economic power between the North African countries. Ben Rabah quoted Mouloud Kacem Nait Belkacem, an Algerian politician, philosopher, historian and fervent defender of Arabo-Islamic ideologies and Algerian nationalism claiming that "the Arabic language and Islam are inseparable" (2004, p. 63). The Amazigh activists, however, saw this as a governmental control over them and certain tensions burst between the Amazigh and the non-Amazigh but mostly between the Amazigh and the government.

Regarding the ethics of language policies, the Algerian authorities while planning Arabisation favoured Classical Arabic aiming to a monolingual state and denying its multiculturality. Ben Rabah denounced this by reporting the State's decision after they hired a group of American sociolinguists from the University of Berkeley to research "the sociolinguistic profile of the country" (2004, p. 64). The team of the researchers advised authorities "the institutionalization of Algerian Arabic and Berber as inter-regional languages because they were the most widely used and the most consensual" (Ben Rabah, 2004, p. 64), however, a contract had been signed between these two parties in which the researchers agreed to keep the results of the survey and never disclose it to the public. Ben Rabah maintains that by Arabisation and its implementation in education, the Algerian authorities tried to control the behaviours of most of the population for the purpose of

creating “school leavers with radical Islamic views” (2004, p. 73) and attempting to bring the national conflicts to an end.

The Berber language was viewed as a threat to the national unity. By implementing Arabisation policy in education, the FLN saw in it the solution to the “Berber problem” (Joffé, 1980). Berbers were Algeria’s problem since independence (Joffé, 1980). Ben Rabah quotes one of the FLN members when he said: “In Algeria, the problem of the Berber language will be solved when the children will not be able to understand their parents and vice-versa" (2004, p. 68). The children were refused their use of their mother tongues, and they were relied on to teach their parents Arabic. Goodman (2004) reported her participants’ narratives of the punishments they received whenever they were heard speaking Kabyle at school. For example, she mentioned the ‘nail’ technique that she compared to the ‘hot potato’ game. She wrote: “When a child was heard speaking Kabyle, that child would receive the nail. To get rid of it, the child would have to catch someone else violating the rule and would pass the nail on. This continued until the next morning in class, when the child left holding the nail would be punished” (2004, p. 67). This is similar to the ‘*bata scoir’* used in Ireland where a stick is attached to every child on which a notch is carved every time Irish Gaelic was used. At the end of the day, the child is beaten according to the number of notches the stick had. Aïtel concluded that “the idea behind Arabisation was to assimilate all Algerians into a unified new nation, consolidate power, and demonstrate cohesion and unity with the other newly independent nations of North Africa” (2013, p. 64), but it led to the marginalisation of Kabylia and the Algerian Berber population.

To render and neutralize the effects of Arabisation, many Berber activists, mostly through music, defended the Amazigh cause and raised the consciousness of the people. For example, the very famous singer Idir whose songs are rarely about love stories but rather teach and call for preservation. Matoub Lounes, a singer with certain political ideologies and revealing politically devoted songs has a huge influence on the Berbers, the Kabyle in particular. His songs denounced the Arabo-Islamic practices that were starting to spread to the Kabyle regions and called for recognition (Aïtel, 2013; Silverstein, 2003). To the Kabyle people, he is a symbol of opposition and freedom.

Surprisingly, political leaders who were fervent advocators of Arabisation did not have knowledge in Classical Arabic and none of them addressed the population in that language. In fact, presidents themselves used Algerian colloquial Arabic in their speeches

or French, to which most Algerians had negative attitudes as the language of the coloniser. In 1992, the Arabisation was suspended by the president Mohammed Boudiaf and who "called for accepting diversity" (Rouabah, 2020, p. 28). Before his assassination on June 29th of the same year of his election, he opposed Arabisation and encouraged the use of Algerian Arabic and other local varieties.

When Liamine Zerouel was elected (1994- 1999), he restarted the Arabisation process but recognized Tamazight and passed a presidential decree to create the High Commission of the Berber Affairs (*Haut Commissariat de l'Amazighité*). In 2002, Bouteflika granted it the national status as part of the national identity after Arabic and Islam. Until then "the multi-ethnic nature of the Algerian population was continuously denied by the government." (Collyer, 2008, p.693). The authoritative nature of Arabisation resulted in its failure and the amplification of the existing conflicts. It contributed to the aggravation of existing identity distinctions between Arabs and Kabyles that resulted from the Kabyle myth. As a result of Arabisation and Arabo-Islamic policies, the Kabyle people saw their language and cultures excluded from the national culture (Tilmatine, 2017b, p. 5). The consequences of this history extend beyond language policy. The marginalisation of Kabyle language and culture contributed to the politicisation of Kabyle identity and to the emergence of cultural practices aimed at preserving, transmitting and reclaiming this identity.

2.7 Linguistic and Cultural Heterogeneity: Algeria's Constitution

Algeria's constitutional framework reflects a long-standing tension between state-imposed Arab-Muslim identity and the country's cultural and linguistic diversity. Since independence, official discourse has promoted Arabic and Islam as foundational to national unity, as seen in the unaltered first three articles of the constitution and the prioritisation of Arabic as the sole official language, even after Tamazight was recognised in 2016. While the 2020 constitutional revision reaffirms Tamazight's status as a national and official language, Arabic is still symbolically and politically dominant. These provisions are underpinned by policies of Arabisation that have historically marginalised Berber identities, framing regional or ethnic claims as threats to national cohesion. The French colonial strategy of "divide and conquer" appears to persist in postcolonial governance, particularly through the legal and ideological suppression of regionalism.

This political environment has spurred resistance movements such as the MAK (Movement for the Autonomy of Kabylia), which initially advocated for linguistic and cultural recognition and later shifted towards self-determination. However, such aspirations directly clash with constitutional articles prohibiting regionalism and political organisations based on linguistic or ethnic criteria. While the Algerian constitution asserts equality and human rights, these principles are contradicted by the criminalisation of the MAK, which has been labelled a terrorist organisation by state authorities. This contradiction exposes a deeper paradox within the Algerian state: the simultaneous promotion of democratic principles and the repression of minority claims, highlighting the structural constraints facing Berber identity movements seeking full recognition within the framework of the nation-state.

2.8 Berberism: A Political Renaissance

After declaring Classical Arabic as the sole official and national language, thereby denying linguistic and cultural diversity (Chaker, 1989, in Amrouche, 2009), the authorities banned the use of Amazigh and related cultural activities, leading to numerous sentences, particularly in Tizi-Ouzou and Algiers. Maddy-Weitzman wrote regarding the use of Tamazight: “the number of Berber speakers declined in the decades after independence, generating, ironically enough, a gradual increase in the self-conscious manifestations of Berber culture” (2001, p. 24). Years later, Arabisation resulted in violent protests demanding the recognition of the Amazigh culture and identity before which this question had never been widely considered. The Berber Academy was the first to explicitly demand recognition of the Amazigh identity in Algeria (Goodman, 2004).

Berberism also referred to as Amazighism is a political and cultural movement that emerged in Kabylia demanding both linguistic and cultural rights. Berberism consisted of two major protests against the repressive policies at that time that are termed *Tafsut Imazighen* (Berber Spring) and *Tafsut Taberkant* (Black Spring). On the 10th of March 1980, a conference to be presented by the linguist and anthropologist Mouloud Mammeri (1917-1989) on the traditional Kabyle poetry at the University of Tizi-Ouzou had been cancelled. While thousands of students and non-students were waiting, Mammeri, who in 1967 had developed *Tajeṛṛumt N Tmaziɣt*, the first modern grammar of Kabyle written in Kabyle, never arrived and a note reached the university. He was arrested in a roadblock a few miles from the university, and the lecture had been cancelled because of “the risk of disturbing

the public order" (Goodman, 2005, p. 30) according to the mayor of Tizi-Ouzou. This resulted in a wave of riots and remonstrations with the unifying slogan "*Berbère, langue nationale et officielle*" [Berber as a national and official language] (Chaker, 2003) and '*Pouvoir Assassin'* (murdering government) lasting for a few months and lead to the death of protestors and many more severely injured.

Though anti-Arabisation confrontations with the government occurred before the 1980s, April 20th, 1980, remains the major date of the Berber Spring that commentators use. It is a date that was set by members of the Berber Academy operating in Algeria for the most major and known protest. In 1974 for example, during the annual cherry festival (*La Fête de la Cerise*) in *Larbaa N'Ath Irathen*, spectators were "expecting Kabyle singers but were presented instead with Arabic-speaking performers" (Aïtel, 2013, p. 66) that the FLN purposefully sent as part of their Arabisation operations. Every year, to enable the transmission of the struggle for identity, the Berber Spring is unofficially commemorated in Algeria and throughout *Tamazgha*. According to Goodman, "*Tafsut* is now one of the key sites through which a discourse on Amazigh identity circulates" (2005, p. 30). Among the diaspora, *Tafsut* became "the *sine qua non* activity of diasporic Kabyle cultural associations around the globe" (Silverstein, 2003, p. 93) where it is an important identity ritual.

Kabyles in Algeria continued undergoing persecutions from the army and were still not allowed to speak their language in the streets and political gatherings were kept undercover. Since the Black Spring, military brigades and roadblocks multiplied in Kabylia as a strategy to control Kabyle youth. On April 18th, 2001, while occasional manifestations kept taking place, government forces started shooting on a crowd and killed an eighteen-year-old high school student, Guermah Massinissa not far from his family house. His death, two days of the commemoration of *Tafsut*, quickly "transformed into public performances of explicit outrage against the state, drawing thousands of male youth[s] into the streets" (Silverstein, 2003, p. 103) chanting '*Ulac smaḥ ulac*' (there is no forgiveness) in unison while confronting the state with home-made weapons and rocks. Insurrection settled and lasted for over a year, and this led to 126 deaths, mostly youth, with over 5, 000 people injured and this came to be known as the Black Spring.

Between the Berber Spring and the Black Spring, Kabylia went through a tumultuous period during Algeria's 'Black decade'. From 1992 to 2002, Algeria witnessed the most violent scenes in its internal territories where Islamic armed forces took over the power

after the 1991 elections in favour of the FIS (*Front Islamique du Salut*) (Dirèche-Slimani, et al. 2023) and applied severe executions targeting the military and civilians. Flood (2016) explains that the terrorist attacks did not target specific individuals only and that civilians' attacks were not incidental. This made the Black Decade a traumatic memory imprinted in Algeria's memory particularly in Kabylia where most women were not veiled. A covered head was non-disputable for women who desired to leave the house in addition to having a masculine company. Guemar (2019) and Hamani (2021) revealed that Kabyle female emigration increased during the civil war. At the time, Kabyles' political struggle was still ongoing. In 1995, the MCB (Berber Cultural Movement) called for a general strike to boycott the educational system. Thousands of students answered the call and the '*la grève du cartable'* [the schoolbag strike] lasted one whole academic year.

Additionally, in 1998, a national tragedy hit Kabylia; the iconic activist and singer Matoub Lounes was assassinated in a fake roadblock. His death remains a mystery to Kabyles, who were convinced that the roadblock that the authorities claimed to be a terrorist one was in reality a governmental strategy to kill '*le rebel'* (the rebellious) because he had been kidnapped a few years back but had been released. Matoub's songs are forbidden on national TV programmes for they are politically motivated. Silverstein (2002) explains that Matoub's death had built up a sense of revenge among Kabyle youths who exploded three years later by the death of Massinissa, both considered martyrs of the Berber cause. *Tafsut*, nowadays celebrated more overtly, was like the North star that guided Tamazight identity towards expansion in the physical and emotional spaces through the foggy uncertainty as a result of oppression.

2.8.1 Nationalisation and Officialisation

A National language is the language "of a political, social and cultural entity" (UNESCO, 1953: 46 cited in Zamyatin, 2014, p. 17). It is the language that is chosen to symbolise the national identity. For instance, Classical Standard Arabic in the greater Maghreb Nations. This language is seen to be the language of the people, or at least the majority, and is not necessarily used in all domains. A State language on the other hand is recognized as the language of the people and is used in all or most of the practical domains including government, education, public institutions, etc but is not necessarily spoken and used by all the people. With officialization being defined simply as "the official recognition given to a language by a political unit (such as a state or an autonomous region)" (Garvin, 2009). An

official language can be considered as “a language used for official purposes, particularly as the medium of a national government” (McArthur, 2012) that is also functional in the legislative, executive, and juridical governmental affairs (UNESCO, 1953 cited in Zamyatin, 2014: 17). Mostly, officialization happens to the peril of minority languages that are either fully isolate or symbolically used (Sallabank. 2011: 280 cited in Zamyatin, 2014, p. 17).

As far as Tamazight is concerned, it is currently a national and official language in Algeria. It has been nationalized in 2002 and co-officialised in 2016 under Bouteflika’s presidency. The Berber Academy and the *Haut Commissariat de l’Amazighité* ensured the creation of an orthography, pronunciation, dictionaries and a grammar. The latter is based on the works of Mouloud Mammeri (1917-1989) and the White Fathers’ works such as the ‘Kabyle-French Dictionary' by Father Olivier Augustine (1836-1889) published in 1878. The Standard Algerian Berber was created for the purpose of implementing it in education, in the Kabylia regions at first.

Currently, Tamazight is still under active development with more materials being published, either literary or academic, and being spread to other non-Amazigh regions in street signs or in schools as it is the case with Gaelic in Scotland, though still optional and with no coefficient. Its co-officialization is believed to be the accelerating factor of its development that would allow its use in scientific and political domains. However, it is worth noting that “co-official designation in itself does not guarantee the maintenance of the minority language or any significant expansion in its official use” (Zamyatin, 2014, p. 115) because of many reasons including the people’s attitudes and the linguistic practices, so does not codification and standardization alone. In fact, as Sallabank explains, “attitudes seem to be necessary if not sufficient pre-requisites for language maintenance/ revitalization” (2012, p. 117). After its officialization and implementation in schools throughout the country, Arab-speaking regions contested it and deemed it useless through strikes and marches. To these, Kabylia’s answer was “*pas d’Arabe sans Tamazight*” [No Arabic without Tamazight] and “without Tamazight, nothing will be.”

2.8.2 Self-Determination and Linguistic Unity

Regardless of the high number of its speakers, a language can be considered as a minority as long as certain criteria are met. In fact, different factors allow language minoritisation to happen including ideologies, attitudes, stigmatization and lack of resources (Sallabank, 2012). Grenoble and Singerman (2014) consider any language spoken by less than 50% of a

population as a minority language. Such claims perfectly apply to the case of Kabyle: it is spoken by around 5 million people; it has been subjected to harming ideological claims because of the colonial history; it has suffered negative attitudes due to internal social conflicts; and it has been marginalised and stigmatised for its oral nature. Generally, a language is a medium of self-identification and a cause for attaining human rights (Sallabank, 2012). This parallels with Ervin Goffman's description of humans as non-passive acceptors of state policies (1983, p. 6-8 cited in Zamyatin, 2014, p. 113).

Individuals from minority communities have the capacity to oppose and resist governmental decisions in their respective countries, thereby distinguishing themselves from the majority population. Within Will Kymlicka's liberal theory of indigenous and minority rights, the selection of one culture over another facilitates the establishment of "a secure sense of identity and belonging" (Kymlicka, 1995, p. 105). Furthermore, this choice is framed as both free and autonomous, constituting an equal right alongside those of the dominant group. Kymlicka contends that liberals should strive to ensure both intergroup equality and the protection of freedom and equality within each group, emphasizing that oppression against any group is unacceptable. In his seminal work *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights* (1995), he amplifies the voices of minorities, advocating for their liberal rights to territoriality and self-government, which should not be viewed as constraints on federal authority. In the context of the Kabyle situation, the Movement for the Autonomy of Kabylia (MAK) continues to advocate for the self-determination rights of Kabylia.

The MAK was established in 2001, following the events of the Black Spring. Its founder, Ferhat M'henni, along with his supporters, championed demands similar to those of the Berber Cultural Movement (MCB), which emerged in the 1980s, as well as the Socialist Forces Front (FFS) and the Rally for Culture and Democracy (RCD). These groups advocated for the recognition of Berber culture and regionalism at the national level (Tilmatine, 2017b, p. 19). It is important to note that the MCB called for the recognition and teaching of both Berber and Arabic. However, the MAK's distinct demand was the autonomy of Kabylia alone, a request that was not acknowledged by the Algerian authorities. In 2010, the MAK established the Kabyle Provisional Government (MAK-ANAVAD) in Paris.

According to Tilmatine (2017a), several factors contributed to the formation of this autonomist movement, including the consistent repression of Berber identity in general, and specifically the Kabyle identity, by successive Algerian heads of state. Additionally, the central government's refusal to allow any form of localism led to a deepening divide between the Kabyle population and the authorities, resulting in rebellious uprisings and protests. The pursuit of Kabylia's potential autonomy was seen as a means to end the "injustice, contempt, domination, frustration, and discrimination" that Berbers had endured since 1962, as stated in a press release published in *Jeune Afrique* (2010) (Tilmatine, 2017a, p. 367).

In 2013, what was a demand for linguistic and cultural autonomy evolved to become a request for a political autonomy. As a result, the MAK changed its denomination from 'Autonomy' to 'Auto-determination.' The MAK bases its claims for Kabyle autonomy and independence on various international instruments, including the UN Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Fribourg Declaration of Cultural Rights, and the 1976 Algiers Declaration on the Rights of Peoples (Tilmatine, 2017a, p. 366). Representing the Kabyle people both nationally and internationally, the MAK advocates for the recognition of their rights to self-determination and a total autonomy from an "Algerian colonial dictatorship" (Mhenni, 2017 cited in Mondafrique, April 9, 2017). According to Castellanos, Chaker, and Tilmatine (2008 and 2017b), the Kabyle situation bears similarities to the Catalan case in terms of both the demands for autonomy and the responses from the respective governments, as well as Scotland and Quebec.

MAK's prospects remain limited, the movement continues to grow, particularly through its online presence, social media platforms, and its periodical *Siwel*. While within Algeria, the movement remains a sensitive and punishable issue under the current government, it is more actively supported within the Kabyle diaspora, particularly in France and Canada -Kabyle immigration destinations par excellence- where it has profound effects on the wider Amazigh diasporic movement (Harris, 2018). In Chapter Seven, I will show that independentist and regionalist views nourish distinctions and hinder community creation.

2.9 Kabyle Immigration: A Historical Overview

One of the primary objectives of the present study is to critically explore Kabyle immigration and the shifting nature of identity within the new environments where Kabyle migrants settle. Specifically, with a focus on the Kabyle community in Scotland, this research seeks to

find out the underlying motivations that have encouraged Kabyles to migrate to Scotland, explore the specific trajectories of their migration patterns, and look at how are Kabyle identities expressed, preserved, and reconstituted within this unfamiliar social context.

In this part of the Chapter, I retrace the history of Kabyle immigration, with a particular emphasis on their settlement in Europe, although references will also be made to their migration experiences in Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom, which are considered secondary destinations in comparison. This multi-faceted exploration aims to shed light on the complex dynamics of Kabyle identity in the context of migration and settlement, and to contribute to a deeper understanding of the broader socio-cultural transformations that accompany transnational movement.

Algerian Kabyle emigration to Europe has been extensively documented by various scholars, including Sayad (1994, 1999), Tilmatine (2017), and particularly Dirèche-Slimani (1996, 1997, 2004), among others. Dirèche-Slimani (1996) highlights that, historically, Berber emigration has often been subsumed within broader studies of Arab migration. This tendency is evident in works such as Silverstein's *Algeria in France: Transpolitics, Race and Nation* (2004) and Sayad's *The Suffering of the Immigrant* (2004), both of which predominantly address the experiences of Algerian immigrants as part of a larger Arab migration narrative. This perspective is further corroborated by Fazia Aïtel (2014), who argues that the Berber issue has traditionally been incorporated into broader categories such as Arabs, Muslims, or Algerians.

However, it is essential to recognize that, despite the widespread adoption of Islam among Berbers, which contributed to their Arabisation, Berbers do not necessarily identify as Arabs. Berbers and specifically Kabyles own the right to be studied distinctively from wider groups. The emergence of Berber Studies as a distinct academic field has played a crucial role in raising awareness about Berber identity, both within Berber communities and on the international stage. This has facilitated the dismantling of stereotypes and misconceptions that have historically been perpetuated by colonial powers, as well as challenging the notion of a unifying Maghreb identity promoted by successive colonial regimes.

The study of Kabyle emigration is methodologically complex, largely because migration research has traditionally prioritized national origin over ethnic and linguistic dimensions, as noted by Dirèche-Slimani (1996, p. 1) and Aïtel (2014). This approach is not

unique to Kabyle studies but extends to broader migration research, as exemplified by the treatment of Italian migration to France (Dirèche-Slimani, 1997). Nevertheless, the substantial presence of Amazigh populations in Europe has attracted the scholarly attention of historians and sociologists who have contributed significantly to the understanding of Kabyle migration patterns.

According to both historical documentation and oral traditions, the early migratory movements of Kabyles to France and Tunisia were precipitated by the French colonial policy of land dispossession, which followed the 1871 insurrection (Sayad, 1999a, cited in Beloufa, 2013; Adli, 2012). Following their conquest of the Kabylia region in June 1857, the French authorities implemented a policy of land confiscation, appropriating approximately 446,000 hectares from the Kabyle population in 1872, notwithstanding the resistance led by figures such as Cheikh El Mokrani. This dispossession, in conjunction with the broader socio-economic conditions under French colonial rule, resulted in widespread impoverishment among Kabyle families, thereby driving significant emigration.

The number of Kabyle emigrants to France saw a marked increase in the years preceding World War I, as Kabyles were sought as a crucial labour force and were often categorised as "*travailleurs coloniaux*" [colonial workers] (Sayad, 1994; Dirèche-Slimani, 1996). By 1912, over 10,000 Kabyles were employed in France, and by 1934, Kabyles comprised three-quarters of the total Algerian migrant population. This proportion remained notably high, with approximately 60% of Algerian migrants being Kabyles by 1950 (Dirèche-Slimani, 1996).

Thus, it can be posited that prior to Algerian independence, Kabylia was a major supplier of labour to France. Kabyles were brought to France to "participate in the reconstruction of France" (Khellil, 1991, p. 13) and were predominantly employed in agriculture or the automobile industry (Lacroix, 2016). The French, under the influence of the Kabyle Myth ideology, still viewed Kabyles as "patient, energetic, sober, intelligent, hard-working, and strongly attached to their land" (Garrot, 1910, p. 1046, as cited in Silverstein, 2002, p. 141). Lacoste-Dujardin (2006) claims that a third of cafés in Paris are owned by Kabyles.

The independence of Algeria did not mark the cessation of emigration; rather, it gave rise to new forms of migration. One significant development was the implementation

of ‘family reunification’ policies by France, which allowed migrant labourers to be joined by their wives, children, or parents. This shift in immigration dynamics introduced new challenges, particularly for women who arrived in France under these policies. As depicted in the film *Insh’Allah Dimanche* (2001) [Sunday, God Willing] by Yamina Benguigui, the experience of these women was fraught with difficulties. The film narrates the story of a woman who joins her Algerian husband in France, where she faces the alienation of being in a foreign country where no one speaks her language. Her ties to her family are severed, and she never feels at home in France. Her only means of escape from an oppressive marriage and a manipulative mother-in-law is to seek refuge and solidarity with other Algerian women and a French female friend.

In some instances, the separation between immigrants and their families was so profound that communication was lost for years. As Blanchard (2018) explains, some emigrants either died without leaving a trace or became involved in a "*double ménage*" [double household], establishing a new family in France and losing all desire to return to Algeria. Such case is referred to in Kabyle as ‘*Amjaḥ*’, meaning the lost immigrant. For many, this was seen as the only viable way to remain legally in France. It is important to note that, for most Kabyle families, the migrant husband or son working in France represented the sole source of financial support. The socio-economic dependence on the male migrant underscores the gendered and familial dimensions of Kabyle migration and settlement in France, highlighting the complex interrelations between migration, identity and ties with homeland and familiarity.

Following Algeria's independence, a new form of emigration emerged under the governance of the FLN. For many years, France became a refuge for individuals opposed to the regime, particularly those aligned with Kabyle political parties such as the RCD and the FFS. These groups resisted the FLN's unification ideologies and as a result of their opposition, many were exiled.

Dirèche-Slimani argues that emigration starting from this period provided a "privileged terrain of identity expression," serving as a space for both cultural articulation and active political resistance (1996, p. 3). According to her, France was, and continues to be, a vital site for Kabyles, not only as a place for political expression but also for the development of literary and scientific ideas. This highlights the role of emigration in Kabyle intellectual and political engagement, where diaspora communities could both challenge

the political status in Algeria and foster the preservation and promotion of their distinct minority cultural and linguistic heritage.

Other parameters that encouraged emigration from Kabylia (not only to France but to other parts of Algeria) were poverty, an overcrowded region with limited natural wealth, economic repression, lack of urbanisation, interest in commerce, and education. Sayad (1994, p. 11) explained that the beginnings of Kabyle emigration to France coincided with that of education in 1873. Colonial French authorities installed around thirty-eight secular primary schools in Kabylia that represented half of the French schools in all Algeria replacing the Koranic ones (Lacoste-Dujardin, 2006, p. 106). Michael Collyer summarised it: "poverty and unemployment have provoked continuing volatility" (2008, p. 694), agreed in Dirèche-Slimani (2004), as a precautious emigration movement. This phenomenon is indeed continuing because, to the present time, emigration from Kabylia or other parts of Algeria to the Global North is still ongoing with more destination countries on the list including Scotland.

In the literature seeking to explore immigration, the push-pull model introduced by Mejia et al., (1979) has long been relied on. This model originates from the works of Lee (1966) *A Theory of Migration*. Lee distinguished four factors that play a role in the process of migration: 1) factors associated with the area of origin, 2) factors associated with the area of destination, 3) intervening obstacles and 4) personal factors. The push-pull model states that push factors are any reasons that encourage and force an individual to move from one's place like political and cultural discrimination, low income or natural phenomena. Pull factors on the other hand are the reasons that attract the individual to move to and settle in a new place such as safety and higher salaries that would enhance one's lifestyle. This model enables understanding of migration processes however superficially. I will show later in the thesis (in Chapter Five) that Kabyle immigration in Scotland is a result of different push and pull factors including perceived political and ethnic oppression as well individual reasons for enhancing social, cultural and economic capitals.

The study of immigrants nowadays goes beyond exploring the reasons for migration or the immigration policies of the receiving countries. More and more attention is put on the immigrants themselves and their experiences, from crossing the borders to who they are in the new society. De Fina shows that "immigration as a process crucially involves a continuous definition and redefinition of one's identity and of one's membership into larger

communities" (2003, p. 3) when she studied undocumented Mexicans in the US. Through narratives and storytelling, immigrants uncover much about their own identities and their group identity. Identity is not only one's self-conceptualisation influenced by their sense of belonging to a particular group, but also the "value and emotional significance attached to that membership" (Tajfel, 1981, p. 255 as cited in De Fina, 2003, p. 16). I argue that this collective identity and emotional attachment to the group of origin are stronger among immigrants.

2.10 Scotland as a Migration Context

Scotland has historically experienced significant population movement, including periods of substantial emigration, but international migration has become increasingly important to its contemporary demographic profile. The 2022 Census recorded a population increase of 2.7% between 2011 and 2022, with international migration making a significant contribution to this growth. During this period, the number of people living in Scotland who were born outside the UK increased substantially, reflecting the growing diversity of Scottish society (National Records of Scotland, 2025). Migration has been particularly significant in Scotland's major urban centres, including Glasgow, where people from diverse national, ethnic, linguistic and cultural backgrounds have established communities. Consequently, contemporary Scotland can no longer be understood solely through historically established notions of Scottish identity, but rather as a society continually reshaped through migration and mobility. This changing demographic context provides an important backdrop for examining the experiences of Kabyle migrants, who constitute a relatively small and under-researched migrant population in Scotland.

The Scottish migration context is further shaped by the country's devolved political arrangements. Although immigration and nationality remain reserved matters under the UK constitutional settlement (Leith and Sim, 2022), areas through which migrants experience everyday life, including education, healthcare, housing, local government and community development, are substantially shaped by Scottish and local institutions. This has enabled Scotland to develop a somewhat distinctive discourse around migration and integration while operating within a UK-wide immigration system. The Scottish Government has repeatedly emphasised the importance of migration to Scotland's demographic and economic future and has advocated approaches that respond to Scotland's particular population needs. Needs that are different from those of England. More broadly, Scottish

approaches to integration have tended to emphasise participation, community relations and the contribution of migrants to Scottish society rather than understanding integration solely as the assimilation of newcomers into an established national culture. The *New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy 2024*, although directed specifically towards refugees and people seeking asylum, reflects this broader emphasis by conceptualising integration as a long-term and multidirectional process involving both newcomers and established communities (Scottish Government, 2024). The 'One Scotland, Many Cultures' campaign is also a good example. Such a context is relevant to the present study because the experiences of Kabyle migrants are shaped not only by their legal status within the UK but also by their everyday encounters with Scottish institutions, communities and social practices.

Scotland also provides a particularly relevant context for examining the relationship between migration, language and identity. English occupies a dominant position across most public and institutional domains, but Scotland has its own history of linguistic diversity and language minoritisation, particularly in relation to Scottish Gaelic and Scots. The historical marginalisation of Gaelic and subsequent efforts towards its revitalisation provide an important, although not equivalent, point of comparison with the Kabyle experience discussed earlier in this chapter. Contemporary Scotland is additionally characterised by the presence of numerous migrant and heritage languages, making linguistic diversity an increasingly visible feature of Scottish social life. For Kabyle migrants, therefore, settlement in Scotland involves entering a society in which questions concerning language, cultural identity and linguistic revitalisation already have a particular historical and political resonance. As will become evident in the empirical chapters, some participants drew comparisons between the position of Kabyle in Algeria and that of Gaelic in Scotland. These comparisons should not be interpreted as suggesting that the two languages share identical histories or political circumstances; rather, they demonstrate how migrants use the linguistic and cultural environment of the receiving society to interpret and make sense of their own minority experience.

Against this background, Scotland represents more than a geographical destination for Kabyle migrants. It constitutes a particular social context in which identities, cultural practices and understandings of belonging are negotiated. Unlike France, which has historically been the principal destination of Kabyle migration and where substantial Kabyle

political, cultural and associational networks have developed, the Kabyle presence in Scotland is comparatively less visible and less institutionally established. Moreover, official migration statistics generally classify migrants according to nationality or country of birth rather than ethnic or linguistic affiliation, meaning that Kabyle migrants are likely to be subsumed within the broader category of Algerian migration. This statistical invisibility further contributes to the limited knowledge of Kabyle migration to Scotland and highlights the importance of examining migrants' own accounts of their experiences. The present study therefore situates Kabyle migrants within the intersection of two contexts: the historical and contemporary experiences of marginalisation, migration and identity associated with Kabylia, and the distinctive social, linguistic and political environment of contemporary Scotland. It is within this intersection that the subsequent chapters examine how Kabyle migrants negotiate identity, culture, language, belonging and notions of home in Scotland.

Finally, when it comes to migration, Scotland population and the Scottish political elites exhibit positive attitudes and make Scotland a place almost prejudice free (Westfall, 2024). The SNP, through an egalitarian self-image, has always resisted Westminster's radical control of immigration policies and worked ways to encourage remigration of people with Scottish ancestry and the welcoming of 'New Scots' while pushing the idea of independence: "we believe that Scotland needs a tailored approach to migration, one that is made in Scotland and is accountable to the people who live here……. And we will stand firm against the demonisation of migrants" (SNP, 2021b)" (cited in Atkinson and Atkinson, 2023, p. 3). Such claims will further be reflected in the participants' narratives.

2.11 Conclusion

This Chapter has laid the groundwork for the rest of the thesis by contextualising my research and foregrounding its relevance. It started by introducing the Kabyle ethnicity as a part of the various Berber groups articulating indigeneity through proclaiming North Africa as an ancestral territory, *Tamazgha*. Further, the Chapter immersed into the Kabylia's space that Kabyles call home and showcase significant attachment to as part of their identity. This identity has historically required active recognition and assertion in the face of marginalisation and oppression by post-colonial state authorities, particularly following the widely perceived 'privileged' treatment accorded to Kabyles from colonial France. It then reviewed the political and cultural movement that Kabyles initiated and turned to be

the identity cause for wider Berber communities throughout NA. From Berber Spring to the Black Decade and the Black Spring, this Chapter fathomed the amplitude of Berberist movement, in Algeria or in exile, that resulted in a rise of consciousness and recognition. It also delved into the history of the dynamic nature of Algerian migration that commenced in Kabylia and the distanced diasporic activism. Finally, the chapter discussed Scotland as an immigration context that perceived to be a positive place to be for migrant communities and ethnic minorities.

Chapter Three

Review of the Literature

3.1 Introduction

As this study took a turn to focus on immigrants' experiences and new meaning-making practices in the new environment, reviewing some of the literature on migration studies will allow for an understanding of the dynamics of human mobility and the complex nature of immigration. In the case of minoritised and marginalised groups, immigration not only ensures a safe home, but it also provides a space of politicised cultural activism. However, by the same token, maintaining one's identity in unfamiliar social spaces presents different challenges. Consequently, immigration can distort original identities and create different type of identities with newly built Habiti (plural of Habitus) and Capitals in Bourdieu's words. Blommaert and De Fina (2017) call these 'Chronotopic identities' with reference to Bakhtin's notion of 'Chronotope'. This Chapter starts by distinguishing between emigration and immigration drawing from the works of Sayad (2004) and explores key concepts central to migration studies, such as transnationalism and diaspora. These frameworks are particularly pertinent to understanding the multifaceted nature of migration. Next, this Chapter sheds light on acculturation, identity hybridisation and home (re)construction phenomena in diasporic communities. Throughout the Chapter, I employ supporting illustrations referring to Kabyle cases as found in the literature. Lastly, the theoretical foundations of the study are outlined, presenting the frameworks upon which this research is based.

3.2 Transnationalism

Any scholarly inquiry into the concept of transnationalism necessitates a comprehensive review of the literature on immigration and emigration, given their intrinsic interconnectedness. Transnationalism itself is defined in various ways by different scholars, with Vertovec offering a widely recognized definition where transnationalism refers to "multiple ties and interactions linking people or institutions across the borders of nation-states" (1999, p. 447). Schiller et al. (1992) conceptualise transnationalism as the processes through which migrants construct and sustain transnational social fields that span across national borders. These fields encompass networks and relationships that simultaneously connect migrants to their host societies and to their countries of origin or other diasporic communities (Kokot et al., 2004).

In the context of the digitally connected world, the geographical distances between nation-states have been significantly reduced and rendered more complex, facilitated by

mass media, telecommunications, and the Internet. These technological advancements enable individuals to establish 'social fields' across borders (Vertovec, 1999, p. 456). In her analysis of 'Digital Diasporas,' Nedelcu (2019) argues that Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are enhancing the quality of relationships among diasporic groups, as well as between these groups and their countries of origin (2019, p. 242). For example, Belabbas (2020) demonstrates that the Kabyle community in England relies on Facebook to build and maintain social relationships, particularly via a cultural organisation's virtual space.

This transformation leads diasporic individuals to utilize these transnational connections and social fields as mechanisms to reconstruct their sense of locality and indigeneity within new spaces. In other words, to cope with their uprooting and deterritorialization and de-localisation, it is important for ethnic communities to create a home-like environment in which they can express and negotiate their identities. Such efforts are crucial in reclaiming a sense of belonging, which may have been diminished due to the processes of emigration and immigration, including the challenges posed by acculturation and what Berry (1992) calls 'acculturative stress' including social, psychological and physical problems (discrimination, exclusion, nostalgia and illness). In Chapter Seven, I will demonstrate how Kabyles of Scotland maintain transnational ties across borders.

3.3 Emigration vs Immigration: The Distinction

Understanding the distinction between emigration and immigration is crucial to comprehending the complexities of transnational migration. Although both terms refer to the act of crossing borders, their conceptual implications and sociopolitical framings are profoundly different. Traditional migration studies often conflate the two, focusing primarily on immigration as a process that unfolds within the host society, thereby marginalising the departure context and the emigrant's relationship with the country of origin (de Haas, 2010; Cvajner, 2020). This analytical imbalance has led to a host-centric bias, which obscures the bidirectional and relational nature of transnationalism.

Abdelmalek Sayad's pioneering work continues to offer a powerful corrective to this tendency. Sayad insists that "one country's immigration is another's emigration," a conceptual symmetry that reorients migration as a "total social fact" (2004, p. 1). His framework challenges researchers to analyse migration as a dual process that unfolds

simultaneously across sending and receiving contexts, each generating its own set of social, cultural, and political transformations.

Sayad's typology further distinguishes between the *immigration of labour*—often associated with economic necessity—and the *immigration of settlers*, which entails deeper, longer-term cultural and political implications for host societies (2004, pp. 3–5). The former has historically characterised Kabyle mobility, dating back to French colonisation, when forced land dispossession and colonial extraction pushed many toward metropolitan France (Hamani, 2021; Aït Kaki, 2019). In the post-independence period, Algerian state repression and economic stagnation, particularly in Kabylia, reinforced this migration dynamic, perpetuating a form of involuntary transnationalism rooted in both structural violence and cultural exclusion.

Sayad's critique remains salient today, particularly in light of the persistent racialisation of Maghrebi communities in France and across Europe. Far-right populism, typified by France's National Rally, continues to depict immigrants, especially from North Africa, as existential threats to national identity (Balibar, 2021; Hargreaves, 2023). This discourse conflates cultural difference with social deviance, obscuring the reality that many so-called "temporary" labour migrants, including Kabyles, eventually become long-term settlers. This shift from circular migration to family reunification and permanent residence exemplifies the inadequacy of static migration categories.

Moreover, immigration is too often cast as a burden on host societies, a framing that obscures the multifaceted contributions of migrants. Empirical studies increasingly demonstrate that immigration generates significant benefits, economically, culturally, and demographically, especially in ageing Western societies (OECD, 2022; Dustmann et al., 2010). Yet such evidence struggles to counter the enduring moral panic surrounding migrants' cultural capital and supposed failure to assimilate.

Migration is not merely a geographical displacement but a profound act of identity negotiation. Migrants bring with them not just labour but embodied histories, linguistic repertoires, religious practices, and socio-cultural capitals. Sayad captures this poignantly: "to immigrate is to immigrate with one's history… traditions, ways of living, feelings… one's culture" (2004, pp. 3–4). To borrow Bourdieu's (1977) ideas, migrants carry their *habitus* and *capital*, continually adapting and negotiating them within new social fields. Settlement, then, becomes a complex process of re-embedding these forms of capital in unfamiliar contexts, a dynamic that is frequently overlooked in state integration policies.

This tension is evident in the digital and community spaces created by Kabyle migrants in the UK. Facebook pages such as *Association Kabyles UK* and *Les Kabyles de Londres* serve not only as logistical support networks but as sites of cultural reproduction and identity affirmation. They serve as spaces where administrators—who have lived in the UK for several years—provide guidance to newcomers about the realities of life in Britain. The choice to name these groups in French reflects the layered legacies of colonialism and the enduring association of Kabyle identity with French-ness, an association that continues to provoke internal debates about cultural authenticity and hybridity (Silverstein, 2004; Belkacem, 2020).

Offline, these networks often materialise in regular cultural gatherings that facilitate integration and preserve diasporic cohesion. As Lacroix (2019) and Belabbas (2020) argue, such cultural associations serve dual purposes: they are simultaneously mechanisms for social support and arenas for symbolic boundary work. They enable newcomers to navigate bureaucratic and cultural systems while also cultivating a sense of belonging distinct from both the host society and the homeland. This is supported by Thomas Lacroix's (2016, 2019) research on the experiences of Punjabi Sikhs in the UK, as well as Moroccans and Algerian Berbers in France. Lacroix found that the primary purpose of such organizations is "to provide support to their members in the place of arrival (to find a job or a place to live)" (2019, p. 175).

This multiplicity of experiences is visible in my fieldwork. For instance, Ziad, an undocumented migrant with limited English proficiency, underscored the importance of Kabyle solidarity networks in mitigating the precarity of settlement. In contrast, Lydie, a highly educated PhD student, expressed no such reliance, illustrating how c, gender, education level and legal status intersect to shape divergent migration trajectories and strategies for adaptation. On this concern, Salih (2003) interrogates: do all migrants aim to attain a certain continuity of the past once in the country of residence? Answering such question requires studying the immigrants prior to their emigration, their motives, their positioning in the host society, etc.

Sayad's warning against reducing emigration to the export of surplus labour remains strikingly relevant. Migrants are not merely displaced workers; they are agents of cultural transformation. Yet dominant narratives continue to reduce them to economic actors, overlooking their broader societal contributions. Sayad critiques this reductionism, noting how emigrants are often depicted as "unemployed men who emigrate so as to cease being

unemployed: nothing more and nothing else" (2004, p. 5). Such representations strip migrants of their full social personhood.

Crucially, Sayad reminds us that emigration and immigration are not static categories but dynamic social mechanisms whose meanings evolve over time. "They must fail to recognise themselves for what they are in order to become what they must be" (2004, p. 5). This paradox speaks to the ontological uncertainty at the heart of transnationalism. Migration, in this view, is not only a physical journey but an unfolding process of becoming, one that is often shaped by forces beyond the migrant's control yet navigated through individual and collective agency forming Diasporic communities.

3.4 Understanding Diaspora as a 'Concept'

The increasing frequency of migration and the formation of migrant communities have prompted scholars to examine the diverse ways in which these individuals settle in host countries, particularly with regard to how they navigate the shifts in environment, culture, language, and other circumstances. As Cohen and Fischer succinctly pose, "what do people identify with?" (2019, p. 2). In a setting that is not their place of origin, how do migrants negotiate the boundaries between 'Us' and 'Them'? What factors exacerbate these distinctions, and how do migrants reconcile these divisions while simultaneously maintaining their sense of identity? These are some questions that may arise when exploring diaspora communities from a sociological lens.

The term *Diaspora* first emerged in the 1930s, with notable contributions from the Russian historian Simon Dubnow. In the *Routledge Handbook of Diaspora Studies*, French sociologist Stéphane Dufoix stresses the clarity of Dubnow's conceptualization of the term, which he developed through his study of the Armenians. Dubnow (1931) defines Diaspora as "nation or part of a nation separated from its own state or territory and dispersed among other nations but preserving its own national culture" (cited in Dufoix, 2019, p. 16). Dufoix contends that Dubnow's interpretation popularised the term and allowed its flexibility of usage from different perspectives. This conceptual flexibility, according to him, allowed the term to evolve and be used in multiple contexts, ultimately broadening its relevance across disciplines.

Similarly, Arnold J. Toynbee's controversial description of Jewish diasporic existence as a cultural "fossil" from an extinct Syriac civilisation (Cohen & Fischer, 2019, p. 1) has provoked longstanding criticism. While Toynbee later clarified that this term was intended

to reflect the community's capacity for cohesion in the absence of a homeland that he called "social cement", it inadvertently pathologised diasporic persistence as static or regressive. This portrayal conflicts with more dynamic understandings of diaspora as fluid, hybrid, and generative formations (Brah, 1996; Gilroy, 1993). Diasporas are not merely remnants of the past but sites of ongoing negotiation, resistance, and transformation.

Contemporary scholars have since problematised such deterministic views. Robin Cohen (2008), in his typology of diasporas, distinguishes between victim, labour, trade, imperial, and cultural diasporas, emphasising that diasporic identities are not only shaped by trauma or exile but also by voluntary mobility and economic agency. Safran (1991) and Tölölyan (1996) further argue that a true diaspora typically exhibits several defining features: dispersion, a collective memory of the homeland, a commitment to its maintenance or return, and a distinct, often minority status in the host society. Yet these criteria have themselves been challenged by poststructuralist and postcolonial scholars who argue that such rigid definitions obscure the everyday practices, ambivalence, and multiplicity of diasporic life (Clifford, 1994; Anthias, 1998). All this raises important epistemological questions such as: are all (and only) displaced communities considered diasporas?

3.5 Transnationalism and Diaspora Communities

The concept of *diaspora* has evolved significantly since its early use in the 20th century, moving beyond the classical associations with forced exile to encompass a wider range of migratory experiences. Scholars such as Shuval (2000) and Sheffer (1986) define modern diasporas as migrant-origin minority groups who reside in host countries while maintaining strong emotional and material links with their homeland. However, traditional definitions, like Chaliand and Rageau's (1991) emphasis on forced dispersion, have been critiqued as overly narrow. Shuval expands the term to include voluntary migration and experiences shaped by inequality, marginalisation, or aspirations for better futures.

Diaspora is now widely seen as a socially constructed identity, grounded in memory, group consciousness, and transnational connectivity (Clifford, 1994; Anthias, 1998). It involves both *dispersion* and *connection*, with ties to homeland and in-group members often expressed through culture, religion, language, or shared history. Scott (2014) broadly defines diaspora as "a dispersion of people throughout the world," but this risks overlooking the specific historical and political contexts that shape such movements.

Central to the diasporic experience is the tension between *rootedness and uprootedness* (Bourdieu & Sayad, 2004), often lived through cycles of adaptation, resistance, and reinvention. Diaspora operates within *transnational social fields*, networks that span countries and allow migrants to remain embedded in multiple societies at once (Glick Schiller et al., 1992). From Dubnow's (1931), Sheffer's (1986) and Shuval's (2000) definitions, we conclude that preserving one's own identity and culture as well as tight connections with homeland are important characteristics of diasporic communities. In different aspects "[c]onnections to home or homeland are widely assumed to be the most important ties to members of diasporas" (Cohen and Fischer, 2019, p. 7).

Shuval's (2000) tripartite model—diaspora, host country, and homeland—highlights the interactive dynamics that shape identity, belonging, and integration. Diaspora communities today often form not only physical spaces but also digital ones, sustaining culture and connection through online platforms (Brinkerhoff, 2009; Dekker & Engbersen, 2014). However, scholars warn against romanticising these formations; diasporas must be understood as shaped by power relations, not merely cultural resilience (Brah, 1996).

3.6 Characteristics of Diaspora

One of the earliest attempts to define the common features of diasporic communities comes from William Safran (1991), whose model remains foundational in diaspora studies. Drawing on examples such as Pakistanis in Britain, Maghrebis in France, and Turks in Germany, Safran identifies six key characteristics: dispersion from an original centre to multiple peripheries; collective memory of the homeland; a sense of alienation in the host country; idealisation of return; commitment to homeland restoration; and ongoing relational ties to the place of origin. While influential, this framework has faced growing criticism for its essentialist assumptions and overly rigid structure.

Robin Cohen (2008) offers a more flexible and historically grounded revision of Safran's model. He introduces categories such as victim, labour, trade, imperial, and cultural diasporas, acknowledging that diaspora identities are not uniform and that features may manifest unevenly over time and across contexts. Crucially, Cohen also challenges the overemphasis on the homeland as a fixed geographical origin, arguing instead that some diasporas may construct new homelands in exile, a point illustrated by the Zionist project and the founding of Israel (Tölölyan, 2019).

Yet even Cohen's expanded model has limitations. As Müller-Funk (2019) argues, such typologies risk flattening the complex intersections of religion, ethnicity, class, gender, and generation that shape diasporic identities. They often overlook how assimilation, hybridisation, and local identification alter the diasporic experience over time. For many second- or third-generation individuals, the homeland may become symbolic or irrelevant, replaced by attachments to the country of birth or residence (Brubaker, 2005; Fortier, 2022). This highlights the need to view diaspora not as a static condition, but as a fluid, evolving process embedded in shifting socio-political contexts. The analysis of the data gathered for this project supports such claims in regard to the Kabyle community in Scotland in Chapter Six and Seven.

Furthermore, the proliferation of global mobility and digital connectivity has created new forms of diasporic belonging that challenge older, homeland-centred models. Scholars now emphasise diasporas as *assemblages* of affect, practice, and identification, rather than fixed groups with uniform aims or identities (Werbner, 2002; Sökefeld, 2006). These more nuanced approaches shift attention from the question of *where* people come from to *how* they live diasporically in specific places and times.

3.6.1 Diaspora Studies: A Critical Review

Diaspora has become a widely adopted, yet increasingly contested, concept across the social sciences. While some scholars continue to treat it as a fixed typology, others argue that its uncritical expansion has diluted its analytical power. Brubaker (2005) famously critiqued the conceptual inflation of "diaspora," warning that its widespread and often indiscriminate application risks transforming it into a meaningless catch-all. He refers to this semantic drift as the "'diaspora' diaspora", a situation that he describes as "a dispersion of the meanings of the term in semantic, conceptual and disciplinary space" (2005, p. 1).

This critique is echoed by scholars like Amelina and Barglowski (2019), who caution against homogenising diasporic groups along national or ethnic lines. They call for greater attention to internal diversity—shaped by intersections of gender, class, race, generation, immigration status, and region of origin. Ignoring such heterogeneity, they argue, obscures how diasporic experiences are shaped by power, history, and social location. This insight is particularly relevant in studies of the Kabyle diaspora, where intra-group variation is central to understanding identity formation and social dynamics (Belabbas, 2020; Hamani, 2021).

In line with this approach, the current project embraces the complexity and diversity of diaspora communities, considering all categories of people, with the exception of vulnerable groups due to my lack of training. This inclusive approach is grounded in the understanding that "no single definition of diaspora can be useful" (Shuval, 2000, p. 49), as each immigrant experience and each diaspora community is distinct. As such, embracing heterogeneity is fundamental to capturing the full breadth of diasporic experiences and ensuring the validity of the research findings.

The conceptual overreach of diaspora is also historically rooted. Early scholarship privileged the Jewish, Armenian, and Greek cases, treating diaspora as synonymous with forced exile and longing for return (Sheffer, 2003; Brubaker, 2005). Later expansions included immigrant, refugee, labour, and even deaf diasporas, reflecting a shift toward cultural, political, and voluntary forms of dispersal. Yet as Tölölyan (2019) warns, diaspora studies now risk becoming entangled with geopolitical agendas, with diasporic elites acting as intermediaries between host and home states. This politicisation complicates the scholarly task of understanding diaspora from the inside out, rather than through state-centric or instrumentalist lenses. Lacroix (2013) found that compared to Punjabis in the UK and Chleuhs in France, Kabyle immigrants in France failed to create solid connections with homeland mainly for political reasons both in Algeria and among themselves in France.

Against this backdrop, the need for a relational, intersectional, and dynamic approach becomes clear. While first-generation migrants may maintain strong homeland ties, subsequent generations often rework these connections. Diasporic identity is thus less about preserving origins and more about *reconstituting belonging* in new contexts. Quinsaat (2019) argues that migration entails not merely transporting identity but recreating it. This challenges Sayad's (2004) more deterministic notion of carrying one's "habitus" intact. Instead, identities emerge as *hybrid*, shaped by ongoing negotiation with the host society (Khellil, 1991; Fortier, 2022). Immigrants find themselves in position that requires them balancing the demands of both the host society and the ancestral homeland.

Brubaker's (2005) reconceptualisation of diaspora into three analytical dimensions, *dispersion*, *homeland orientation*, and *boundary-maintenance*, offers a useful framework while also acknowledging competing currents of hybridity, creolisation, and syncretism. Diaspora, then, is not merely a condition of being dispersed, but a dynamic process of identity (re)creation, often marked by ambivalence and contradiction. This approach allows

for the coexistence of attachment to homeland with adaptation, resistance, or even indifference to it, especially among younger generations.

In summary, contemporary diaspora studies must move beyond rigid definitions and instead treat diaspora as a flexible, historically contingent, and politically situated process. It should resist essentialist tropes and instead foreground the multiplicity of experiences, identities, and aspirations that shape diasporic life in the global era.

3.7 Acculturation and Identity Hybridisation

Early studies on acculturation, such as those by Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits (1936), framed it as a unidirectional process where one culture adopts the traits of the dominant society. This early conceptualization assumed that the acculturating group would gradually abandon its original cultural practices in favour of those of the host society. However, over time, scholars have critiqued this assimilationist view, arguing instead for more complex, multidimensional models of acculturation that recognize the agency of the immigrant group and the dynamic nature of cultural exchange.

One such model is Berry's (1997) bi-dimensional model of acculturation, which suggests that individuals can maintain their cultural identity while simultaneously adopting aspects of the dominant culture. This model includes four acculturation strategies: integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization. Integration refers to a situation where individuals maintain their cultural practices while engaging with other cultures through daily interactions. Individuals maintain a certain integrity while taking active participation in the host culture. Assimilation occurs when individuals "do not wish to maintain their cultural identity and seek daily interaction with other cultures" (1997, p. 9). Separation occurs when individuals retain their heritage culture and avoid interaction with the dominant culture, while marginalization happens when individuals reject both their heritage and the dominant culture due to discrimination. Berry's model highlights the diversity of experiences within diaspora communities and underscores that acculturation is not a one-size-fits-all process. While Berry's typology has been widely applied, it has also faced criticism for being overly static and insufficiently attentive to contextual factors such as race, class, and structural inequalities (Rudmin, 2003; Schwartz et al., 2010).

Acculturation also has significant implications for identity formation. According to Phinney (1990), acculturation can lead to either cultural assimilation, where individuals adopt the host culture at the expense of their own, or biculturalism, where individuals

retain their original culture while also incorporating elements of the dominant culture. Bicultural identity has been found to be particularly beneficial, as it allows individuals to navigate both their heritage culture and the broader society, often leading to better psychological well-being and social adjustment (Cheng et al., 2011). However, this process is often accompanied by what Berry (1997) terms “acculturative stress,” referring to the psychological strain resulting from conflicting cultural expectations of both the homeland and hostland.

Recent literature has increasingly focused on the role of hybridity in acculturation. Hybridity refers to the blending of cultural elements from both the host and heritage cultures, creating new, syncretic forms of identity and practice (Bhabha, 1994). This concept challenges traditional models of acculturation that emphasize either cultural preservation or cultural assimilation. Studies have shown that hybridity can be a productive and adaptive strategy for individuals navigating multiple cultural worlds, as it allows for creative expression and the negotiation of cultural boundaries (Carter, 2005).

Additionally, there has been a shift towards recognizing the fluid and dynamic nature of acculturation. In their study, Neto and Soares (2018) emphasize that acculturation is not a static or linear process but instead a continuous negotiation between maintaining one’s cultural identity and adapting to new cultural practices. This perspective shows that acculturation is shaped by individual's experiences and changing life circumstances. For example, an immigrant may initially attempt full assimilation, only to later reassert ties with their heritage culture, a process influenced by emotional needs, social networks, or shifts in political climate. This notion of acculturation highlights how acculturation can be subject to changes in individual agency, identity development, and broader societal changes (Bacallao & Smokowski, 2007). It is worth noting that community creation and connections are central to the process of integration. Bourdieu (in Sayad, 2004) states that an immigrant is neither a citizen nor a foreigner to the local culture and is located at the border of the “*être et non-être social*” (2004, p. 12-13) (between the being and the nothingness in the social space).

Contemporary literature therefore frames acculturation as a multifaceted, iterative process. It involves not just the adaptation to a new culture but also the strategic preservation, redefinition, and hybridisation of identity. This dynamic is shaped by

structural forces, personal agency, and collective belonging, making acculturation not a destination but an evolving journey.

3.8 Recreating Home through Cultural Organisations

Cultural organizations within immigrant communities play a crucial role in fostering connections and reinforcing a sense of belonging by recreating a home-like environment. A distinctive feature of Kabyle associations in the diaspora is their tendency to replicate the village structure and governance system of Kabylia. As noted by scholars such as Hugh Roberts (2014, 2017) and Jane Goodman (2003, 2014), Kabyle villages were historically organized under specific governing rules that often resembled a parliament-like structure. Kabyle society, as described by Roberts (2014), was characterized as "a remarkable society of numerous, unusually large, rigorously ordered, and fiercely independent villages" (p. 8). This structure was often misinterpreted by early observers due to their over-reliance on etic perspectives and lack of theoretical insight into local realities. In contrast, the emic self-perception of Kabyle people offers a more nuanced understanding of their social organization, which was not fully captured by colonial-era writers such as Hanoteau, Latourneux , Masqueray, and Devulder, who lacked an intimate understanding of the region.

Over time, Kabylia garnered the attention of both foreign sociologists and anthropologists, such as Bourdieu and Goodman, and raised its local scholars including Mammeri, Sayad, Yacine, and Chaker. These scholars, due to their intimate knowledge of the region, have offered more accurate depictions of Kabyle society. Many of them agree that Kabyle society is fundamentally structured around self-governing village communities. This emphasis on village governance is often mirrored in Kabyle diaspora associations, where the community recreates these self-regulating structures to maintain cultural continuity and foster a collective identity.

As explained in the previous Chapter, every village in Kabylia holds regular assemblies in the assembly point '*tajmaɛt'.* However, while every village makes the internal rules and ensuring the protection of the villagers, its existence depends on "its membership of a larger whole" (Roberts, 2014, p. 43). A "whole" that is known as '*Aarch*', an organisation including different united villages for mutual help in governance. After the Berber Spring, citizen movement of the *Aarch* emerged to represent Kabyles when demanding cultural recognition and to fight back the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) and the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) during the black decade (1991-2002). In the diaspora context, Collyer (2008) mentions

that the concept of *Aarch* “became an important tool for the emigrant community to imagine, or re-imagine, their homeland” (2008, p. 704).

One of the topics covered in the interactive village assemblies is that of honour. The notion of honour has a special place in the Kabyle code of conduct. Lahouari Addi (2002) explains that honour is a precious capital that helps in maintaining trust-based relationships with others (p. 82). This means that the sentiment of honour is validated by one’s reputation and respectability within the village. The Kabyle society compels its members to preserve their honour and that of their groups because of its obsession with honour (Addi, 2002, p. 80) agreed in Bourdieu (1979).

The concept of *tajmaɛt* is significant to this study because it highlights how Kabyle diasporas, through cultural organizations, recreate a village-like atmosphere that fosters the expression of their identity and sense of belonging, while simultaneously facilitating their integration into the host culture and maintaining connections with authentic Kabyle traditions. In France, organizations such as "Takaats Europe" play an active role by bringing together individuals from the same village, *Takaats*, and organizing regular meetings. Silverstein (2004b) calls these meetings ‘migrant tajmaats’ and usually held in cafés owned by Kabyles. Similarly, a newly established organization in Birmingham, *Association Kabyle UK*, holds bi-weekly assemblies to host cultural events, such as the celebration of the Amazigh New Year, *Yennayer*, or provide community support. In essence, these cultural associations are crucial for the Kabyle communities’ settlement in their new environments. In this respect, Collyer (2008) asserts that "the rapid transnationalisation of the Kabyle citizen’s movement depended significantly on this density of pre-existing organizations" (p. 705). This underscores the role of organisational movements in immigrants’ experiences and acculturation processes as I will demonstrate later in this thesis.

Cultural organizations serve as essential tools for immigrants to both preserve and express their identity within multicultural contexts. Additionally, they provide critical support for newcomers in navigating their new environments. While Scotland lacks such organizations, several participants in this study stressed the significance of these institutions. Cultural organisations are important in maintaining one’s linguistic heritage in a foreign space and also in recreating ‘village-ness’ from a distance. Thomas Lacroix (2016) terms this type of organisation as ‘Hometown Organisations’ (HTOs). HTOs, Lacroix argues, are “social institutions in which migrants strive to collectively re-articulate the coherence of their multi-stranded selves” (2016, p. 3). These organizations help migrants navigate the

complexities of a fragmented history and maintain a connection to their origins, even as the place of departure undergoes significant transformation. Furthermore, the role of social media in facilitating the activities and gatherings of these organizations has been noteworthy. As a result, the concept of "Digital Diasporas," as introduced by Nedelcu (2019), has emerged, highlighting the influence of digital platforms in connecting dispersed communities and reinforcing their cultural identities.

Crucially, these organisations are not merely tools of nostalgia; they actively contribute to migrants' processes of settlement, integration, and identity maintenance. They help navigate acculturative stress, offer linguistic continuity, and provide a space where cultural hybridity can be negotiated (Lacroix, 2016; Nedelcu, 2012; Vertovec, 2009). Devine and McCarthy (2018) support such claims detailing the roles of immigrant associations, particularly in the Scottish context, including providing a networking platform, a space of cultural reproductions and activism as well as providing support. Their absence, as seen in the case of Kabyles in Scotland, often results in fragmented diasporic experiences, underscoring the importance of such institutions in the broader ecosystem of transnational belonging and identity reconstruction.

3.9 Between Asylum Seeking and Identity Preservation

Exiled, oppressed, or in search of better opportunities, diasporas are compelled to create new or secondary "homes" in host countries where nothing is like home. This uprooting necessitates a process of integration to the sociocultural norms of the host country, while simultaneously striving to preserve elements of one's identity, or part of who they are, and maintain connections to the homeland. Scholars such as Miller (2001), Brubaker (2005) and Cohen & Fischer (2019) highlight the significance of these transnational ties, recognizing the vital role they play in the preservation of cultural identity. These connections, whether physical or virtual, enable immigrants to sustain a sense of belonging to their heritage. Brubaker (2005) further asserts that individuals in the diaspora do not cut ties to their country of origin entirely; rather, these relationships endure through ongoing forms of engagement with their cultural roots and a solid sense of community. I demonstrate this point further based on my participants' experiences in Chapter Seven.

Connections with other in-group members are also created and maintained in other parts of the host country or with the diaspora in other parts of the globe. Cohen (1997) suggests that "a diaspora space comes into being through a shared sense of belonging, a

shared memory of uprooting and a shared longing for the nation of origin" (in Mihaela Nedelcu, 2019, p. 242). In other words, through creating and sharing a sense of community. McMillan and Chavis (1986) define the sense of community as a “feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and shares faith that members’ needs will be met through their commitment together” (as cited in Navarette and Huerta, 2006, p. 2-3). This notion of a “diaspora space” is central to the experience of individuals in exile, as it provides a collective foundation for their cultural continuity despite geographical separation.

The creation of a "home-like" environment in the host country facilitates the settlement process and encourages immigrants to reconcile their identities with their new way of life. This negotiation of identity is often highlighted by the desire to maintain cultural practices and connections to the homeland. As Lyons and Mandaville (2012) have observed, the processes of diaspora mobilization and identity reconstruction simultaneously invoke old forms of identity rooted in the "motherland," typically expressed in terms of bloodlines and cultural ties (cited in Müller-Funk, 2019, p. 254). The sense of belonging to a group that maintains practices of the original culture strengthens the notion of the motherland/ homeland, even for individuals who have been uprooted and are now living in a de-territorialized condition.

Such identity preservation can manifest through various strategies, including the formation of cultural organizations that facilitate gatherings and foster a shared sense of community. These organizations provide platforms for interaction and knowledge transmission among members, helping to sustain cultural practices across generations. As Blommaert et al. (2005) argue, individuals in new environments are both subjects and agents of influence. On the one hand, the new cultural, linguistic, and social norms of the host country influence immigrants, regardless of their social status or educational background. On the other hand, immigrants contribute to shaping the host society through their roles as neighbours, colleagues, and active participants in the broader community, fostering a dynamic exchange between the two cultures. I provide some cases related to the participants of this study in Chapter Seven.

Thus, the diaspora experience is one of both adaptation and contribution, where identity is continuously renegotiated through the interplay of cultural preservation and assimilation. The creation of diaspora spaces serves as a critical site for this process, helping

to ensure the survival of cultural identities while simultaneously enriching the social fabric of the host society.

3.10 The Immigrant's Identity

Immigrant's identity is a complex concept that has received a significant scholarly attention over the decades. Different terms emerged in the literature including 'hybrid', 'sub-altern', 'transnational' and 'chronotopic' that characterise the dynamic nature of identity in immigration. As mentioned above, individuals' identities undergo important changes through the influence of both the desire to merge in and be active members of the new society and the willing to preserve their identity of origin. Romoli et al. (2022) confirm such claim and argue that a person's sense of self and of home change after migration (cited in Foxwell, et al. 2024). Subsequently, diasporic communities build and negotiate identities that neither fully retain collective morals of the homeland nor do they entirely accept the norms of the new space. Ting-Toomey (2005), as cited in Liu and Gallois (2021), conceptualizes identity as a set of reflective self-images that are continuously constructed, experienced, and communicated by individuals during interactions within a specific cultural context. This perspective highlights the role of connections and interpersonal relationships in the formation of identity, emphasizing the dynamic nature of identity.

The notion of a "hybrid" identity, for instance, stresses the blending of cultural elements from both the homeland and the host society, resulting in a new, often ambiguous sense of self (Bhabha, 1994). Successfully integrated immigrants often build identities that reflect neither a complete adherence to the values of their country of origin nor full acceptance of the norms of the host society. In other words, a migrant's identity is fluid and flexible (McAreavey, 2017). This results in what Belaidi (2003) calls '*identité métisse'* [Metis or mixed identity]. In the context of North African immigration in France, immigrants, particularly of second and third generations, experienced what Sayad (1999) calls 'double absence'-a situation where migrants are geographically and culturally absent from their homeland and absent within the host society due to marginalisation and not rigorously conforming to the local culture-.

Beaman (2017) illustrates this phenomenon in her work explaining that North African immigrants in France were "too French to the Maghrebi and too Maghrebi to the French" (2017, p. 1) based on one of her informants' narratives comparing himself to Bruce-Lee who was too American for the Chinese and too Chinese for the Americans. In Algeria,

they were called the children of immigrants while in France they were see as unassimilable (Khellil,1991; Baillet and Lamchichi, 2001; Derderian, 2004; and Beaman (2017). This stigmatisation led to a loss of social visibility (Saada, 2000). Yamina Benguigui's documentary '*Mémoires d'immigrés, l'héritage maghrébin'* [Immigrant Memories: The North African Heritage] (1997) illustrates the NA second generation immigrants' experiences. These feelings were the outcome of strict assimilationist strategies imposed by the French far right proponents who attempted to mould them and turn them to French citizens as opposed to the British context where multiculturalism and acceptance are the motto (Todd, 1994 cited in Hamani, 2021).

The 'hybrid' identity, which has long been viewed as "sub-altern" Hall (1996a, 1996b cited in Ata, 2022) comes into being in what Mathy calls "*la troisième voie*" [the third way]. He describes this space as "the middle way between assimilation and exclusion … (they call it integration)" (2000 cited in Derderian, 2004, p 2-3). Integration is the term favoured by scholars in migration studies due to the international policies applied that allow migrants certain mobility while immersed in a new culture (Ameer, 2010) and acknowledging diversity. While the first generation was not concerned with integration but only with "minimal adaptation" (Khellil, 1991, p. 166), Baillet and Lamchichi argue that the integration of "*les enfants de l'immigration Maghrébine*" [children of immigration] (2001, p. 9) was easier for they were less attached to their ascendents' homeland. In a sense, the second generation underwent an 'enculturation' process in which individuals are given the agency to incorporate elements of the dominant culture ensuring a continuity of the self (Weinreich, 2009). In this thesis, I join Ameer's (2010) views and utilise the term 'integration' to express any form of acceptance of the host country's cultural norms. In this respect, Kokot, Tölölyan and Alfonso (2004) argue that identity formation is always dependant on sociopolitical and cultural contexts and that agents "always require an opposite, the 'other' on to which the image of the 'self' is projected" (2004, p. 7). I will demonstrate these claims in Chapter Five where I discuss how immigration and the immigration context reshapes my informants' views of themselves.

Identity or identification occur in interactional contexts as a response to the clash between the self and the other. McAreavey (2017) argues that Individuals living in a new space hold multiple identities that are validated by external factors as identity goes beyond internal cognitive processes. The self in a vacuum cannot exist. Societal interactions shape and remind us of who we are. Often, in what Verkuyten (2004) calls 'hyphenated identities',

immigrants take the national identity of the country of residence hyphenated with that of their country of origin such American-Chinese (Hamani, 2021). To navigate the demands of the new social and cultural environment and to align with "internal expectations and external influences arising from social interaction" (Goffman, 1969; Jenkins, 2014 cited in McAreavey, 2017, p. 2), individuals choose their identity. Immigration complicates the process of identity formation, as it encourages immigrants to negotiate multiple affiliations and to navigate different cultural and social norms.

More recently, a new term emerged in the study of immigrant identity -chronotopic identity- inspired by the works of the Russian literary critic Bakhtin (1981) who developed the 'chronotope', which he defines as "the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature" (1981, p. 84). In other words, a person's behaviour, a story character in Bakhtin's observations, is shaped by one chronotope, i.e. specific temporal and spatial non-random circumstances. Blommaert and De Fina (2017) illustrate this with the 'happy hour' example, a weekly informal meeting between colleagues held in a pub where work-related talks, dress codes and professional hierarchies are not allowed. Blommaert (2015) writes that "Specific chronotopes produce specific kinds of person, actions, meaning, and value." (p.109). He later explained that within a particular chronotope, individuals display particular identities and roles (2020). In a sense, one's behaviour is scripted to the smallest detail.

Agha (2007), Blommaert (2015) and Blommaert and De Fina (2017), among others, stretched the chronotope and linked it to personhood and identity. De Fina (2022) argues that the study of immigrants' negotiation of identity is where the notion of chronotope has been the most productive. Immigrants often experience a dual sense of time and space. In their new space, they are constantly confronting memories of their past and present selves in the *here* and *there* (De Fina, 2022). Through memory (time), migrants connect to their homeland (space) helping them negotiate certain identities and reimagining home. In a way, they negotiate their identity and belonging in two different worlds. Blommaert and De Fina (2017) explain that time-space reordering "redefines the space of what is possible and allowable in performing identity" (p. 5). In other words, immigrants' identities are not static; rather, they are continually shaped by the fluid interplay between past memories (time) and the present reality of the new environment (space). This process of negotiation, where memories of the past are intricately connected to the spatial realities of the present, allows individuals to construct identities that are both fluid and multifaceted. Through this lens,

chronotopic identity serves as a tool to understand how immigrants continuously navigate, renegotiate, and perform their identities within these multiple temporal and spatial frames.

3.11 Theoretical Concepts

This study adopts a primarily inductive, data-driven ethnographic approach, grounded in the narratives of Kabyle migrants in Scotland. However, to situate the findings within broader scholarly debates, this Chapter draws on key theoretical frameworks concerning migration, identity, and home, particularly within ethnic minority and diasporic contexts. In what follows, I critically examine Pierre Bourdieu's concepts of *habitus* and *capital*, particularly as developed through his early ethnographic work in Kabylia, to explore how identity and social positioning shift across migration trajectories. These concepts offer tools for analysing how Kabyle migrants reconfigure their cultural dispositions and social resources within new fields. Later, I address theories of home and home (re)making, including Miller's (2001) multidimensional notion of home, and Fishman's (1991) idea of "breathing spaces" for identity and language maintenance in the diasporic field.

3.11.1 Bourdieu in Kabylia

Pierre Bourdieu's engagement with Algerian society, particularly the Kabyle community, began with his arrival in Algeria in 1955, where he served in the French colonial army and simultaneously worked as a university lecturer and researcher in Algiers. His deep interest in the Kabyle people led him to conduct extensive ethnographic studies from both sociological and anthropological perspectives, producing influential works such as *Sociologie de l'Algérie* (1958), *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1972, 1977), *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* (1992, co-authored with Wacquant), and *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture* (1970, with Passeron). These publications introduced key concepts, including habitus, capital, field, and reflexivity. These concepts are interconnected, and none can act on its own as Maton (2014) explains.

Bourdieu's research focused on various aspects of Kabyle social life, such as the concept of honour, the role of the Kabyle house as a societal microcosm, and the intergenerational transmission of knowledge within the household and village. His depiction of Kabyle as non-literate, classless and undifferentiated as compared to the literate, class-based and differentiated French society (Reed-Danahay, 1995) enhances the division of the 'West' and the 'Rest' and reinforced the distinction between the modern

‘Us’ and the traditional ‘Them’ and ‘Other’ with literacy being a defining feature of this division. Critics, such as Lacoste-Dujardin (1976) and Mead (2016) noted Bourdieu's tendency to describe Kabyle society as ahistorical and spatially and temporally vague, which some interpreted as disregarding its historical context and colonial impact. This opinion is highlighted in Reed-Danahay when she wrote that “the Kabyle is somewhat ill-defined both spatially and temporally as if the specific historical locations of the subject of study were irrelevant” (1995, p. 71).

Although Bourdieu avoided direct comparisons between Kabyle society and Western society to avoid "ethnocentric identifications" (1966, p. 241 cited in Reed-Danahay, 2004, p. 94), his work faced criticism from scholars influenced by Edward Said’s theory of Orientalism, who accused him of Eurocentrism and failing to adequately address colonialism. Reed-Danahay (1995) observed that Bourdieu orientalises Algeria as he occidentalises France. In fact, as Martin-Criado states, Kabylia in Bourdieu’s works, “far from being a traditional society, was, in large part, the result of colonial politics” (2008, cited in Mead, 2016, p. 327). Go (2013) concluded that the early works of Bourdieu, conducted in Kabylia while in the army, did not obscure the context of colonialism as he wrote that in Algeria, “a truly isolated community, completely untouched by the colonial situation” never existed (1959, p. 50 cited in Go, 2013, p. 49).

Bourdieu, despite his affiliation with the French colonial army, did not position himself as a typical "Westerner" in his research. In fact, he developed a certain natural affinity for Kabyles to the point that he considered Kabyle as his ‘alter-ego’ when he described himself as a ‘*Kabylo-Béarnais’* (Yacine, 2005). Bourdieu linked the Kabyle and the Béarnais people and posits himself in between and seldom mentions one without referencing the other (Mead, 2016). He used his French roots, raised in a rural area in an agricultural way, in order to “claim a sort of ‘insider’ status among Kabyle peasants and to distance himself from others associated with the colonial power of France” (Reed-Danahay, 2004, p. 89). His way of conducting observation allowed him to get deep into the context of life of his subjects and gather mostly authentic data free of researcher influence, as he was perceived by the people as a coloniser embodying both the enemy presence and representing a source of fear. Reed-Danahay further explains that this distancing was meant to escape “naive perceptions of understanding the ‘other’ through participant observation research” (2004, p.90). In short, considering the similarities between the two fieldworks,

in Yacine's metaphor, the Kabyle was to Bourdieu a mirror that allowed him to see himself and Bearn differently through an "autoethnography" lens (Reed-Danahay, 2005, p. 4).

In various fields such as sociology, anthropology and sociology of education, Bourdieu's name is often mentioned. Some of his best-known theories; "theory of practice", "habitus", "field" and "symbolic capital" were elaborated based on a Kabyle ethnology (Hammoudi, 2007, p. 2). This makes Bourdieusian concepts relevant to the current study that investigates Kabyles' experiences in new social fields where their habiti and capitals shifted from homeland to host land.

Habitus

While Bourdieu's specific formulation of *habitus* was novel, the term itself, derived from the Latin word for "habits," had been previously explored by thinkers such as Aristotle, Weber, Durkheim, Merleau-Ponty, Husserl, and Elias. Bourdieu himself acknowledged the contributions of Hegel's *ethos*, Husserl's *Habitualität*, and Mauss's *hexis* as precursors to his understanding of *habitus* (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992a; Maton, 2014). In his studies of Algeria, particularly in collaboration with Abdelmalek Sayad, *habitus* emerged in 1964 in relation to the concept of "uprooting" (Hamoudi, 2007).

Initially, Bourdieu used *habitus* to describe enduring bodily dispositions that varied across individuals and enabled them to function within society, a view that Reed-Danahay (2004) has termed "bodily habitus." Over time, Bourdieu refined and expanded his definition, providing a more complex account in *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1972) and *The Logic of Practice* (1990). *Habitus* refers to the internalized systems of dispositions—habits, perceptions, thoughts, and actions—that individuals acquire through socialization. This knowledge is not consciously learned but is absorbed unconsciously through social interactions, shaping individuals' worldviews and behaviours. According to Huang (2019), *habitus* influences a person's expectations of social life and is, as Bourdieu described, a "subjective but not individual system" shared by members of a particular group or class (1977, p. 86). Webb et al. (2002) further clarified this, noting that *habitus* both reflects the way individuals develop their attitudes and dispositions and guides their engagement in social practices (Huang, 2019). That is, habitus conforms and adjusts people's ways of considering the world and life in society. In short, Costa and Murphy (2015) summarise habitus arguing that it is a way of being.

Maton (2014) further discusses Bourdieu's definition of *habitus*, as a "structured and structuring structure" (1994d, p. 170 cited in Maton, 2014, p. 50). It is "structured" because it is shaped by past experiences, such as family upbringing and education, and "structuring" because it influences future actions, such as how one behaves or speaks in different social contexts. As such, *habitus* is dynamic and context-dependent, meaning that no two individuals have identical *habiti*, as social characteristics like class, education, and family life all contribute to its formation. Moreover, *habitus* is not an isolated concept but is interconnected with Bourdieu's other key concepts of *capital*, *field*, and *practice*. These elements together form an equation—[(habitus)(capital)] + (field) = practice (Bourdieu, 1986c, p. 101)—where practice refers to individuals' actions in their everyday social lives. The term practice here refers to what individuals do in their everyday social life. On this equation, Maton (2014) emphasises that "one's practice results from relations between one's dispositions (habitus) and one's position in a field (capital), within the current state of play of that social arena (field)" (2014, p. 50). In short, individuals' practices in society cannot be thoroughly understood considering only their habiti and he argues that "any attempt to explain practice using habitus alone is not Bourdieusian" (p. 60).

In conclusion, although Bourdieu's notion of *habitus*, has been subject to several critiques regarding its tendency toward determinism, its conceptual ambiguity, and its limited ability to account for agency, reflexivity, and social change, particularly by Archer (2007) and Lovell (2007) and Noble (2013), it nonetheless provides a rigorous framework for understanding how individuals' behaviours and attitudes are shaped by their social context, while also recognizing the dynamic interplay between *habitus*, *capital*, and *field* in producing social practices. Understanding this complex interaction is essential to comprehending how individuals navigate their social worlds.

Field / Social Space

The concept of *field*, or *social space* as Pierre Bourdieu also referred to it, is crucial for understanding social interactions and the dynamics of human behaviour within various social contexts. As Patricia Thompson (2014) highlighted, simple explanation of actions and events is insufficient without considering the social space in which they occur. Bourdieu introduced the concept of *field* early in his career. According to Passeron, Bourdieu's conception of *field* was influenced by Gestalt psychology, specifically Kurt Lewin's (1935) concept of the psychological field, which views the "life space" as a framework for

understanding individual behaviour (Hilgers and Mangez, 2014). For Bourdieu, the *field* is the social space where interactions, transactions, and events unfold, and where individuals (or agents) navigate through various social dynamics.

Bourdieu employed a range of metaphors to elucidate this concept, which Thompson (2014) synthesises into three main analogies. The first analogy, a football field, portrays social life as a game played within a bounded space where individuals (agents) must learn specific skills and follow certain rules, with their position on the field influencing what they can do. This analogy emphasizes that individuals' actions are shaped by their position in the field and the limitations imposed by the social environment. The second analogy compares the *field* to a self-contained world, like a spaceship, where insiders follow a defined set of rules that order the space. These rules, which Bourdieu refers to as *doxa*, guide the agents' actions and reflect the structuring forces of the field and structure what is thinkable, sayable, and doable within that space. The *field* is thus both hierarchical, due to unequal distribution of capital (social, cultural, economic, symbolic), and semi-autonomous, meaning it operates with its own logic and beliefs that justify the behaviour within it. The accumulation of different types of capital by agents can lead to higher positions within the *field*, culminating in what Bourdieu terms the *field of power*. Finally, the third analogy compares the *field* to a force field in physics, wherein opposing forces (such as cultural and economic capital) exert influence on one another, creating a dynamic and competitive environment. Bourdieu, in the same view and respect, also described the social field as analogous to a battlefield.

Bourdieu's definition of *field* underscores the competitive nature of social life, where some agents are dominant and others are dominated, leading to ongoing struggles to maintain or alter positions within the social space. These power dynamics shape individuals' roles and actions in society. As Bourdieu (1998a, p. 40-41) noted, the social space is characterized by inequalities, and agents' positions are determined by the structure of power relations. Researchers such as Benson and Neveu (2005, p. 30) have further defined *field* as a "field of forces" in which agents occupy positions that determine their actions and their efforts to either preserve or change the existing structure of power.

Overall, the *field* is central to Bourdieu's understanding of social life, providing a framework for analysing how individuals and groups navigate and influence social relations. He stressed that to understand individuals' actions, one must first understand the *field* in

which they operate, as it shapes their behaviour and positions within the social world (Bourdieu, 2007 [2004] cited in Thompson, 2014 p. 74). Despite its significance in Bourdieu's work, the concept of *field* has received less critical attention than *habitus*, which has sparked numerous debates regarding its implications and applications (Hilgers and Mangez, 2014). Nonetheless, *field* remains a foundational concept for understanding social behaviour and the forces that structure human interactions within society.

Capital

Capital, in its broad form, is everything that an individual or organization possesses, as financial assets mainly, that are profitable and expected to maximize their profits. Pierre Bourdieu's reconceptualisation of *capital* is central to his broader theory of social practice, challenging the traditional economistic understanding of capital as merely financial or material wealth. Instead, Bourdieu (1986) identifies capital as a multi-dimensional construct comprising economic, cultural, social, and symbolic forms. These different types of capital—while interrelated—are not interchangeable and carry different weight depending on the social field in which they are mobilised. Importantly, capital is both a resource and a form of power; it determines one's position in the social field and conditions their capacity to act, influence, and compete within that space. As Moore (2014, p. 102) explains, capital functions as a form of "energy" that drives the development of a field and shapes trajectories within it.

According to Bourdieu, capital is unequally distributed and its accumulation defines the structure of social hierarchies. Crucially, an individual's capital can be converted—sometimes instantaneously—from one form to another, such as when educational qualifications (cultural capital) are transformed into employment opportunities (economic capital) (Bourdieu, 1986). These conversions underpin social reproduction and often reinforce existing inequalities, as capital is inherited and cultivated over time, particularly through the family and the education system.

Cultural Capital

The term cultural capital, as understood by Cole (2019), is the accumulation of knowledge and behaviours that allows individuals to manifest their cultural competence and social status in society (cited in Huang, 2019). Therefore, cultural capital can be seen as the "*asset that contributes to cultural value ... the stock of cultural value(s) embodied in an*

asset" (Throsby, 1999, p. 6). This type of capital refers then to what an individual knows and possesses, generally different from one person to another, which help define their positions in the social field. This difference leads to unequal economic capitals and results in unequal distribution of power; one may be more advantaged than the other. For instance, a child from a rich family is more likely to have better education and succeed in life than a child from a family of low social class and low economic capital. Additionally, this inequality leads to what Bourdieu later called 'symbolic violence'.

Bourdieu (1986) identifies three subtypes of cultural capital:

Embodied Cultural Capital refers to "long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 243), such as language use, mannerisms, accent, and deportment. These are often acquired unconsciously through early socialisation and are difficult to transmit instantaneously. For migrants, the embodiment of unfamiliar cultural codes can lead to misrecognition or marginalisation in new social fields.

Objectified Cultural Capital is the material representation of capital (Moore, 2014) in the form of material artefacts, books, instruments, artworks, or technologies, that reflect and reproduce cultural value. An individual's material possessions define their status in social life but while ownership of such goods can signify status, access to them is mediated by economic capital and cultural literacy. For instance, owning a fancy car of a famous brand or possessing a collection of rare paintings of famous artists give more cultural capital. Migrants arriving to a new place with little or no objectified capital may find themselves disadvantaged in cultural settings where such signs of value are expected or required.

Institutionalised cultural capital denotes formal recognition of competence, such as academic degrees or professional credentials. Bourdieu (1986, p. 246) describes it as a "certificate of cultural competence" that carries a legally and socially guaranteed value. However, the symbolic power of such qualifications is also context-dependent. For example, a PhD from a globally prestigious institution may carry more cultural capital than the same degree from a lesser-known university, an inequality often exacerbated in transnational contexts where foreign credentials may be devalued or unrecognised as I will demonstrate in Chapter Five. This type is linked to economic capital and social capital because referring back to the example above, it is certainly the child who is raised in a family with high economic capital that has more chances to be in a prestigious university as Bourdieu argues. However, similarly to habitus, this concept is often criticized for being overly deterministic,

implying that cultural capital rigidly reproduces social hierarchies and leaves little room for agency or social mobility.

Cultural capital thus intersects closely with other forms of capital. Access to elite education (institutional capital), for instance, is typically facilitated by familial economic and social capital, perpetuating cycles of privilege. These interdependencies reveal the structural nature of inequality, as individuals are unequally positioned from birth within fields that reward specific forms of capital.

Bourdieu's theory of capital is foundational to understanding the reproduction of inequality in various institutions, particularly the education system. His studies in Béarn, for example, demonstrate how schools often reward the cultural capital of dominant classes while masking this process as meritocracy. The unequal transmission and recognition of capital leads to what Bourdieu terms *symbolic violence*—a form of misrecognition whereby the preferences and dispositions of the dominant class are imposed as universal standards (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977).

In linguistic terms, this process is especially visible. As Gal (1989, cited in Rouabah, 2020, p. 52) argues, language practices are powerful markers of social positioning and often reveal underlying dynamics of dominance, exclusion, and authority. For immigrants, especially those from minoritised linguistic backgrounds, their embodied and linguistic capital may not be valued—or may even be stigmatised—within the host society's dominant field. This can result in diminished social recognition, limited mobility, and a need to renegotiate identity within new structures of value.

Social Capital

Social capital, in Bourdieu's framework, refers to the resources embedded within and accessible through social relationships and networks. Unlike economic capital, which is material, or cultural capital, which relates to knowledge and competencies, social capital is relational and collective. It encompasses the benefits and opportunities that arise from membership in social networks and group affiliations. Bourdieu defines social capital as:

> "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition—or in other words, to membership in a group—which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectively-owned

capital, a ‘credential’ which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word.” (1986, p. 247)

This formulation underscores two core components of social capital: network membership and access to group-held resources. That is, belonging to a group, whether professional, familial, cultural, or ethnic, confers legitimacy and social recognition, which can be converted into symbolic, cultural, or even economic gains. The value of an individual's social capital is not determined solely by the number of connections they hold but also by the volume and types of capital held by those within their network. Thus, access to high-status individuals, those with substantial economic, cultural, or symbolic capital, can significantly increase one’s own social capital.

Bourdieu distinguishes between *individual* and *collective* dimensions of capital. While individual social capital refers to a person’s own social networks (e.g. friends, colleagues, collaborators), collective capital arises from shared characteristics or affiliations, such as membership in a professional group (e.g. PhD holders), a specific social class, or an extended kinship network. These shared affiliations provide access to a pool of resources that is collectively owned and maintained, further reinforcing internal solidarity and external legitimacy.

Importantly, like other forms of capital, social capital is not static; it is accumulated, maintained, and sometimes lost over time. Its acquisition requires continuous investment in social relations through sustained interaction, trust-building, and mutual recognition. In this sense, social capital is the result of labour, often invisible and affective, that maintains relationships and affirms one’s place within a network. As Bourdieu notes, capital “is never completely independent of the agent’s position within the field” (1986), meaning that one's ability to mobilise and convert social capital is conditioned by structural factors such as class, ethnicity, and institutional recognition.

In migration contexts, social capital plays a crucial role in facilitating integration and adaptation. As I will demonstrate in Chapters Five and seven migrants often rely on ethnic networks for emotional support, housing, employment opportunities, and cultural continuity in the host society. These networks function not only as safety nets but also as sites of negotiation, identity construction, and resource exchange. However, the transnational nature of diasporic networks complicates the localised use of social capital, as ties may span borders, communities, and institutional systems. As such, the concept of

social capital is especially relevant in understanding the Kabyle diaspora's ability to sustain transnational linkages, recreate community structures, and navigate shifting power relations in multicultural settings.

Symbolic Capital

Symbolic capital, in Bourdieu's framework, refers to the prestige, honour, and recognition individuals acquire within a social field. Unlike economic, social, or cultural capital, symbolic capital is not a separate asset but the perceived legitimacy of those forms when publicly recognised. As Bourdieu (1987) argues, it is "nothing other than economic or cultural capital when it is known and recognized" (cited in Lebaron, 2014). To put it differently, symbolic capital is the image that other members of the society have on a particular person. They build this image upon the recognition of the person's volumes of the different types of capital

Symbolic capital plays a central role in establishing social hierarchy and legitimacy. It influences how individuals are perceived, respected, or marginalised within a given field. Its value is context-dependent and relational, based on the rules, or *doxa*, of the field and on others' recognition of one's capital. It is not simply wealth that defines one's position but a combination of cultural, social, and symbolic assets, all of which are interdependent and fluid over time Thus, symbolic capital helps reproduce social inequalities by legitimising the position of those with recognised assets.

In his work on Kabyle society, Bourdieu (1958) observed that honour and reciprocity functioned as key sources of symbolic capital. In these communities, status was grounded more in solidarity, gift exchange, and moral conduct than in material wealth (Rouabah, 2020). However, with urbanisation and economic change, these traditional forms of symbolic capital have diminished, giving way to more individualised and market-based valuations.

In migration contexts, symbolic capital is critical to processes of identity negotiation and integration. Migrants often navigate multiple fields in which their capital may or may not be recognised, affecting their social standing. For example, a degree earned in the home country may not carry the same value in the host society. Understanding symbolic capital thus reveals how power, recognition, and inequality are produced and contested across social and cultural spaces.

3.11.2 Home, Homeland and the Re-making of Home

As the current study focuses on Kabyles' immigration experiences and practices of home remaking, reviewing the literature around home is important. Immigration and de-territorialisation challenge the notion of home and home-feelings (Nowicka, 2007) extending it further beyond territory, materiality and physical aspects. Vilar Rosales (2010) argues that studies about home, particularly migrant's home, have long focused on the physical place, that is a house, with limited attention on the emotional and symbolic aspects. However, Miller (2001) states that Bourdieu's (1970) study on the Kabyle house was pivotal in re-launching new perspectives on material culture and home. For Bourdieu, *Axxam* (house) is central to people's habiti and reflects the societal organisation. The house is more than a physical place; it is a representation of social structure and hierarchy. Silverstein (2004) claims that "In Bourdieu's analysis, the *axxam* is a fully structured space whose internal symbolic order reflects and structures – and thus infinitely reproduces – the exterior repertoire underwriting habitus" (p. 560). *Axxam* is therefore a synecdoche of society and social order.

Axxam (house/ home) and *tamurt* (homeland) are two recurring themes in Kabyle immigration, particularly in music. For example, Akli Yahyaten, a Kabyle artist who moved to France during 1950s as part of the labour migration, devoted a song to the Kabyle house in 1998. For ten minutes, he addresses the house that was left empty due to immigration and recalls the moments when it was always busy with its members. Similarly, Akli D shows his immigrant's loneliness in his blues flavour song about the empty house while longing for the past self in a collective place. Moreover, as I will demonstrate in the data Chapters, *tamurt* appears in a large number of Kabyle songs by artists in immigration and exile including Slimane Azem. *Tamurt* is the term par excellence all Kabyle immigrants utilise.

The concepts of home and homeland have received a significant amount of scholarly attention though both terms remain non-definable in the time of human mobility. Brah (1996) suggests that 'home' can be interpreted as "the lived experience of a locality" (1996, p. 192 cited in Cohen, 2008, p. 10). This means that as Blunt and Dowling (2006) affirm, "Home is much more than house or household" (p. 3). In fact, to a number of people, a house is not necessarily a home nor is homeland a representation of home to all diasporic communities as for some, home and homeland might be a mythical imagined place or even a feeling that is developed through everyday practices (Boccagni and Brighenti, 2015). Subsequently, home means different things to different people. The homeless and the

people raised in the care system are two good examples to illustrate the imaginative aspect of home.

The sense of home according to Cloutier-Fisher and Harvey (2009) results from feelings related to a place, such as comfort, safety, freedom, relaxation, and a sense of control (cited in Gao, et al. (2021). These feelings are accentuated with memory, family relations and interactions, social networks, material culture, space and time. Choluj (2019) demonstrates the interrelatedness of the feeling of home and the sense of belonging among immigrant communities as one leads to the other. She found that home is reconstructed through everyday social and religious practices as well as parenting. Hage (1997) identifies four types of feeling that contribute to the home-making process: security, familiarity, community and a sense of possibility (cited in Obeid, 2013). This facilitates the re-making of home for de-territorialised communities.

Modern scholars agree on the fluid multidimensional nature of the concept of home that goes beyond the rectangular brick walls of a house and materiality. Rapport and Dowson (1998), Miller (2001), Blunt and Dowling (2006) and Duyvendak (2011) are some of the most referenced authors in the field. Gao et al. (2021) affirm that home includes "not only a tangible environment (e.g., architectural structure, decorations, furniture, and garden) but also personal, social, and emotional related meanings" (p. 4). Kreuzer et al. (2018) confirm the multi-faceted criteria of home and identified four dimensions. 1) The physical dimension that reflects the physical characteristics such as a house, landscapes and homeland. 2) The social dimension that refers to the physical and virtual relationships. 3) The individual dimension that describes the emotional meanings and feelings a person develops. 4) The temporal dimension that is about past experiences and future expectation. According to Kreuzer et al. (2018), "Reflecting on beloved memories, present experiences, and future states enables people to experience the ideal home" (p. 336). Blunt and Dowling (2006) summarise the complex mechanism of home arguing that "home is: a place/site, a set of feelings/cultural meanings, and the relations between the two." (p. 2-3). In other words, the physical space of a home causes the emotional state of home.

To conclude, home is more of a process than a geographical space. As Blunt and Dowling argue, "Home does not simply exist, but is made. Home is a process of creating and understanding forms of dwelling and belonging. This process has both material and imaginative elements" (p. 23). Home is built through daily practices, thoughts and feelings. Willes (2007) summarises this view and argues that "People experience home in many ways

– as concrete fixed locations, as specific practices and routines, as social relationships, or as emotional connections and symbolic concepts. Home can be a residence, place, or where one's family is; it can also be a nostalgic past or a utopian future (Blunt 2005)" (p. 122-123). In this vein, Silverstein (2004) tells us about one of his informants who recreated a mini version of *axxam* in his Parisian studio with all the material details. While this is a recreation of a nostalgic past, the reconstructed physical characteristics provide a feeling of safety and a reconstitution of familiarity and a sense of self. As Rapport and Dawson (1998) affirm, home is where one best knows oneself. The mini *axxam* is then a safe space where identity manifests itself.

3.11.3 Breathing Spaces

The final concept underpinning this study is *Breathing Space*, a term coined by Joshua Fishman (1991) in his foundational work on reversing language shift. Although it emerged primarily within the field of sociolinguistics (Silvetri, 2024), and language revitalisation (O'Rourke, 2019; O'Rourke and Dayán-Fernández, 2024), the concept proves relevant to migration and identity studies, particularly when exploring how minority and heritage languages are preserved and performed within diasporic settings. Fishman's notion of *breathing spaces* refers to the social domains where minority languages are shielded from competition with dominant ones, where individuals can use their languages freely, confidently, and without fear of judgement or marginalisation.

Originally, *breathing spaces* were conceptualised as physical domains, such as homes, cultural centres, cafés, and schools, where minority languages could survive and be reproduced across generations. Fishman's argument rests on the idea that unequal bilingual practices often lead to language shift, whereby minority languages are gradually replaced by dominant ones resulting in homogeneous communities. In this context, breathing spaces function as protective environments where the minority language is used as the main means of communication and cultural transmission. O'Rourke and Dayán-Fernández (2024), for instance, examine the *Semente* project in Galicia, where parents, teachers, and activists collaborate to maintain Galician language use. They demonstrate how such initiatives create everyday spaces in which Galician is the sole language of interaction, thereby resisting the dominance of Spanish. As I will demonstrate in the data Chapters, such domains may include houses, bars, cafés, restaurants, cultural organisations and any space

encouraging connections where individuals' linguistic identity emerges freely without judgements.

In line with this, O'Rourke (2019) notes that physical locations such as bars, community centres, and social gatherings, where Galician is spoken exclusively, offer symbolic and practical support for identity construction. These spaces, she argues, allow speakers to "cast off the Spanish-speaking self" (p. 110) and embody their minority linguistic identity without compromise. Similarly, Silvetri (2024) highlights how complementary schools for minority languages can serve as breathing spaces for children of immigrant backgrounds to learn and perform their heritage languages in a supportive environment.

Beyond the physical space, scholars such as Cunliffe (2019, 2021) and Belmar and Glass (2019) emphasise the growing importance of virtual or digital breathing spaces. Online platforms, particularly social media, provide a transnational context where minority language speakers can interact, share cultural content, and reinforce linguistic identity. Belmar and Glass (2019) argue that a virtual space qualifies as a breathing space when language use is central and uncontested, where the minority language is not only the object of conversation but also its medium. According to Cunliffe (2021), such digital environments also rely heavily on community members' agency and commitment to maintaining linguistic practices.

In the context of this research, Facebook pages such as *Kabylian Community in the UK* serve as digital breathing spaces for Kabyle speakers in Scotland and across the diaspora. These platforms allow members to share news, celebrate cultural events, post in Tamazight, and engage in discussions that reinforce a shared sense of identity. Although English often coexists within these spaces, its presence does not necessarily detract from their value as long as Tamazight maintains symbolic prominence. As such, these online spaces become crucial sites for identity negotiation, language maintenance, and cultural continuity.

Of course, this notion was subject to different critiques in several important ways. For example, it has been argued that this model presents a static and bounded understanding of space, which fails to capture the fluid, hybrid, and mobile realities of transnational and multilingual life (Blommaert, 2010; Pennycook, 2010) emphasising the fluid, mobile, and hybrid nature of linguistic identities. Additionally, Blackledge & Creese (2010) attacked the 'Breathing Spaces' model for neglecting the intersectional dynamics of language use, as factors like gender, age, Bilingualism, migration status, class and symbolic

power profoundly influence who participates in these spaces and how. They also argue that spaces are never neutral and interactions are ideologically loaded. Further, they challenge the idea that in 'breathing spaces' people can be themselves and explain that identities are contested in accordance with those factors. Women, for instance, may still be constrained by cultural expectations.

In sum, *breathing spaces*, both physical and digital, play an essential role in fostering minority language use and reinforcing diasporic identities. They offer sanctuary, agency, and affirmation for communities seeking to preserve their linguistic and cultural heritage in contexts of displacement and marginalisation. *Breathing spaces* offer continuity between the homeland and host country, enabling migrants to maintain symbolic and practical ties to their linguistic and cultural heritage. These are not just linguistic shelters; they are identity-affirming zones where intergenerational transmission, cultural rituals, and ethnic solidarity occur (Fishman, 2001).

3.12 Conclusion

This Chapter reviewed the relevant literature to the current project. It started by setting the distinction between 'Emigration' and 'Immigration' based on Sayad's (2004) differentiation and then introduced my understanding of the term 'diaspora'. This discussion suggested that the dynamism of immigration is complex as the study of immigrants cannot be completed without the study of emigrants. Pre-migration experiences are as important as post-movement's new identities. Moreover, this Chapter explained diaspora communities and the importance of these in helping migrants cope with their immigration sufferings, particularly through the creation of home-like environments encouraged by cultural association, as well as in the reconstruction of immigrant hybrid identities. In the second part of this Chapter, I introduced the different theoretical concepts that serve as a foundation to this study. I reviewed the '*Chronotope*' and chronotopic identity as understood by De Fina. Next, I set out Bourdieu's sociological concepts, namely habitus, field and capital. Further, I put forward different theories around 'home' as a multi-layered concept that merges between the physical and the emotional dimensions. Home means different things to different people. Finally, I discussed the notion of '*Breathing Spaces*' as introduced by Fishman (1991) as a physical or virtual place where minoritised languages are maintained and freed of external pressures. The next Chapter will set out a detailed account of the methodological part of this study.

Chapter Four

Methods and Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This Chapter outlines the methodological framework employed in this research, which centres on the use of ethnographic principles as the primary methods for data collection and analysis. Ethnography, as a qualitative research approach, provided appropriate means to explore Kabyles' immigration experiences in Scotland and understand their acculturation, identity negotiation and home remaking practices through direct engagement and immersion in this community. The current project clearly follows an interpretivist research philosophy as it integrates participants' subjective experiences and the researcher taking a social participant role (Pervin and Mokhtar, 2022) reflexively incorporating subjective views in order to explore a phenomenon through the eyes of the informants. Interpretivism posits that people actively interpret and make sense of both their surroundings and their own identities. The manner in which individuals engage in this interpretive process is influenced by the specific cultural contexts in which they exist. These unique cultural frameworks significantly shape not only their beliefs but also their actions. And in order to understand these subjective interpretations, it is advised to draw upon one's social experience rather than aiming for objectivity (Hammersley, 2013). Ethnography is one of the methods that captures peoples' subjectivities in the social field. This Chapter starts with an overview of ethnography as an interpretive qualitative research tool outlining some of its varieties relevant to the process of this project such as multi-sited, digital and auto-ethnographies. Then, I explain the procedure of data collection from identifying the field, recruiting participants to immersing myself in some of their daily routines and interviewing them. Further, I describe the data analysis phase that allowed me to explore the participants' social experiences including translation, transcription, coding through thematic and reflexive narrative analysis tools. Finally, I illustrate my positionality in regard to the informants' identifying community while demonstrating trustworthiness to which I give significant importance. This Chapter concludes by providing an account of the different challenges experienced throughout this research as well as the mitigations and decisions that helped lessen their effects on the process.

4.2 Kabylia: A Fertile Area for Ethnographers

The Kabyle case has been given scholarly attention since the early French presence in Algeria. In fact, Kabylia and its inhabitants interested several anthropologists and

sociologists including nineteenth and twentieth century political philosophers and historians who studied the linguistic and cultural landscapes as well the social and political aspects of the region. The very first ethnographic study on Kabyles was carried out by lieutenant-colonel Lapene in 1839. The resistance of Kabylia to the French military attempts, as also observed by Tocqueville two years before him (1837), intrigued him and he conducted long research entitled '*Vingt-six mois á Bougie'* (twenty-six months in Bougie, former Béjaïa) in which he provided valuable observations to ease the conquests of the mountains.

Following Lapene and Tocqueville, a number of colonial scholars researched Kabylia and the Kabyles including Daumas and Fabar (1847), Hanotau and Letourneux (1893), Garrot (1910), Wysner (1945), Bourdieu (1958) and later Lacoste-Dujardin (1996, 2006), Tillion (2000), Sheele (2009), Goodman (2014), Maas (2014) and Roberts (2014) to name but a few. Though antebellum scholarly productions targeted military objectives in favour of the French government, they popularised a hitherto less known and isolated Berber region. Particularly, the works of the *Péres Blancs* (White Fathers), who founded the institution called 'Missionaries of Africa' in Algiers in 1868, contributed to raising Berber identity awareness and worked to the documentation and preservation of the Kabyle oral culture while working to reach their initial mission that was said to be the evangelisation of the Algerians. Post-independence and post-Berberism researchers participated in the promotion of the Berber identity and communicating the ethno-political struggle through giving voice to Kabyles on the world stage. Additionally, the emergence of local scholars such as Mouloud Mammeri, Salem Chaker, Tassadit Yacine and Karim Achab encouraged the development of the linguistic profile and the political movement in Kabylia adding academic weight around Kabyles.

Ethnographic approaches have also been adopted on studies investigating the Kabyle diasporic communities and the process of immigration. Khellil (2001, 2004), Lamchichi (2003), Silverstein (2002, 2004), Sayad (2004), Tilmatine (2017a, 2017b), Lacroix (2016) and Harris, (2018, 2020, 2021) among others studied the Kabyle community in France, or the Maghrebi, as some preferred to categorise them. In the context of the United Kingdom, Collyer (2008) and later Belabbas (2020, 2021, 2025) and Belabbas and Armbruster (2021) pioneered in understanding Kabyles' migration experiences, their political and cultural movements and the negotiation of their cultural identity in the

multicultural British setting. Moreover, Hamani's (2021) ethnographic study explored Kabyle's attachments to their homeland with a particular focus on the Black Decade as the main push factor for migration. Additionally, Beloufa (2013) studied the immigration motives of Algerians to the UK and Spain and Guemar (2019) was interested in the feminisation of forced migration during the Algerian civil conflict. However, these followed what Aïtel (2014) advised against, that is studying the Kabyles as part of a wider category: the Algerians. While the above-mentioned works focused on England's largest cities, the current project contributes to this ever-growing literature with a specific focus on Kabyles, a demographic who has not, until now, received scholarly attention.

4.3 The Ethnographic Scope

Before outlining the methodological aspect of the current study, it is necessary to briefly review some relevant notions within ethnography. To start with, ethnography is commonly viewed as a descriptive method of understanding people's daily practices. Hammersley (2018) claims that its meaning went through 'dangerous' distortions since its spread from anthropology to other disciplines. In fact, ethnography is far more than a data collection method. Brewer (2000) defines it as "a style of research that is distinguished by its objectives, which are to understand the social meanings and activities of people in a given 'field' or setting, and its approach, which involves close association with, and often participation in, this setting" (p. 11). Hammersley (2018) declares that ethnography is "not limited to methods of research design, data collection, and analysis, but extends to methodological, ontological, epistemological, ethical, and political ideas" (p. 6). In short, ethnography is both a method and a methodology that provides the tools for deep understandings of phenomena that happen in the research field. Since Malinowski's pioneering innovative use of prolonged fieldwork, ethnography accounts for a number of threads including:

4.3.1 Multi-sited Ethnography: Initially coined by Marcus (1995), multi-sited ethnography "moves out from the single sites and local situations of conventional ethnographic research designs to examine the circulation of cultural meanings, objects, and identities in diffuse time-space" (p. 96). In what is also called 'mobile ethnography', researchers do not remain in one single site but rather investigate the social phenomenon wherever it can be observed including in the virtual social space. In Hannerz's (2003) words, multi-sited ethnography is "being there … and there … and there" (p. 202). O'Reilley (2009,

2012) argues that is more than moving between geographical locations. Rather it involves tracing connections, relationships, and practices across sites that are socially, culturally, and symbolically linked.

4.3.2 Digital Ethnography: The internet and social media provide a source of abundant data for qualitative researchers where individuals and communities connect and share views and stories. The virtual social space allows cultural expression and safe but open place for communication. Underberg and Zorn (2013) think of ethnography as a tool for "representing real-life cultures through combining the characteristic features of digital media with the elements of story" (p. 10 as cited in Kaur-Gill and Dutta, 2017, p. 2). While other appellations are also used including 'online ethnography', 'virtual ethnography' or 'cyberspace ethnography, Kozinets (2015) utilises the term 'netnography' that he describes as "participant-observational research based in online hang-out, download, reflection and connection" (p. 67) where ethnographers use the online space to understand and represent social practices of a community to which they are attached.

4.3.3 Autoethnography: Auto-ethnographers engage in a thorough process of self-reflection, commonly known as "reflexivity," to examine and critically assess the interactions between the individual and broader social contexts (Adams, et al., 2017) from an insider perspective. In other words, they explore the relationship between the social world and the self. Ellis et al, (2011) write that "autoethnography is an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyze (graphy) personal experience (auto) in order to understand cultural experience" (p. 273). It is characterized by its emphasis on the researcher's subjective experience, while also seeking to produce insights that resonate with larger societal phenomena challenging the boundaries between the researcher and the researched.

4.4 Identifying the Field

Prior to fieldwork, a long preparation is necessary as the first steps to any kind of research to take place in the library or on the internet (O'Reilly, 2009) where in-depth documentation starts. In fact, one needs to "read considerable volumes of theoretically and methodologically informative works, which is invaluable because it directs [researchers'] gaze to particular aspects of social reality and sharpens [their] eyes and ears for particular phenomena and events" (Blommaert and Dong, 2010, p. 18). That is, the time spent

documenting shapes the research objectives and supplies the researcher with the necessary tools to conduct fieldwork. However, it primarily helps researchers to identify and locate the field.

When identifying the research field, familiarity might be taken into consideration. According to Pole and Hillyard (2016), some researchers may choose a field that is familiar to them such as the village where they lived or the school where they studied. Immersion in participants' lives and maintaining good positive trust-based connections may be straightforward and uncomplicatedly smooth as they are more likely to be regarded as insiders. Nonetheless, some other researchers may opt for unfamiliar fields with no first-hand experience which may turn identifying the field and gaining access more challenging because of their outsider non-member status.

The fields where data collection took place for this project were carefully and thoughtfully selected. My first intentions were to investigate Kabyle culture transmission and preservation in the local and the transnational contexts i.e., in Kabylia and Scotland. However, as I moved to the UK and met some Kabyle people, my interests shifted towards migration and immigrant experiences. Language, culture and identity are not confined to bounded geographical places and are not tied to a homeland but are constantly negotiated and remade in interactions (Hall, 1990). Considering nowadays mobility and multiculturalism, this idea challenges traditional views that 'one language = one territory = one people' that pushes minority languages to the periphery positions (O'Rourke, 2022) and neglects the heterogenic feature of societies and diasporic communities. In other words, as I will demonstrate in the analysis, the Kabyle community in Scotland construct distinct hybrid identities as well as different home making practices. Echoing Auer (2013), I argue that similar to languages, identities and diasporic practices cannot be anchored to specific geographic locations like mountains and lakes (cited in O'Rourke (2022, p. 65).

The Kabyle community in the UK differs from that of France and is understudied. When I moved to Glasgow, I came to realise that Kabyles had different views about life away from home and I found that worth researching. The reasons behind choosing Scotland as the main field of the study are threefold. First, after doing extensive readings of the literature, I did not encounter any research paper that investigates Kabyles or Algerians in the Scottish context as such. Most available studies are based in the large cities of the UK though Scotland is mentioned by authors such as in Hamani (2021) who included only one

participant residing in Aberdeen in her study of push-pull factors of Kabyle immigration to the UK. Nevertheless, Mouhoubi (1997) conducted her comparative PhD research at the University of Glasgow in teaching bilingual pupils from minority groups with reference to Kabyle, Scottish Gaelic, Irish Gaelic and Catalan.

Second, as the current study was undertaken during the covid-19 outbreak, trips to Kabylia, France and the UK were severely limited. Third, a Facebook post from one of my participants that reads "Scotland, my second Kabylia" intrigued me to explore the similarities between the homeland and the host-land, something to which all of the participants alluded. However, because there exists no official Kabyle organisation to bring together the people taking part in this study, I adopted some aspects of a multi-sited ethnography approach. I went to where my participants were, observed their daily interactions, informally discussed with them and interviewed them. In short, this study does not study people in fixed settings. Therefore, the field is defined less by territorial fixity and more by the ethnographer's sustained engagement across different sites with the lived experiences of mobility, belonging, and diasporic consciousness. For me, the field was where the participants were.

4.5 Access

> *"Access in ethnographic work is a continual process rather than a one-off event, and includes the building of trust and the establishment of rapport"* (Coffey, 2018, p. 41)

Generally, in ethnography, the researcher identifies and accesses a well-structured field, with the gatekeepers' permission, where participants gather making observations easier. As far as this project is concerned, the Kabyles of Great Britain are scattered all around the different cities of the country and due to the limited number of cultural organisations, they do not come together regularly and gather as a community. To the best of my knowledge, no association comprising Kabyles has been documented in Scotland. Nevertheless, a few of my participants revealed to me their decision to create a "*very much needed organisation*" despite the hurdles. Conjointly, some of them are members of broad-themed groups such as 'Algerian Society in Scotland' and 'Inclusive North African Community in Edinburgh'. This suggests that Kabyles identify as Algerians and North Africans.

The absence of organisations does not prevent Kabyles of Scotland from attending social gatherings. As observed, some individuals assembled to form a group of six members in a Scottish independence activist movement organised in Edinburgh in October 2021 by the All Under One Banner group. For this reason, paired with my aim in researching the Kabyle people in Scotland, my research field is not limited to an institution or a site with well-defined borders. In this respect, Marcus (1995) suggested six strategies ethnographers can rely on when identifying the field; among these, he advises multi-sited ethnographers to 'follow the people' (cited in Cohen and Fischer, 2019, p. 34). I went where my participants were as individuals and as a participant-observer, I immersed into their routines and participated in their activities whether social, cultural or political, individual or collective, which allowed me to observe them. Additionally, with their full consent, I watched their social media profiles and virtual engagements with the aim of collecting complementary data. Consequently, accessing the site did not require searching for gatekeepers in the general sense, i.e., people granting 'entry tickets' to access an establishment, or at least not every time I had to approach participants. Following the people is one of the common contemporary techniques of multi-sited ethnographers in the field of migration studies (Marcus, 1995).

4.6 Snowballing Recruitment

At the beginning of fieldwork, ethnographers start "wherever they can slip a foot in the door" (Fetterman, 2009, p. 33) approaching the most accessible people. The research questions then guide the selection of the appropriate participants. The chain sampling technique, according to Atkinson and Flint (2001), reveals the hidden categories of the population to the researcher. The researcher gains access to the stigmatised and elite groups through word of mouth and referral. One of the earliest uses of snowball sampling dates back to the 1966 by the Scottish sociologist James Patrick for his book 'A Glasgow Gang Observed' (cited in Atkinson and Flint, 2001). James Patrick, a pseudonym, infiltrated a Glaswegian gang with the aid of a colleague in the school where he worked. He covertly observed the group while participating in their meetings for four months but refusing to bear a weapon. Suspicions led him to leave the city and wait until 1973 to publish his findings due to security.

Ethnography as a methodology requires gatekeepers to grant access to the researcher in order to approach the participants complying with ethical obligations.

However, my research mostly relied on key informants that I met at the beginning of data collection. For example, the administrator of a Facebook page, Peter (a pseudonym), was one of the primary informants from whom the snowballing sampling technique commenced. Later, Ziri also played an important role in recruiting participants of his network. Of course, other participants have been added to the list by me. For example, I contacted Nelya after I read an online article on her artistic works.

Distinguishing clearly between gatekeepers and key informants is a prerequisite for ethnographers. The literature suggests that gatekeepers are the people who enable access to the group (O'Reilly, 2009). They may be local contacts that are encultured with extensive knowledge of the site chosen by the researcher providing 'inside' information (Coffey, 2018). The researcher may be encouraged by their status within that group and their wisdom along with the study objectives to count them as key participants. On the other hand, key informants are the central participants on whom the ethnographer focuses his/her attention. In the instance where the snowballing method is used, key informants are usually the first participants encountered and are deliberately selected to initiate the recruitment process. Long-lasting friendships are generally established with them (O'Reilly, 2009). The snowballing sampling technique allows access to rich and varied participants' profiles. For that reason, Ladner (2014) argues that "non-probability sampling is the best choice" (p. 104) for ethnographers.

In order to reach a larger public and reach a larger number of people, I created an invitation image that I posted on Facebook Kabyle groups (see Figure 1). The snowballing technique resulted in rich and engaging data but appealing to the digital technologies and social media exponentially supplemented. In fact, people with diverse profiles contacted me and showed their interest in taking part. This helped me escape the snowballing technique's pitfall, which is "homogeneity" according to O'Reilly (2009, p. 198).



Figure 1: Invitation Image posted on Facebook

4.7 Participants

When applying the snowballing method in the field, researchers commence with a small number of social actors. These may be the individuals approached prior to entering the field who got intrigued by the research topic or they may represent people of the fieldworker's own circle. Fetterman (2020) calls this technique "*the big net-approach*" in which ethnographers start by talking to anyone that they think might be relevant to the study. Generally, the key informants are easily accessible such as friends or relatives, colleagues, acquaintances or just people they meet daily. "Networking and referral" are central characteristics of snowballing (Parker et al 2019, p. 3). In other words, after initial contacts are invited to take part in the investigation, they are then asked, though not necessarily, to refer the researcher to people in their circles.

My first days in a country where multiculturality is a driving force reminded me how far I was away from home. This led me to search for Kabyle communities on social media to feel less detached from Kabylia. I met two active members of the 'Algerian Society in Scotland' and the 'Kabylian Community in UK'. They then referred me to some of their contacts. Additionally, a fellow Kabyle PhD student in a different Scottish city, Lydie, directed me to people she met accidentally. Ziri and many others contacted me after he came across the invitation image on Facebook and he gladly suggested a few of his friends, including his wife.

The profiles of the participants are varied. The age range is around forty years, and the vast majority is males. Most of them come from Greater Kabylia, that covers Tizi-Ouzou and Boumerdes provinces, while others originate from Lesser Kabylia that includes Béjaïa

province and parts of Setif and Bouira. This difference is interesting as it adds to the heterogeneity of the people being investigated. This is so because these two areas of Kabylia have different varieties of the language as well as divergent political engagements. Additionally, the participants' professional experiences are varied. Some work in academia, students and teachers, researchers, but others have manual jobs such as working in the kitchen, cafés, bars and pubs, working for private companies or even owning their own businesses like shops and restaurants. Their competences in the English language are also different. While some have excellent communicative competence in the language, others could barely speak English, but they were attending courses in their free time. Even though some of them could not speak Kabyle and others had difficulties with the language of their hosting country, they were all united by their Kabyle-ness.

The participants preserve tight connections to Kabylia and other Kabyles. Some of them travelled and still travel throughout Europe whether for work or leisure. France is the primary destination for friends and family visits. Of course, this is due to the large Kabyle community there. Nearly all of them travel back home frequently (during events such as marriage or to attend funerals), but others have illegal status and cannot travel outside the UK. However, they keep constant online contact with their friends and kin. It is also worth mentioning that they are all from different villages and cities of Kabylia. Moreover, their migration trajectories are unsurprisingly mixed. For some, their motive to travel to the UK was for professional reasons and to get work while others joined a Scottish friend or spouse. Some ended up settling in the UK after years in Europe. Furthermore, a number of them entered the UK to escape all sorts of repression back in the country of origin. Two of the adult participants are born in the UK.

The diversity of participants' profiles increases the 'representativeness' characteristic of qualitative research (O'Reilly, 2009 and Parker et al, 2019) though as in all ethnographic studies, it was not the main objective of this study nor was "generalisation and external validity" (Parker et al, 2019, p. 4). Some of the participants I had the opportunity to meet disappeared and others rejected the invitation letters. This is inevitable according to Blommaert and Dong (2010) when they asserted that "[t]he informants you had contacted prior to your fieldwork may no longer be there [or] may now bluntly refuse cooperation" (p. 24). However, other key informants, maintained their collaboration with the project and were easily accessible. A number of the participants had the habit of coming

together, in a café, prior to the Covid-19 outbreak. They emphasised the importance of "*knowing Kabyle people in the land of other people*" and associate that with security. Not all these participants know each other and that gets back to the absence of associations in Scotland, whether physical or virtual, as well as other factors such as work and family engagements. Also, the current research project performed as a connecting bridge between some of them.

The total number of participants was thirty-three individuals with an age range between mid-twenties to mid-fifties. Six of them live outside the Scottish territory, particularly in England such as Leicester, Birmingham and London, but keep close physical and virtual connection with Scotland while others are scattered around Scottish cities. As I anticipated it, the overwhelming majority of them are males with only six females due to a combination of me being a male researcher and the concept of honour that Kabyles are traditionally tied to. As explained in the Literature Review Chapter, honour is crucial in the Kabyle society as the image of the self is built on the view of others. Preserving one's honour cultivate respect and position the individual in the social arena. All of the participants were given details of the study both through the information sheet and orally to clarify what was required from them while ensuring them confidentiality and anonymity and the voluntary aspect of the participation. Furthermore, consent was provided in different ways mainly through signing the consent form, orally or through text. The following table introduces the total number of the people who agreed to take part in this study based on their gender, age range, employment and the length of settlement in Scotland.

Table 1: Characteristics of the participants based on their gender, age, employment and length of settlement in Scotland

Pseudonym	Gender	Age range	Years in Scotland	Profession
Ziri	Male	40-50	+5	Academic
Mazigh	Male	40-40	+ 25	Works for a private business
Lydie	Female	25-30	+4	Student
Tafat	Female	25-30	+4	Student
Ahmad	Male	35-45	+10	Works for a private business

Massa	Female	35-45	+1	Academic
Nelya	Female	25-35	Scottish-born	Author
Ferhat	Male	40-50	+10	Works for a private business
Massinissa	Male	30-40	+8	Works for a private business
Aksel	Male	35-45	+10	Works for a private business
Mayas	Male	30-40	+3	Works for a private business
Idir	Male	35-45	+1	Works for a private business
Aylan	Male	40-50	+30	Business owner
Arris	Male	40-50	+15	Business owner
Mokrane	Male	45-55	+32	Business owner
Mernis	Male	35-45	+10	Self employed
Asalas	Male	40-50	+10	Works for a private business
Tarik	Male	30-40	+10	Self-employed
Zayen	Male	30-40	+3	unemployed
Agraw	Male	30-40	+6	Works for a private business
Koceila	Male	35-45	+4	Self-employed
Dalil	Male	25-35	Scottish-born	Works for a private business
Asaru	Male	30-40	+10	Works for a private business
Yanni	Male	30-40	-1	Short-time visitor
Aris	Male	20-30	Scottish-born	Student
Damia	Female	35-45	+8	unemployed
Mohand	male	50-60	+32	retired

Massyl	Male	25-35	+6	Works for a private business
Anzar	Male	30-40	+4	Works for a private business
Rahim	Male	30-40	+7	Works for a private business
Daniel	Male	45-55	+25	Artist
Peter	Male	45-55	+32	Works for a private business
Numidia	Female	40-50	+15	Self-employed

4.8 Methods

This ethnography-oriented research relied on its three most fundamental methods according to Harrison (2018), that is, participant-observation, field notes, and qualitative open-ended interviews. I observed people as a community during some cultural events as well as individually or as groups of two or four. I had informal discussions with them in person or via phone calls and sometimes written discussions through WhatsApp and Messenger. During data collection, I had my notebook's company on which I wrote any thoughts as fieldnotes before and during gatherings. After each meeting, I would write down a sort of summary along with my reflections on people's behaviours, hesitations and emotions. Additionally, online observations of the participants Facebook profiles and groups contributed largely to data collection. This allowed me to gather data from people I did not have the chance to meet personally and to catch up on details I might have missed during my presence with them. Ethnography is, of course, not restricted to these techniques but these particular tools were successful and enriching to this particular project.

4.8.1 Participant Observation

Observing the participants involved in the study is an effective way to gather information that has been taken for granted. For example, this technique allows to delve into people's behaviours during a gathering or a celebration. Such acts and attitudes might be unconscious but can speak more than words because the individuals may not have an opinion about them as they are natural, automatic and are not specifically triggered by the

researcher, may not find ways to express their thoughts or feel uncomfortable. In participant observations, "the rule is: you start by observing everything and gradually start focusing on specific targets" (Blommaert and Dong, 2010, p. 30).

Blommaert and Dong (2010) believe that ethnography "aims at finding out things that are often not seen as important but belong to the implicit structures of people's life" (2010, p. 3). They explain that asking questions is not necessarily adequate to understand certain aspects of the subjects' natural setting. An instance of this in the Kabyle context is their behaviours performed in a certain order during certain events. If asked why those specific performances and rituals, answers would be something like 'our ancestors always did that'. Therefore, through prolonged meticulous participant observation, paired with adequate questions, ethnographers conduct detailed investigations of cases.

The natural social field "cannot be studied without being part of it", therefore, social research is a sort of participant observation (Atkinson and Hammersley, 1983 cited in Atkinson and Hammersley, 1998). Researchers, insider or outsider, adopt the traditions and behaviours of the people being studied. In other words, they aim at viewing things from a native's eyes as well as immersing into the setting with little or no disturbance at all (O'Reilly, 2009).

I officially started fieldwork on the 31st of January 2022, the day I received ethical clearance from the University of Glasgow. This date also marked the celebration of the Amazigh new year (2972) in Birmingham organised by the association called '*Association Kabyle Uk*'. Because of a belated approval of my ethics application, I could not attend other celebrations including *Yennayer* on the 14th of January organised by the association '*Les Kabyles de Londres*' in London.

I attended the first event as an overt researcher. From day one, I explained my academic intentions to every person I met and exchanged contact details with those who were intrigued and showed participation interests. My Kabyle-ness as well as my fluency in Kabyle, Arabic, French and English helped me build quick bonding connections with the guests. Being an in-group member of my participants' ethnicity, i.e., Kabyle, as an ethnographer, I did not have to 'go native' once on-site to understand them. Ethnographers usually do their best to take the characteristics of the group they are studying. For example, I met two female colleagues during an ethnography training in Edinburgh Queen Margaret University and Stirling University who had to use fake tattoos to join a prison gang or smoke

Marijuana to be accepted by the users of this substance. However, I needed to keep aside my meagre immigration history, my political affiliations, I needed to speak either Kabyle or English and any other differentiating aspects. In other words, I had to speak and behave as Kabyles in Scotland do.

I had that physical and social resemblance that is one of the characteristics of an ideal participant observation according to Harrison (2018). However, the more time I spent with them, in person or online, the more I felt accepted into their community, to which I am also emotionally connected. To them, not only was I that PhD researcher recording and writing things down, but also a member of their big family. Also, as one of the participants confessed, I was viewed as one of those honoured people who work for the promotion of the Kabyle culture and its preservation. As I will discuss later, this tells me about the degree of consciousness and awareness of this particular community about the minority characteristic of their language and their desire to promote it.

Through participant observation, I could make record of my participants' aspects such as behaviours, dress codes, the different ways they spoke to me or between themselves and the language they used for instance. Moreover, I observed them as individuals during the interviews and informal discussions. I watched their actions, reactions and attitudes towards the topics being discussed. For example, I looked at the facial expressions and their tone of voice when the topic of Kabyle independentist movement, or any other politics-based theme was brought up, mostly by them as no questions were planned to be asked on that. The recalling of memories of home also caused their expressions to change. Burgess (1982) affirms that the main instrument of data collection in participant observation is the “researcher” (cited in Brewer 2000, p. 59). What a researcher’s eyes focus on is driven by his background, training, interests, closeness to participants, etc. After each meeting, I recorded all the details in my notebook as field notes. Atkinson (2001) considers fieldnotes as an expression of the ethnographer's deepening local knowledge.

4.8.2 Field notes

Writing fieldnotes is another fundamental tool in ethnographic studies. Whether memorised and mentally recorded, brief jottings that serve as *aide-mémoire* triggering the researcher’s memory or full notes (O’Reilly, 2009), fieldnotes are the recorded

interpretations of what the ethnographer sees, hears, touches, smells and tastes during fieldwork. In essence, fieldnotes are the first step of the data analysis and writing up processes.

Fieldnotes are the diary of ethnographers that tells the study repeatedly. They not only include the details of the fieldwork context, i.e., the place, the date and time, the number of participants and their physical appearances, but also the feelings felt by both parties. In this respect, Blommaert narrates his attachment to fieldnotes that provided details "not only about *what* I witnessed in the field, but even more importantly about *how* I witnessed it" (Blommert and Dong, 2010, p. 39). O'Reilly (2009) explains that what we observe affects what we write and conversely, what we write will affect what we observe.

Throughout data collection, I took notes during and after events that I attended as well as after the interviews and informal meetings. My method of note taking during events was rather different from the standard written approaches to fieldnotes out there. Though I was an overt researcher and an in-group member, I did not take my notebook out as many ethnographers would do all the time. This was to avoid distracting the guests, to reinforce my relationships with them and most importantly, to not forego any details. During the course of an event, I relied mostly on my cell phone. It was discrete and within reach. It was also necessary to exchange contact details.

My phone served me as a notebook as the latter would have been unnatural to the setting. To keep a record of what was happening, I sent text messages to myself on Facebook and WhatsApp. Of course, I made sure to not use it while discussing with my informants as this would have potentially damaged the mutual trust-based relationships which have been build. At the end of the day or on the following day, I developed the texts into more precise and linear stories with as much details as possible. In this respect, Atkinson writes: "fieldnotes (re)constitute that world in preserved forms that can be reviewed, studied and thought about time and time again" (Atkinson 2001, p. 353). To put it differently, through fieldnotes, just like with videoing, picturing and audio recording, the ethnographer freezes the happening of the event in time and space.

The use of mobile smart technologies was not limited to sending texts as fieldnotes. I relied on the device to write down any ideas that came to mind (memos) when I did not have my computer or notebook to hand. Moreover, during events, I used my smartphone to record the guests' voices, especially during a group discussion, as well as the on-stage

performances of the artists amongst them. Daniel, one of the main performers, granted me his consent minutes before the first event started when I met him outside. For a better performance and sound quality, I later used the Zoom H1n recorder. Furthermore, to collect more data about the setting, I took pictures and videos using my smartphone. Though, the overwhelming majority of guests were also taking pictures and videos, I had to be careful where I pointed my camera. This is because of several factors such as honour that will be discussed in the following Chapters as well as the presence of minors.

There exist different approaches to fieldnote taking in fieldwork. Some ethnographers prefer to go digital and use all sorts of portable devices to record short videos and memos to be reviewed later. Others, however, like to use more traditional ways because they tend to revive the moment in the researcher's mind through writing and transcribing. A physical notebook may contain drawings, typing mistakes that were not corrected by an automated software and different pen colours and shapes. All of this can help trigger the memory of the ethnographer when the analysis starts. For reasons that will be discussed in the following Chapters, I used my notebook only during certain interviews and discussions because the participants were uncomfortable being recorded.

4.8.3 Interviewing

"Interviews are conversations: a particular kind of conversation, but a conversation nonetheless" (Blommaert and Dong 2010, p. 46)

Being in the role of an ethnographer, I seized every opportunity to meet with people, both whose participation was confirmed as well as others who withdrew without notice. Throughout the data gathering phase, I met with the informants in informal settings and chatted with them before and after I officially interviewed them. I was not recording the informal discussions but made sure to write down my observations later the same day. Drawing upon Fetterman (2009), O'Reilly (2009, 2012), Blommaert and Dong (2010), Harrison (2018), I learned to not fully act as an interviewer so that the participants would not feel the pressure of answering or get bored by a list of printed questions. The atmosphere of an interview was not sought for. In the most natural relaxed environment possible, I actively listened to them from the beginning and recalled their previous anecdotes whenever necessary in order to develop new topics.

The conversations usually started with me being asked about my identity. The participants wanted to know my village of origin and residence, whether I was Kabyle, if I spoke the language, the sponsor of the research and the reasons behind my chosen topic, etc. To these questions and more, I took the time to not only talk about the research but the researcher as well. This allowed my participants to trust me and open up, which resulted in deep and sincere revealed narratives and autobiographies. This also facilitated my immersion to their social practices. Of course, this was a bidirectional trust-based relationship. In this vein, Fetterman advises that "[i]nformal interviews are also useful in establishing and maintaining a healthy rapport" (2009, p. 38).

Complementary but essential tool for ethnographers, ethnographic qualitative interviews, mainly semi-structured and unstructured, are "those projects in which researchers have established ... enough rapport for there to be genuine exchange of views and enough time and openness in the interviews for the interviewees to explore purposefully with the researcher the meanings they place on events in their worlds" (Heyl, 2001, p. 369 cited in De Fina, 2019, p. 154). To put this differently, in order to capitalize on and get the most from interviews, a number of factors need to be taken into consideration such as the relationship with the informant, the attitude of the latter towards the research and researcher, the environment of the interview, etc. However, it is important to specify that for an ethnographer, this participant-oriented data collection tool commences with the very first contact with the informants.

The context of interviewing may cause apprehension, anxiousness and even embarrassment in some individuals. For this reason, it is the responsibility of the interviewer to create a comfortable and relaxed atmosphere to overcome anticipated complications. Abiding by the ethical regulations of qualitative research and using my acquired skills from ethnography trainings and relevant sources, I worked to reduce the oddity and formality of the environment. For example, the choice of the location as well as the date and time of the meetings were left to the informants. I observed that this helped building up and reinforcing the truthfulness of the liaison. Most of the places selected by the informants were cafés, generally the cafeterias where they are frequents and therefore feel comfortable. Additionally, four languages have been used during communication, namely Kabyle, Arabic, French and/ or English depending on the participant's dexterity and needs. The main language used was Kabyle mixed with and with frequent switching to

French and English depending on the topic being covered as well as the unfamiliarity of words, or their absence, in the Kabyle language.

The order of use of those languages is different in the written online context. In fact, on social media platforms, Facebook, the informants tend to favour English and/ or French when posting something or commenting on others' posts. That is because of their objective to reaching and being understood by their friends and followers with little or no knowledge of the Kabyle language. Moreover, a few factors lie behind the fact that WhatsApp and Messenger conversations occur mostly in French as the main language. For instance, many of the participants are used to the Latin keyboard and therefore rely on the auto corrector in order to speed up the writing of the text. Besides, several of them are not familiar with the Amazigh Latin or Tifinagh keyboards. The use of Kabyle was limited to oral communications such as on phone calls as well as recorded audio messages. Due to the informants' overloaded schedules as well as the covid-19 chaos, digital ethnography was the door to the online social field.

4.8.4 The Digital Space

The onset of the Internet and technology led to the appearance of virtual communities, whether these share the same ethnicity, religion, political or personal commitments or whatever can bring them together in the digitized world. In the virtual social space, distances are null, and populations surpass the social rules and judgements through certain levels of anonymity. It is irrefutable that technologies and social media are integral parts of peoples' lives as they are used in their everyday existence. Events and news are instantaneously shared on the net and publicized with simple clicks. This attracts a number of researchers from various disciplines, particularly in the social sciences. For example, ethnographers amended and adapted their ethnographic traditional methods to explore the numerical multi-media world with what is termed as digital ethnography or else known as online/ virtual ethnography or simply, nethnography. In fact, this facilitated access to ethically and geographically non-reachable communities (Dicks, 2005 cited in Kaul-Gill and Dutta, 2017).

According to Murthy (2008), the emergence of digital technologies has the capacity to create new avenues for ethnographic research (p. 837). In fact, the internet and technologies opened the eyes of qualitative researchers and reshaped their insights towards sensitive topics such as sex and drug industries. In a sense, digital ethnography

looks at social and individual practices on digitized spaces (Kaul-Gill and Dutta, 2017, p. 1) through virtual contact with informants. I used digital ethnography as a complementary method of data collection. Therefore, the current study adopts a hybrid type of ethnography. In other words, it studies people in their most natural physical environments as well as in the digital social fields.

The decision of going hybrid was driven by different factors. First, as this project took place during the peak of covid-19 health crisis, meeting in person was not possible due to the governmental guidelines. For this reason, some of my participants preferred to be contacted through phone calls or WhatsApp and Messenger calls. Second, because many of the potential participants contacted in the first-place lead extremely busy lives in their host country, it was difficult for them to grant me some of their precious time to meet. Some of them have young children to care for while others work late at night to close their stores and restaurants or head to their English language night classes after their nine-to-five shifts. Third, and most importantly, as the communication technologies and social media platforms are fundamental in many peoples' daily lives, reaching them as participants was easier. Therefore, social media were important complementary data collection tools for this research. I kept in touch with most participants through social media texting, Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram as well as E-mails.

In addition to interacting with informants, Facebook was relied on as a field for participant observation. Participant observation in the virtual setting, according to O'Reilly, "involves observing identity performances, rule and norm enforcement, learning acceptable behaviour, witnessing transgressions (and corrections), sharing exchanges, coming to understand power structures and to recognise hierarchies" (2009, p. 217). With their consent, I added my participants as friends on Facebook and observed their activities. I carefully watched what they were posting on their walls and followed their interactions on comments, the language they used and the way they used it. For instance, people expressed their anger and sadness during the deadly wildfires that hit Kabylia in 2021. In a way, from a distance, Kabyle Diasporas lived the events and felt the intense emotions that created after watching videos and live streaming. The digital space is where immigrant communities and the homeland meet. The incidents caused Kabyle Diasporas to unite and call for fund raising and material support for the victims back home. Moreover, I observed people who were not directly involved in this study. That is, I observed through Facebook

pages of associations of the UK. Consent was given by the administrators, but faces have been blurred and names changed for privacy matters.

One of the challenges qualitative researchers encounter when conducting online participant observations is ethics. Different scholars believe that accessing an online 'public' space violates the research ethics regulations (Doring, 2002 cited in Kaul-Gill and Dutta, 2017 and Hine, 2000 cited in O'Reilly, 2009) because ethnographers are not known to the people under study. However, this virtual anonymity allows certain freedom and comfort to participants participating in delicate studies such as research on mental health issues as a result of Covid-19 (see for example Koh and De Fina, 2023). Receiving researchers' focus on already uploaded pictures, videos and texts on social media gives less exposure to the individuals who do not feel intimidated or have their personal space invaded by the researchers. Another concern about digital ethnography, which is also an advantage according to Kaul-Gill and Dutta (2017), is the fact that it "cuts across geographic boundaries and divisions of space and societal structures of hierarchy and power" (2017, p. 2). In other words, the ethnographer does not interact with participants in natural physical settings, face-to-face, which suppresses the proximity between the two parties. The researcher is not really immersed in his/her participants daily social worlds (Spitulnik, 1993 cited in Kaul-Gill and Dutta, 2017, p. 7). Despite that, the potential of Internet to bring people together and form communities in digitized spaces is worthy of attention. In fact, as far as the Kabyle people in the UK are concerned, they are more present virtually than in real world due to their dispersion in different cities, their small number and the lack of organisations. Therefore, observing them in the virtual space enriches this study.

As discussed above, the online field is "a space where social interaction of all sorts occurs." (Hine, 2002 cited in Kaur-Gill and Dutta, 2017, p. 3). Its openness and easy access to all users cause it to be a fertile place for qualitative researchers for the abundantly available data. It goes without saying that the Internet has reached most secluded places on the planet allowing them to express their identities in the virtual world. As far as Kabyles are concerned, social media suppresses the distance between families and their members living abroad. The networking platforms replace the *'tabratt'* (letter) sent to an old Kabyle illiterate woman by her husband or sons who emigrated as a work force or in a search for more comfortable lifestyle (Sayad, 2004). The letter is usually written in French and is read by a young literate person of the family or the neighbourhood. Kabyles use the digital

platforms to text and call relatives but also to post their experiences accessible to general public. For example, they post their wishes of celebrations, images and videos of their place of origin, local and national news and sports, etc.

Kabyle identity expression is prolific in the virtual space. I observed some of the participants' Facebook profiles to complement the lack of time they could grant me. They authorised me to dive into their virtual territory to take notes and screenshots. A number of the participants attracted my attention due to their strong presence on the social media. In order to answer the inquisition about the types of connections Kabyles in the Scotland maintain with others in other parts of the world and homeland, my online observations incorporated the different Facebook groups and pages that I found relevant to the research and where my participants interacted. The most pertinent of these are: 'Kabylian Community in the UK', 'Association Kabyle Uk', 'Amazigh Aid UK', 'Algerian Society in Scotland' and 'Inclusive North African Community in Edinburgh'. The appropriateness of these relies on the fact that at least some, if not all, of the participants are members of these groups and therefore are familiar with their content.

4.9 Analysis of Data

Data analysis starts with ethnographers' first ever review of the field notes, the transcription of the interviews and the organising of the secondary data they are interested in. Brewer (2000) argues that data analysis "usually begins when the field notes are read and typed before the next visit to the field" (p. 107). Writing up the observations entails the ethnographer to think and initiate the categories and themes in which the data will fit. In addition to this, this operation helps in the amelioration of the questions of the interviews, the attitude of the researcher and in the refinement of the observations. Coffey (2018), and others, suggests that data analysis starts before the ethnographer penetrates the space when researching about the potential field and population. However, a typical commencement of the analysis involves the transcription of all data, including recordings, observations, photographs, and video descriptions. This project follows a similar approach, but, as most content is in Kabyle language, translation was its starting point.

4.9.1 Translation

The overwhelming majority of the recorded data were in the Kabyle language. Therefore, translation was an inevitable step in the process. When translating, I relied on the 'literary translation' method in which "[t]he literary translator's work is primarily interpretive" (Churchill, 2005, p. 5). To put it differently, the ethnographer, who also happens to be the translator in this case, tried to find words that are as faithful to the ones used in the source language as possible. This way, the reader can visualise the settings where observation was conducted and understand the metaphoric discourses held with the participants. Naturally, being Kabyle myself helped me identify, interpret and translate my participants' narratives and discursive symbolism. This also legitimises my emic approach to ethnography.

A small portion of the participants did not speak Kabyle for they were born in Scotland, mostly Kabyle and British parents. In most cases, the participants are attached to Kabylia from their fathers' sides only. The first language they picked up was their mothers' which is also the language of their friends, schoolteachers, etc. Additionally, their visits to Kabylia were limited to one month of summer holidays each year. Consequently, their mastery of Kabyle is restricted to a few learned words and common expressions. During the interview, they instinctively led the conversation in English exclusively. My knowledge of English and my identity as Kabyle made me feel "at home in the two languages" (Churchill, 2005: 6). Similarly, a handful of cases occurred in the Arabic language. Again, with Arabic being in my linguistic repertoire, I had the necessary skills to deal with the interviews, translation and transcription.

Throughout the following three analytical Chapters, where I will analyse and interpret the participants' experiences, I make use of the translated versions of the excerpts for two main reasons. First, the study does not focus on the language as a code of discourse but rather as a means of storytelling and a social practice which helps construct identity and convey culture. The translation had been done in a way to be as faithful to the original as possible. Second, due to a heavy use of quotes from the participants' narratives to support the analysis, using both the original and the translated versions would cause over excess of the thesis word count as set by the University.

4.9.2 Transcription

Ethnographers collect in-depth insights of the participants, however, the volume of the data gathered is often extensive. As a result, transcription "is terribly time consuming" (Blommaert and Dong 2010, p. 69). In fact, transcription, usually paired with translation, takes time to not only come up with the most suitable renderings, but also to write down the interviews verbatim or cleaned versions. Brewer (2000, p. 105) argues that one problem during data collection that qualitative researchers face is that it is difficult to stop participants from talking. However, this depends on the nature of the topic being discussed, the technique of interviewing, the relationship between the researcher and the participant as well as the personality of the latter. Studying human beings is dealing with diversity. Not all my participants spoke extensively, and the average interview length is one hour and a half excluding the informal discussions I had with them. Though I rarely interrupted them, the conversations with the garrulous individuals were often filled with repetitions and beside the point articulations from time to time.

During transcription of the interviews along with the recorded and downloaded videos, I tried to include everything that had been said by the participants for the purpose of facilitating the reading of the data and the coding. However, given the fact that this project does not employ a conversation analysis approach, it does not give the same attention to all discourse components, linguistic and paralinguistic features. Because of excessive repetition, conversation fillers were excluded and, in addition to this, all extraneous utterances were removed due to irrelevance and idleness (Flick, 2014, p. 300), though might be important for further research. Schmidt and Werner's explain that "paralinguistic phenomena (like laughing or pauses) and suprasegmental characteristics (like intonation or voice quality) may play an equally important role in the analysis." (2009, p. 567 cited in Flick, 2014, p. 65).

For the purpose of simplifying readability, the transcripts of the interviews include descriptions and clarifications. Kowal and O'Connell (2014) define description as a way of denoting "paralinguistic or extralinguistic behaviours as well as non-linguistic activities observed in dialogical interaction" (p. 67). That is, I described the paralinguistic features of discourse such as a person's facial expressions or a change in their voice pitch. I adopted the same strategy for fieldnote taking and when writing observations of the occurrence of the interviews. Additionally, I added some clarifications of certain culture specific terms or

terms that translation would fail to convey. I explained words used connotatively and an instance of that is the word '*tamurt*' meaning 'land' or 'country' in Kabyle. As I observed both in the UK and France, Kabyles call each other '*tamurt*' whether when meeting for the first time or not. For example, Mayas, used the term to approach me on the train where we unexpectedly met again. This habit made me question: does that remind them of their homeland? and how strong is the relation between Kabyles and their ancestor's land and what does it mean to them from miles away?

It is advised to transcribe interviews the same day they took place or within a short period of time. This is to keep the vividness of the moment and to be as accurate as possible. Heritage suggests that translating and transcribing "correct the natural limitations of our memories" (1984, p. 238 cited in Bryman, 2016, p. 479). Transcribing at an early stage during the research allows to keep the freshness of the happening of the events. Whereas, taking a step back before transcribing, i.e., deciding to consecrate a time to transcribe all the interviews after a while, may change the researcher's perspective and somehow suppresses all pre-judgements. Additionally, after the time interval, the researcher is more familiar with the different concepts and theories and would have had elaborated the research questions. Due to unexpected circumstances, transcription for this project was completed after a certain dormancy. These circumstances, that are not related to my participants but rather to private matters, resulted in the suspension of this project for a period nearing a year long. The distance from the data helped me redirect my views regarding the coding and analysis. The observations I wrote about the interviews the same day, helped me not lose the context.

An extra tactic that I relied on in the transcription is adding observations or what is referred to as 'memos' in the literature. These observations are rather subjective and driven by my background as a researcher and an individual as well as my own migration history and status. Bucholtz affirms that "we all bring our subjectivity to the task of transcription" (Bucholtz, 2000, p. 1446). As an example, I wrote down my interpretations and understandings of what might have motivated and inspired my participants' answers to a question or an anecdote they told to back up their claims. Whether it be the latest news they get from Kabylia such as the wildfires or a controversial video circulating on social media on languages in North Africa. Memos are notes written by the researcher that are used later to remind them about the meanings or the reflections made (Bryman (2016).

In her paper, Mary Bucholtz (2000) declares that politics is inevitable in the process of transcription. In fact, Blommaert and Dong (2010) argue that "the way in which … [we] transcribe already contains some of … [our] own preferences and biases." (2010, p. 69). In other words, objectivity can be difficult to reach and sometimes impossible in qualitative research. Bucholtz explains that "[a]ll transcripts take sides, enabling certain interpretations, advancing particular interests, favouring specific speakers, and so on" (2000, p. 1440). Additionally, Bailey (2008) explains that translation "adds an additional layer of interpretation to the transcribing process." (2008, p. 129). She emphasizes that transcribing is an interpretive process, rather than merely a technical task (2008, p. 130), so is translating. Transcribers, therefore, have the capacity to, intentionally or not, affect the interpretation and coding of the data.

4.9.3 Coding

Transcription, as the opening move of data analysis, leads to the coding phase, what others prefer to call 'indexing' (Bryman, 2016). Although, "[t]here is no (specific) formula for coding ethnographic data" (O'Reilly 2009, p. 36), ethnographers agree on that coding entails detailed management of data and the segmentation of considerable amount of data into more manageable chunks ready for interpretation. Ethnographic data can be an 'attractive nuisance' (Miles, 1979 cited in Bryman, 2016, P. 570) due to its ambiguous misleading copiousness. Brewer explains that "organizing the data into manageable units so that they do not appear as an amorphous mass" (2000, p. 110) is what analysis starts with.

Coding is referred to by Flick as "the classification of events in discrete categories and the labelling of these categories" (Flick, 2014, p. 68) and each category or theme "categorizes, summarizes, and accounts for each piece of data" (Charmaz, 2006: 43 cited in Coffey, 2018: 83). Although the thematization and labelling are important steps for the analysis of data, they are not analysis in themselves. These two steps break down the data and prepare it for the analysis, which mostly consist of data interpretation or theory testing (Coffey, 2018). For ethnographers, "analysis requires searching for the patterns within the data and explaining the relationships between segments of data" (Brewer, 2000, p. 113). Coding then helps in the generation of ideas and guides the analysis. For the coding process, I relied on NVIVO software to assist me with the organising of the voluminous data. Gobo and Molle (2017) argue that computer assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS)

help sort ethnographic notes, have a stable overview of the codes created and provide graphic representations.

Coding qualitative data analysis, particularly in ethnography, is more fluid and open to constant revisions as compared to quantitative data, Bryman (2016) explains. In fact, the qualitative analyst may code and organise the data different times before getting to the desired outcome, generation of theory. This is essential in deciding about the quality of the gathered data. Flick agrees and clarifies that "qualitative analysis emphasizes the importance of remaining open to what is in the data, rather than simply applying concepts imported from the literature." (Flick, 2014, p. 305). The researcher reads and rereads the transcripts and asks about "what it is that people in the field (or various field sites) are saying and doing" (Brewer 2000, p. 110). To get even deeper, one needs to wonder what the people think and say they are doing while comparing between them, what is actually happening (thematic analysis), how the people experience it and what they say about it (narrative analysis), etc. Of course, for an ethnographer "the data reduction phase ... is guided by the purpose of research" (Flick, 2014, P. 305) as well as having the research questions in mind and minimal prepared theoretical knowledge. Coffey (2018) advises starting the organising of data chronologically, though this depends on the objectives set by the researcher, the type of data, their priorities and the relevance of the themes extracted.

4.9.4 Thematic Analysis

As for all qualitative researchers, choosing a suitable data analysis method is key to giving visibility to their findings and make a clear, coherent and convincing report. Thematic Analysis (TA) and narrative analysis are two of the most common techniques for ethnographers. As underlined by Braun and Clarke, "[t]hematic analysis (TA) is a method for identifying, analysing, and interpreting patterns of meaning (themes) within qualitative data" that aims to not simply "summarize the data content, but to identify, and interpret, key, but not necessarily all, features of the data, guided by the research question" (2017, p. 297). That is, one needs to read through the data *ad infinitum* before sequencing the dataset and making sense of it all in a way that is understandable to the readers. Therefore, a thematic analyst's job is "to tell a particular story about the data" (Braun and Clarke, 2022, p. 88) that is relevant to the research questions and not just "to represent everything that was said in the data." (Braun and Clarke, 2012, p. 65)

For the purpose of this research and referring back to the rationale, I have adopted Braun and Clarke's (2022) Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA) approach due to its "accessibility and flexibility" (2012, p. 58). It is a method that reconnects researchers with subjectivity that "is taught as something problematic to students and novice researchers as it obstructs the objectivity principle of research" (Braun and Clarke, 2022, p. 12). In fact, Yvonna Lincoln (2005) views, "all research [as] interpretive; it is guided by the researcher's set of beliefs and feelings about the world and how it should be understood and studied" (2005, p. 2 as cited in Braun and Clarke, 2022, p. 13). Reflexivity and researcher's positioning within the research is important to set solid ground for the research and increase its persuasion. Reflexivity is seen as "one of the ways qualitative researchers should ensure rigor and quality in their work; it is the gold standard for determining trustworthiness (Teh & Lek, 2018 cited in Dodgson, 2019, p. 220). My background, my ethnic origin, identity and my immigration trajectory, etc are all reflected within my participants' narratives. In a way, my research takes an autoethnographic turn.

Though I explicitly opted for an inductive approach for doing TA, i.e. a bottom-up approach that extracts codes and themes from the data gathered (Braun and Clarke, 2006; 2012; 2017 and 2022) and letting data speak for itself, I realised that some of the codes that came up were driven by my theoretical knowledge such as Bourdieu's and Sayad's concepts. Consequently, "[i]t is impossible to be purely inductive, as we always bring something to the data when we analyse it" (Braun and Clarke, 2012, p. 58). The analysis conducted is then a combination of the inductive (data driven) and deductive (theory driven) approaches. In short, coding and analysis involved me moving back and forth between the data and the theoretical baggage I had prior to entering the field and starting data collection. This combination approach justifies and supports the dynamic and flexible characteristic of qualitative research. In other words, the research questions are "not fixed and can evolve throughout coding and theme development" (Braun and Clarke, 2017, p. 297). My ethnographic research questions changed throughout the course of the study and particularly during the coding phase. The participants' narratives, in some way, reshaped my general focus and aims as I explain in the Introduction Chapter, particularly that of Massyl's (pseudonym) view of Scotland as his second Kabylia or Massa's constant reference to Kabylia when telling me about her immigration experience as a newcomer in Scotland.

4.9.5 Narrative Analysis

"*The outcome of a narrative analysis is a story - for example, a historical account, a case study, a life story, or a storied episode of a person's life*." (Polkinghorne, 1995, p. 15)

For the purpose of providing a deeper analysis of my participants' life stories and narratives, I paired thematic analysis with narrative analysis as an ethnographer and sociolinguist. As it can be deduced, narrative analysis is a qualitative data analysis method used to explore and examine narrative type discourses as told by study informants organised to a coherent and well-ordered tellable story. Though the terms story and narrative can be interpreted differently in different research areas, I use them interchangeably to refer to the "vehicle through which the reality of life is made manifest ... we live by stories – both in the telling and the realising of the self" (Gergen, 1994, p. 186 as cited in Sharp et al., 2019, p. 862). People tell stories all the time and at any age to make sense of the world around them. One of the central functions of storytelling is "presenting and representing identity" (De Fina, 2003, p. 5). Baynham and De Fina (2016) argue that stories help "to create common ground and to share experiences" (2016, p. 31) and assist people make meaning of their life experiences (Sharp et al., 2019). Narratives or stories as constructed by researchers are influenced by personal experiences, research questions and objectives, theoretical knowledge and perceptions (Polkinghorne 1995). Stories as representations of identities are scripted by a chronotope, "a constellation of particular time and space" (Blommaert, 2020) that dictates behaviours. However, providing distinctive definitions of what stories and narratives entails remains a daunting task (De Fina and Tseng, 2017, p. 391).

Narrative Analysis (NA) has been used in different research disciplines such as sociology, sociolinguistics, anthropology and the health sector. NA gained more popularity in migration studies for the investigation of the "processes of uprooting, relocation, adaptation to new surroundings and linguistic realities, and the consequent identity struggles of migrants and transnational individuals." (Baynham and De Fina, 2016, p. 31) generally through ethnographic methods. Immigrants face a myriad of challenges including the need to reposition themselves outside their familiar space. De Fina (2003) explains that qualitative narrative study of immigration provides a deeper understanding of immigrant's self-representation that statistics often disregard. NA allows deep interpretation of displaced individuals' experiences of migration and resettlement, questionings of their

belonging and where they fit in. Stories "are central to the construction of individual and collective identities and are used to index ways of being and social identifications." (De Fina and Tseng, 2017, p. 381).

Through NA, identification and racialisation in the emigration-immigration context have been the focus of sociolinguistic studies such as De Fina (2003; 2017 and 2020) and Baynham (2005; 2006 and 2016) to name but a few. The narrative study conducted by Wortham et al. (2011) demonstrated the dynamic nature of the identity construction process among Mexican immigrants in the US. Narrators' stories showed the significance of the racialization of the Other in the positioning of the Self in new social settings. I will discuss in the following Chapters how Kabyle people in Scotland position themselves as an ethnic minority among others in multiethnic cities of Scotland. They refer to groups such as Indians, Pakistanis as well as 'Arabs' and the Scottish people. During the interviews and informal discussions, I did not ask questions to solicit their views of others in the Diaspora. Such opinions came naturally with the flow of conversation and with my encouragement of narrating their stories and anecdotes to me. Though some stories are shared, they are not told in the exact same way. Telling anecdotes allowed them "to offer their perspectives indirectly, by positioning themselves and others in certain ways in the story world, without explicitly stating their points of view." (De Fina and Tseng, 2017, p. 391). Hymes (1982) explains that through anecdotes and other types of narratives, people organise data in a way to explain their experiences (cited in Cortazzi, 1994). NA is the tool *par excellence* by which researchers make people's experiences as less anecdotal and more empirical.

4.10 Reflexivity, Positionality and Trustworthiness

As explained above, social science interpretive researchers' subjectivity adds up to rich data to be modelled and remodelled in the analysis. Braun and Clarke (2022) remind ethnographers that qualitative research involves embracing subjectivity because as Steier (1991) claims, doing reflexive research is "telling a story about ourselves" although through telling stories about others (p. 3 cited in Fook, 1999, p. 14). Additionally, a researcher's theoretical knowledge and physical presence in the field shape the phenomenon being investigated, therefore, reflexivity merges into what is happening and what is being observed and collected. In this vein, Bourdieu, whose works were transparently reflexive, advises that all researchers should make a concerted effort to acknowledge their own objective position within the intellectual and academic domains (Deer, 2008) and to allow

them to reach 'ethnographic authority' (Britzman, 1995, p. 229 cited in Pillow, 2003, p. 176). This authority is often shaped by the ethnographer's position, background, and the ethical considerations they navigate while conducting fieldwork that legitimise their research and establish trustworthiness.

In its simplest form reflexivity is the researcher's ability to position themselves in the research context and reflect on what and who is being studied and where. Fook (1999) argues that reflexivity is "an ability to locate yourself in the picture, to understand, and factor in, how what you see is influenced by your own way of seeing, and how your very presence and act of research influence the situation in which you are researching" (Fook, 1999, p. 12). Interpretations and analysis of the data gathered are influenced by the researcher's position and background. Reflexivity, as defined by Berger (2015, p. 220), involves the researcher directing their analytical focus back onto themselves in order to acknowledge and assume responsibility for their own position within the research process. This includes recognizing the impact of their presence on the research setting, participants, the questions posed, the data collected, and its subsequent interpretation (Dodgson, 2019, p. 221). In short, reflexivity is knowing the self through knowing the other as reflexive analysis "naturally, places emphasis on the agency of the researcher" (Townsend and Cushion, 2020, p. 252) or as Berger (2015) simply puts it, "reflexivity is the self-appraisal in research" (p. 220).

At the start of data collection, I attempted to stay as objective as possible while attaining a trust-based connection with the participants. However, I learned that the researchers' paradox is inevitable in ethnography but at the same time valuable to the data. In fact, interacting with the participants required me to reciprocally open up about my immigration experience as a Kabyle in Scotland. While every trajectory is different and meaning-making processes are divergent, the people involved in this study, including myself, share certain experiences. I realised during the data collection phase and later during the coding process that while I was exploring my participants' feelings of belonging and home in the Scottish context, I was also somehow researching my own as my views were reflected in their narratives and accounts.

My shared ethnic background and immigration status legitimised my insider position and played a focal role in the bi-directional trust-based relationship. Berger (2015) and Teh and Lek (2018) argue that shared experiences and similarities between the researcher and

the researched are important and should be made known to the readers (cited in Dodgson, 2019). The commonality between the researcher and the informants leads the research to meet trustworthiness standards. As Berger (2015) affirms, reflexivity "… is a prime measure used in qualitative research to secure credibility, trustworthiness, and nonexploitative research" (p. 229). Lincoln and Guba (1985) developed four criteria that ensure the trustworthiness of research, namely credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility ensures that the collected data truly and accurately reflect the participants' experiences through prolonged engagement in the field and reflexivity. Transferability ensures that the findings can be transferred to other settings or groups (Elo, et al. 2014). Dependability refers to consistency and stability of the research project and the data. Confirmability refers to the accuracy of the findings that are shaped by the participants' experiences and not by the researcher's biases or preconceptions. The current research ensures these criteria have been met through my extended ethnographic presence in the field as well as my reflexive approach to analysing the data. Moreover, albeit reflecting Kabyles' experiences in Scotland, the findings can be extended to the study of other ethnic minority groups in the same context or other Kabyle diasporic communities in different social spaces.

4.11 Ethical Considerations

Every research involving human participation requires a thoroughly strict consideration of ethics and deontology. Atkinson (2009) explains that ethics is a sort of contractual relationship that exists between the researcher and the participants, which defines a fair distribution of rights and responsibilities. This agreement is voluntarily undertaken by both parties and fully comprehended by each. He stresses that the participants "should not merely consent but should do so with knowledge and understanding of what risks might be involved" (Atkinson, 2009, p. 18). Consent is essential in building long-term trust-based relationships with study informants. For this reason, research is bound to institutional ethical regulations that help prevent potential "minor and reversible emotional distress or some measure of reputational damage" (Dingwall, 2008, p. 3). The current study had been granted ethical clearance by the University of Glasgow research ethics committee strictly following the UKGDPR regulations that protect both the researcher and the researched.

Hammersley and Atkisnon (2019) argue that the *sine qua non* of research ethics and ethicality is informed consent. It is required that every participant is well informed about

the research project and understands the participation requirements before accepting their consent so that the data is not abused. To reach such aims, each of my initial contact with the participants started by explaining the research objectives and motivations and make sure they understand the account of the research. Then, I distribute or virtually send the information sheet and the consent form written both in plain English and French (see appendices 1 & 2). However, to ensure that the participants were fully aware of their rights, I informed them about what was required from them if they decide to take part. This complements the fact that no consent forms or information sheet were produced in Kabyle mainly due to limited technical vocabulary. Consequently, a number of the participants preferred to provide me with their oral consent instead of signing the document provided. This preference can also be due to illiteracy in the written languages provided.

As a fundamental aspect of ethnography, building trust with the participants, as well as with the readers, is foundational for this project. According to Pugh et al. (2023), trust is built through reflexivity which my insider status and the auto-ethnographic approach facilitated. Nonetheless, approachable researchers' behaviour and clear consent forms contribute to trust-building. In a plain language, I guaranteed the voluntary aspect of participation and the possibility to withdraw from the study at any moment without any consequences. This gave them certain control over the process and encouraged open and honest participation. Moreover, I ensured them that every bit of data would be kept confidential and in no way their confidentiality could be breached. For this reason, the participants were given the right to choose a pseudonym to reduce chances of being identified although the task was kept for me, which I interpreted as a sign of trust. Through ethics, both the researcher and the researched navigate through the power dynamics ensuring truthfulness and transparency while ensuring that the research does not cause harm and ideally contributes positively to the participants and the wider community. As I explained above, the participants viewed this study as important to them and as a way of promoting their culture and identity in the Scottish space.

4.12 Research Challenges

Ethnographic research is inherently fraught with challenges that may arise at various stages of the research process, including before, during, and after fieldwork. As a Kabyle researcher studying the Kabyle community, I anticipated many potential challenges and proactively devised strategies to mitigate their impact on the research process. The first

major challenge encountered was the dispersion of the Kabyle community all around Scotland and the absence of cultural organisations that could foster cohesive networks. To subjugate this issue, I adopted a multi-sited ethnography allowing me to engage with individuals across different locations and observe them within their natural contexts.

The second was that politics appeared to be a feared topic and a factor of suspicion. In fact, fear of political disclosure reigns after the imprisonment of different Kabyle activists in Kabylia such as Kamira Nait Sid, a co-president of the World Amazigh Congress, who was arrested in 2021 on charges of "endangerment of national unity" and "affiliation with a terrorist organization" (LeMonde, 14 Novembre 2022; LeMonde, 3 August 2025). To navigate this challenge, I emphasized openness, transparency and ensured strict confidentiality, which helped to build trust and encouraged politically active participants to share their experiences. Nonetheless, I recognize that the researcher's paradox—the inherent tension between objectivity and the potential influence of the researcher's presence—cannot be entirely eliminated.

The third challenge involved participants sharing deeply personal struggles that exposed emotional vulnerabilities. Although I had not anticipated this, my training as a Peer Wellbeing Supporter allowed me to manage these sensitive moments effectively through active listening and empathetic engagement.

Gaining control over unexpected situations in qualitative research is not always possible as the priority is to not cause harm or distress to participants. The issues of honour and religion, which are deeply intertwined within Kabyle identity and cultural practices, proved particularly difficult to navigate. As noted by Addi (2002) and Blanchard (2018), honour is a central aspect of Kabyle identity and is often viewed as an obsessive preoccupation that shapes social practices. For example, I was unable to access the homes of certain participants or engage with their female relatives. Notably, Dalil, a Scottish-born individual, refused to allow any contact with his parents, whom he described as conservative, while Aylan subtly rejected the suggestion of meeting his family. Given that honour is intricately linked to social status and reputation, I respected these boundaries, which in turn fostered a trusting relationship with participants, some of whom I have maintained lasting rapport with. Throughout the research process, I prioritised respect and the wellbeing of the participants.

4.13 Conclusion

This Chapter has provided a detailed examination of ethnography as an interpretive qualitative research methodology, highlighting three of its various forms—such as multi-sited, digital, and auto-ethnographies—that are particularly pertinent to the methodology employed in this study. It has outlined the data collection procedures, including the identification of the research field, participant recruitment, observation, fieldnote taking, immersion in participants' daily practices, and the conduct of interviews. Furthermore, the Chapter has elucidated the data analysis phase, which enabled a nuanced exploration of participants' social experiences through processes of translation, transcription, and coding, utilizing both thematic and reflexive narrative analysis techniques. It also addressed my positionality in relation to the participants' community, emphasizing the critical importance of establishing research trustworthiness. Finally, the Chapter has reflected on the challenges encountered throughout the research process and the strategic mitigations implemented to minimize their impact on the overall study.

Chapter Five:

Kabyles in Scotland: Immigration Trajectories, Identity (Re)construction and Self-(Re)definition

"The construction of a new identity is a vital process for immigrants given that establishing themselves in a new country and starting a different life, always implies a redefinition of their place in the host society and of their position with respect to other social groups."

(Defina, 2003, p. 161)

5.1 Introduction

As is the case throughout the thesis, I use the terms ‘emigration’ and ‘immigration’ distinctively from each other in a certain way. As Sayad (2004) explains, the former leads to the latter. In his words, a county’s emigration is another country’s immigration. To emigrate is to move from one’s place of birth and to immigrate is to settle in a new space where the individual is ‘unnatural’ to the local cultural landscape. Therefore, an immigrant is the twin of the emigrant (Sayad, 1991, p. 14). This Chapter explores the immigration trajectories and settlement experiences of Kabyle immigrants in Scotland. While Kabyle emigration has historically been driven by colonial legacies and labour market demands, particularly toward France, contemporary Kabyle immigration to the UK reflects a more complex interplay of political marginalisation, personal aspirations, and transnational motivations. Drawing on my participants' narratives, the Chapter examines how migration is not only shaped by structural push and pull factors, but also by individual strategies to enhance social, cultural, and economic capital in the context of perceived ethnic oppression in Algeria as well as by humanitarian matters.

From a classical perspective, migration has often been explained through push-pull models, most notably associated with Everett S. Lee (1966). In this framework, individuals are “pushed” by adverse conditions in the country of origin such as political marginalisation, economic constraints or a lack of opportunities, and “pulled” by perceived advantages in the sort of idealised country of destination including better living conditions, education and safety. While this model provides a useful heuristic for identifying structural factors shaping Kabyle migration, it remains limited in its tendency to reduce migration decisions to rational responses of external conditions.

As this chapter demonstrates, participants' narratives complicate the push-pull model by revealing migration as a socially embedded, intersectional and agentive process. Rather than resulting from a single determinant, migration emerges through the interaction of personal aspirations, educational ambitions, family circumstances, political considerations and broader socio-economic conditions. Participants' trajectories illustrate how migration decisions are shaped by both structural constraints and individual projects of self-realisation. In this sense, migration is not merely a reaction to adverse circumstances but also a proactive strategy through which individuals seek to reposition themselves socially, culturally and economically across transnational spaces.

Through the lens of narrative analysis as introduced by Braun and Clarke (2022) and implemented by De Fina (2003, 2005, 2015 etc) and Baynham (2009, 2011, 2015 etc), this chapter treats participants' accounts not merely as reflections of experience but as situated acts of meaning-making and ways of interpreting the world around them. As professor Baynham (2018) states, narratives are privileged windows into the lives of people who have been rendered invisible or marginalised within historical currents such as migrants making the perilous crossing of the Mediterranean.

The analytical perspective is further informed by Bourdieu's concepts of habitus (1977) and capital (1986). Habitus allows an understanding of how embodied dispositions, shaped in the Algerian context, continue to inform migrants' perceptions of the self and the other, practices and expectations of Scotland. Habitus is individuals' histories and embodiments that shape their roles and behaviours in the social sphere (Consoli, 2022). At the same time, the concept of capital, social, cultural and economic, provides a framework for analysing how migrants seek to convert and accumulate resources across transnational spaces. Migration is, therefore, not only movement, but also a repositioning withing shifting social fields.

Moreover, Bakhtin's (1981) notion of chronotope, as developed by De Fina and Blommaert (2015), enables an analysis of how time and space are discursively configured in participants' narratives. Through chronotopic constructions, migrants link past experiences in Kabylia, present realities in Scotland and imagined futures, thereby producing coherent accounts of mobility and belonging. This framework helps in examining how participants anchor their identities across multiple temporal and special frames.

The narratives discussed in this chapter were selected to reflect the diversity of migration trajectories within the participant group. They include men and women who migrated at different stages of the life course, through different routes, and for a range of interconnected reasons including education, employment, political considerations, family circumstances, personal relationships and humanitarian concerns. The chapter also incorporates the perspectives of second-generation participants where relevant, as their accounts provide insight into the longer-term and intergenerational consequences of migration. Rather than aiming for statistical representativeness, these narratives were chosen for their analytical value in illustrating the complex and often intersecting factors that shape immigration and settlement experiences.

Participants' narratives reveal how migration fosters new identity negotiations and reattachments, often marked by emotional investments in homeland symbols, practices and memories. By focusing on personal histories, motivations and settlement experiences, the chapter demonstrates how Kabyle migrants (re)construct their ethnic identity within a multicultural Scottish context while positioning themselves in relation to both their homeland and the imagined Other. More importantly, the diversity of participants' trajectories highlights the limitations of singular explanations of migration. Their narratives point instead to a complex interplay of structural conditions, personal aspirations and individual agency, illustrating how migration decisions are shaped by multiple and intersecting motivations that continue to influence experiences of settlement and belonging in Scotland.

5.2 Participants' Biographies, Migration Choices and Trajectories

In the following, I give voice to my participants and their narratives by exposing their interestingly varied and heterogenous biographies. I tell the life stories of most of the informants as I got to know them through an ethnographer's lens. In terms of immigration trajectories and the motives behind their immigration choices, the participants differ immensely though most of them knew each other by the time I met them. However, they are all united by some characteristics such as their expression of and attachment to their *Kabylité* [Kabyle-ness] and their country of origin as well as strong awareness of the minority status of their language and a desire to contribute to its preservation. Additionally, all participants, though in various ways, showcase their identity either through symbolism and materiality or through their language that some of them try to sound as pure and authentic as possible by avoiding the use of French or Arabic words. *Kabylité* as a habitus, a set of structures, characteristics, perceptions and conceptions shared by members of the same group (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 86), is therefore a subconscious person-specific construct that each of the participants built up based on their own experiences of the world around them. One's habitus is influenced by agents within the personal and private circle of the individual. This means that a habitus is both individual and collective. Most of my participants share parts of the same habitus because they grew up in Kabylia. Individuals "may acquire multiple habiti (plural of habitus) as part of collectives based on , gender, ethnicity, nationality, locality etc." (Joy et al., 2020, p. 8) as well as religious beliefs and political activism.

The *Kabylité* of my participants is the baggage they did not have to carry in a suitcase or pay an extra fee for at the airport. They immigrated with their own history, language, feelings, lifestyle, beliefs, etc. In short, as Sayad (2004) claims that where people go, their culture and identity go with them. Prior to constructing new identities, chronotopic, hybrid and immigrant identities influenced by their assimilation degrees, their acceptance of the new culture and their interactions with the 'other', immigrants remain the emigrants with a certain way of life and culture in the first stages. Hypothetically, "immigrants' sense of self takes new directions in relation to the circumstances in which they find themselves and the new roles that they need to adopt" (De Fina, 2003, p. 161) in the hosting society. This sense of self evolves through time and is shaped by the immigration experience.



Figure 2: Les Voyageurs Sculpture (from Brunocatalano.com)

One of the challenges that could constrain the construction of the new identity is what the immigrants left behind. For example, the Mexicans in the USA studied by De Fina (2003) lamented community life they lost once they crossed the border. While this has also been felt by most of my participants, what exacerbated the incompleteness of some of them is their families. One informant, Idir, has been immensely affected by that considering his immigration objective of seeking security from death threats. He migrated on his own leaving his wife and young children behind.

The bronze sculptures, *les Voyageurs*, by the Italian-French artist Bruno Catalano are representative of my participants' immigration. The statues are located in Marseilles-Fos Port facing the city carrying bags and suitcases. They are built as a tribute to the thousands of immigrant workers from Morocco and France's other colonies (see Figure 2). The feature of these is that the characters are incomplete and miss some parts of their bodies, mostly the abdomen area, possible to invoke the emotional rupture. When contemplated from the front side, one can understand and feel the pain of these

metal bodies looking at the immense volume of blue water behind them. From the back however, it is as if the city of Marseille completes them.

Throughout the data, two interesting terms emerged and were shared by most of the participants who used them differently. The term *Taqbaylit is used by most of the participants* to describe their *Kabylité* as well as the language in narratives like "*taqbaylit-iw"* [Massa] (my *Kabylité*) or "*Taqbaylit mači d ameslay kan*" [Ziri] (being Kabyle is not just about language). *Taqbaylit* in the Kabyle language is a feminine polysemous word that indicates the Kabyle language as in "*teddeggir luḍa teqbaylit-ni*" [the Kabyle language is emerging] (a song by Zedek Mouloud 2014). Another use of the term is 'Kabyle woman' as in "*a taqbaylit, a tigejdit ɣef yebna wuxxam*" [oh Kabyle woman, you are the foundation of the house] (a song by Slimane Azem). Finally, the term also means *Kabylité* or one's Kabyle identity such in "*teğğayi teqbaylit-iw, ma d-nek ittyeğğan, la smaḥ*" [my *Kabylité* abandoned me and no forgiveness if I abandoned it] (a song by Matoub Lounes). The second term is '*Tamurt*' which translates literally as 'land' and is a double entendre in that it had been used to refer to homeland. From the participants' narratives, the thought of homeland is sometimes the Kabyle lands where these people grew up and have left their families. Some other times, '*tamurt*' shows up as Algeria as a whole for some participants in some contexts This shows that though ethnic and regional identification is important, wider border national space also represents home.

Every migration story is different and there exist no two diasporic communities alike notwithstanding their shared social elements in the original culture or the hosting one. Immigrations have distinctive colour shades. Ata attests that "Diaspora formation is not unique to any part of the world and cannot be assigned to any particular group of people" (2022, p.48). The Kabyle immigrant community in Great Britain, particularly in Scotland, is among the youngest and most recent compared to that of France or Canada. Additionally, no colonial historical links or major political influences exist between the two territories making it less 'exemplary' (Sayad, 2004). However, emigration was induced by similar social, political and economic agents such as seeking asylum, better job opportunities or simply joining their life partners. Surprisingly, the English language did not discourage some of the participants who have restricted knowledge of English to come to this country. Language can sometimes be experienced as an "acculturative stress" (Berry, 1992) hindering people's integration. Algeria and the UK do not share linguistic assets but the limited mastery of my

participants as well as Belabbas' participants (2020) did not prevent them to migrate. For example, Zayen, a man in his late thirties who initially migrated to join a friend, spoke no word of English and interacted with me mostly in Kabyle and French online or over the phone. When I met him, he was religiously attending evening language classes to better his communicative skills.

For thousands of years, populations have been migrating to new places forming different types of 'Diasporas' (Marfleet, 2006 cited in Ata, 2022, p. 48). In modern South-North migration movements, common factors exist between immigrant communities such as the pursuit for better salaries, more comfortable lives and human rights (Hamani, 2018). In the case of undocumented Mexican immigrants in the USA for example, one of the main reasons of migration is the "desire to improve one's economic situation and the need to get a better salary" (DeFina, 2003, p. 38) rather than unemployment as it is the case of Mirpuri Punjabi in the UK (Capstick, 2020). Reaching economic stability and an ability to provide financial support through remittances is a common factor among most of my informants. Nonetheless, immigration and resettlement can sometimes be unplanned. A number of the participants in this research described theirs as a result of "pure luck".

5.3 Unplanned Migration

Algerian labour immigration became settler immigration through immigrants' efforts to achieve belonging and social acceptance in the host society, despite experiences of exclusion and othering (Sayad, 2004). Creating a family and residing away from one's people in working-class neighbourhoods or simply emigrating as skilled workers whom the society of origin would benefit from are some of the ways immigrants can bridge the distance between the 'self' and the 'other' (Portes and Rumbaut, 2001; Sayad, 2004).

Algerian Immigration kept gaining prestige since intellectual elites started fleeing. The traditional model of Algerian immigration based on labour is no longer the norm. In fact, since the appearance of new types of immigration; namely, education, highly skilled worker or global talent, Algerian immigrants hold social statuses as equal to local populations and other immigrants as possible. They are no longer put apart because of their occupations or housed in isolated HLMs (*Habitations á Loyer Modéré*) (Council estates) away from middle class residential areas as it was the case in France. In other words, their previously constructed capitals are less devalued. Emigrating for the purpose of pursuing a higher education degree has also become a popular move approved, supported and funded

by parents (Chachoua, 2018). This type of immigration also can turn into permanent settlement in the hosting country.

As previously discussed, many researchers relied on the push-pull model to understand the emigration-immigration phenomena as developed by Mejia et al., (1979). However, this model is out of date and less reliable when studying modern migration as it is "asymmetrical" and too general according to Bruzzone (2020) and neglects transnational spaces, the idea that migration could be a relational process rather than a reaction to sociopolitical stimuli in addition to taming the dynamic nature of migration in general. De Haas (2011) also considers the push-pull models to be static portraying migrants as 'passive pawns' with no left agency. In fact, as it will be demonstrated via the following first four profiles, the push-pull factors do not apply to all migration movements and excludes personal choices of the migrants. While it is true that these participants were attracted by some idealised characteristics of the West, they did not base their decisions solely on them.

5.3.1 Lydie: "My Immigration to Scotland was All Pure Luck"

At the beginning of data collection, my quest for participants, especially females, snowballed to Lydie. This woman in her late twenties settled in a city that is commonly known as the gateway to the Scottish Highlands or as the Scottish poet Alexandre Smith (1856) sees it: "a huge brooch, clasping highlands and lowlands together". While her immigration to Scotland may appear serendipitous, what she referred to as "*pure luck*", her narrative reveals underlying dynamics that complicate dominant models of educational migration. Although the conventional framework proposed by Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) outlines a rational three-stage decision-making process, choosing to study abroad, selecting a country, then an institution, Lydie's account disrupts this linear model. Her decision appears less structured by overt pull factors such as institutional prestige or diasporic networks, and more shaped by a broader orientation toward knowledge acquisition and personal development.

This pursuit of education aligns with Bourdieu's (1986) concept of cultural capital, particularly its institutionalized form, which includes academic credentials. However, Lydie's case challenges the assumption that international students necessarily act to maximise symbolic returns in predictable ways. While Bourdieu posits that cultural capital can be converted into economic capital, Lydie's narrative foregrounds the symbolic value of education for its own sake, as well as the contingent and affective elements in migration

decision-making. Rather than being solely motivated by structured economic logic, her migration trajectory suggests a blend of aspiration, chance, and a broader disposition toward mobility, a habitus shaped by both individual agency and structural opportunity.

She admitted that her knowledge of Scotland was limited and had no preference coming to Scotland: "d*uring my Masters* [in Algeria]*, I specialised in English language and culture, ... we had a chapter about Irish literature but never done anything on Scotland, so I had no idea about Scotland, and I did not know that they had their own language* [Scottish Gaelic]*. So, I discovered all that when I came here."* This shows that individuals construct new habiti and symbolic capitals continuously through immigration replacing the ones generated in the country of origin as these are usually "devalued in the host nation fields (Nohl et al., 2006; Parutis, 2014; Riano, 2011), as conditions of their production are not homologous to their conditions of functioning" (Bourdieu, 1990 cited in Joy et al., 2020, p. 9).

Lydie's mobility from Kabylia to Scotland was preceded by a brief immersion in British society through a language training programme in England, a formative encounter that, despite being her first experience abroad, appeared to ease her subsequent integration. While lacking prior transnational mobility, she demonstrated a notable adaptability to the cultural norms and expectations of the host society. This adaptability, however, should not be interpreted merely as a personal trait, but as an expression of her accumulated symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1986), manifested through education, linguistic competence, and embodied cultural dispositions. Rather than relying on ethnic networks for support, Lydie positioned herself as autonomous, distancing herself from dependence on co-ethnic ties. This reflects not only confidence rooted in cultural capital but also a conscious negotiation of identity and belonging within the host context. Her case challenges assumptions that ethnic solidarity is a prerequisite for successful adaptation and highlights the role of internalised dispositions and self-perception in shaping migrant trajectories.

I contacted Lydie via Instagram after she had been suggested by a colleague of mine, her cousin, from another University in England. Although Lydie and I had never met, despite having attended the same university in Algeria, she readily agreed to participate in the study. Consistent with my approach to all participants, she was given full agency over the time and location of the interview, ultimately opting for a weekend afternoon in Glasgow, a visit she also used to reconnect with a Kabyle male friend. Though, Lydie argued that she

was not particularly looking for Kabyle people when she arrived, she never misses the opportunity to make new acquaintances when these came her way naturally. This suggests a shift in her orientation over time, highlighting how immigrant subjectivities evolve through prolonged exposure to the host country's context.

This narrative underscores the dynamic nature of acculturation, where initial tendencies toward independence or disconnection from the ethnic community may give way to a gradual re-engagement. Drawing on Bourdieu's concept of *habitus*, it becomes evident that migrants like Lydie continuously negotiate their positioning within the social field, influenced by both structural conditions and emergent interpersonal networks. Her unplanned encounter with another Kabyle individual, Agraw, during a visit to Edinburgh—an interaction that led to further engagement and ultimately to his participation in this study—exemplifies how informal and serendipitous social ties can accumulate and evolve into forms of social capital. Such experiences reflect not only the fluidity of immigrants' affiliations but also the enduring significance of cultural familiarity as a source of belonging and emotional anchoring following the initial 'honeymoon' phase of resettlement.

When I asked Lydie if she knew other Kabyles, she replied "*Yes, one of them is you [laughter]. But no gatherings really. I do meet with two or three people that I know. I know other Algerians but not Kabyles. But in the UK, I do know other people like my cousin that you also know*." Anna De Fina suggests that "ethnicity becomes a very salient category for self and other identification for immigrants" (2003, p. 205) as they naturally attract and get attracted to people who have similar habiti as them. For example, in France, Kabyle individuals from the same village would gather and create a cultural organisation bearing the name of the village. However, these are mostly on the village structure level and their objective is supporting their expatriates and sending remittances (Lacroix, 2016) (see Chapter 7). Lydie's answer "*I know other Algerians but not Kabyles*" suggests that there are bases when socialising for her beyond ethnicity, the specific group membership she intrinsically identifies with. In other words, ethnic and regional distinction are overcome and as she explains below, she fully embraces her Algerian-Arabic-Muslim side that she uses to position herself within even wider communities in the Diaspora like North Africans and Muslims.

Lydie is originally from a village in Greater Kabylia where she lived from birth till the age of ten. Her parents decided to leave the village to settle in a small town closer to

Kabylia's biggest city where facilities like shopping centres, schools and hospitals are easy reach. Therefore, Lydie experienced her first displacement within the same linguistic and cultural landscapes. Her family moved from a traditional type to a nuclear family with only her parents and siblings leaving grandparents and cousins in the village. Lydie believes that the time she lived in the village with her grandparents taught her immensely about the Kabyle language, culture and traditions. Traditions that she maintains as best as she could in Scotland sharing them with her colleagues and flatmates. This parallels Blommaert and Jie's (2010) view that immigrants have a certain agency in the country of residence.

Like all the other participants, Lydie is not always a passive recipient of change in the country of immigration absorbing what belongs to the 'other', she becomes agent of influence where she positions herself. When meeting someone new, the participants always introduce themselves as Algerians but feel the need to go into details explaining that they are "*not Arabs*" and sometimes find themselves telling the History of North Africa. Similarly to Belabbas (2020) and Hamani's (2021) findings, my participants experienced situations where they had been described as Arabs based on people's assumptions that Algeria is an Arab country and sometimes had their country confused with Nigeria when introducing themselves due to the lack of familiarity with Algeria in the British society. Such misrecognition compels migrants to engage in what De Fina (2003) terms "identity work," as public opinion and others' assumptions shape not only social interactions but broader access to recognition and belonging. Public opinion is important to immigrants because others' perception about them dictates how they can be treated in the land of the other. It is generally during these situations that participants often juxtapose their own culture with that of others, Scots or other ethnic groups, highlighting similarities and differences as part of their integration strategy as I will show in the next Chapter.

When discussing Amazigh New Year's celebrations, Lydie says: "*in the school where I teach French. I talk with my colleagues about new year's celebrations, and I tell them that in Algeria we have three [referring to the Gregorian, Islamic and Berber calendars]. I tell them that the Berber calendar is older, and they ask me about how it is celebrated and what people do and cook*." Lydie's acquired cultural capital in French allowed her to be employed as a French teacher in a British context. Additionally, her displacement caused her self-rediscovery regarding her origins. Indeed, she narrated to me that not only her UK

immigration expanded her knowledge about other nations, but it also allowed her to discover Algeria in its real image:

> "*Another important factor in the process of rediscovering myself is when I first came here in 2016 for the pre sessional, I met Algeria. I met Algeria in all its diversity. Back in Algeria, as you know, we don't travel too much, so we don't know people from other regions and their cultures. As we only live between Kabyles, not many people know what differentiates them from other Algerians."*

Lydie's reflection on her arrival in the UK is particularly revealing: "*I met Algeria in all its diversity.*" Her comment challenges the often static or homogeneous representations of national identity. Migration not only exposed her to global diversity but also deepened her awareness of Algeria's internal heterogeneity—something she had not experienced while living among predominantly Kabyle communities. This resonates with the idea that displacement can generate a new gaze, one turned both outward and inward, prompting migrants to re-evaluate their origins through a transnational lens.

Throughout the interview, Lydie kept switching back and forth between Kabyle and French with frequent use of English and Arabic when she unconsciously feels the thought is better expressed that way. Capstick (2020) explains that code switching is common in migrants who speak more than one language. For example, she used an Algerian Arabic saying "*ja kerray wella moul ddar*" [*he came as a renter and became the owner of the house*] when she said, "*North Africa has always been a land of conquest*" and particularly the Arab conquests that she later referred to as "*aberrani*" [*foreigner*]. To express the word colour or dye, she uses the Arabic word 'صبغة' pronounced (*sabgha*) in: "*When I arrived here, I saw. I saw the diversity. I saw people from the East, the West, South and all. I saw the difference. I saw that I had something extra. I had the sabgha as they say*." Crystal (1987) pointed out that code-switching can be a way of compensating a linguistic deficiency in one language (cited in Benali-Mohammed, 2010).

According to her, *Arabité* is rooted in North Africa and Kabyles do not reject this aspect of Algeria though it had been historically imposed to them over years of cultural oppression post-independence. An interesting term she utilised in English was "*ethnic cleansing*" when she was expressing her condemnation of the North African governments' strategies to "*exterminate the Berbers*". She supported the same narrative with a quote from an Algerian author "*on ne fait pas l'histoire avec une gomme"* [*we do not make history with an eraser*]. Lydie's institutionalised form of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986), i.e., being

an educated person with academic career, in English, provokes her multilingualism. This is a lingering social class hierarchy feature that upper class educated people have. Aligning with Blommaert's (2010) view of 'elite' multilingualism (learning a language as a form of prestige) as opposed to 'migrant' multilingualism (learning a language out of necessity) Lydie's competence in English is a form of cultural capital playing a role in her immigration experiences. As explored in the literature review, speaking a more prestigious dominant language is seen as sign of power within a society.

5.3.2 Tafat: "Putting my Culture to the Front"

Like Lydie, Tafat's migration to the UK in 2019 was primarily driven by educational aspirations, specifically the pursuit of a university degree. Unlike the other participants, however, my connection with Tafat preceded this research; we had known each other since 2013 through academic networks in Algeria. This prior familiarity introduced ethical and methodological considerations, prompting initial hesitation about including her in the study. In this case, only exclusively this case, I did not rely on the snowballing sampling technique but rather a convenience non-probability sampling method. Nonetheless, I maintained an ethnographic sensitivity by first ensuring that Tafat met the study's criteria. Her profile, young, female, academic, and relatively new to Scotland, added further heterogeneity to the participant pool and brought valuable nuance to the dataset.

Due to Covid-19 restrictions and time constraints, the formal interview was conducted online, although I had met her twice in her work and study place before the official interview. What made Tafat's case particularly compelling was her explicit intention to use her research and presence in the UK as a platform for promoting Kabyle language and culture. This reflects an active, self-reflexive engagement with the migration experience, not merely as a process of adaptation but as an opportunity for cultural projection and advocacy. Her narrative positions the migrant not only as a learner within the host society but also as a transmitter of heritage, complicating the conventional directional flow of cultural influence in migration contexts.

Tafat grew up in a town approximately ten kilometres from the centre of Tizi-Ouzou, a context distinct from village life and more reflective of urban dynamics. Unlike Lydie, her upbringing was shaped by a space where Kabyle cultural expressions have become increasingly diluted, a phenomenon that Oulebsir (2009) describes as the *clochardisation* of the Kabyle language, referring to its symbolic relegation to a form of linguistic vagrancy.

This marginalisation stems from intersecting pressures: the perceived socioeconomic advantages of Arabic as the language of state and media, and an internalised stigma associated with rural mountain identities.

In this urban milieu, Arabic is often privileged over indigenous customs, giving rise to what Bhabha (1994) calls "hybrid cultures", a cultural space where competing norms and values converge. However, rather than fostering mutual enrichment, this hybridity can operate within a hierarchy that devalues Kabyle identity. As Bhandari (2022) argues, new hybrid identities are forged in such "third spaces," but they are often shaped by unequal power relations. For Tafat, this hybridity is not merely a blending of cultural references but a negotiation under constraint, where subtractive bilingualism (Vogel & García, 2017) threatens the vitality of her heritage language. The shift from Kabyle to Arabic, especially among urban youth, reflects not only linguistic substitution but also broader processes of cultural erasure, fuelled by structural assimilationist discourses and internalised notions of modernity. The mountain dweller, or *amsedrar*, continues to be caricatured as a backward, uncivilised peasant, muddy, loud, and associated with so-called pagan practices, reinforcing the symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1977) that underpins linguistic and cultural hierarchies in the region.

Tafat's *Kabylité* and sense of belonging are actively manifested through both her research and her engagement with material culture, emotionally charged objects such as traditional clothing, jewellery, and food. These items function as more than markers of ethnic identity; they are tools through which she reclaims, redefines, and performs cultural continuity in a diasporic context. As Béji-Bécheur et al. (2012) suggest, material possessions are not merely symbolic but are mobilised by immigrants to differentiate themselves from both host and home societies (cited in Kreuzer et al., 2018). For ethnic minorities in particular, such practices help counteract displacement and maintain a coherent sense of self in unfamiliar settings.

This aligns with findings from Khellil's (1991) study of North African migrants in France, which revealed how everyday products from the homeland mitigated the psychological impacts of uprootedness. Similarly, Silverstein (2004) frames these practices as part of an affective economy of memory and belonging. I return to this theme in Chapter Six; however, Tafat's reflections already illustrate how migration reconfigures identity not only cognitively but also materially. She told me:

> "*I think in Tamurt, we don't give too much consideration to the value of being a kabyle. I did not when I was back home. I did not wear kabyle dresses and jewelery. But once here, it's like if I wanted to bring the culture with me here. When I went back to Algeria, I brought Kabyle dresses and jewelery. And also here, I take time to cook traditional dishes for celebrations whether it is Mouloud [birthday celebration of prophet Mohammed peace be upon him] or Yennayer [the Amazigh new year celebration] and other traditions. I do my best to preserve those things.*"

Her statement, "*I did not wear Kabyle dresses and jewellery when I was back home… But once here, it's like I wanted to bring the culture with me*", reveals how displacement often intensifies cultural attachment. Migration does not merely prompt nostalgia but creates a new space for the deliberate performance of tradition. Tafat's decision to bring traditional clothing and artefacts back from Algeria, and her commitment to preparing Kabyle dishes for celebrations such as *Mouloud* and *Yennayer*, suggests a revalorisation of cultural practices that were previously taken for granted in the place of origin. Through these acts, she asserts agency in preserving heritage and remaking a sense of home.

The interview with Tafat was conducted in Kabyle, but much like Lydie, she frequently shifted between languages, both consciously and unconsciously. This translanguaging practice, as described by Vogel and García (2017), reflects the dynamic use of a multilingual speaker's full linguistic repertoire to make meaning, transcending traditional language boundaries. In migration contexts, translanguaging plays a dual role as it facilitates social integration by enabling communication across linguistic divides, while also supporting cultural retention and identity expression. Tafat's seamless movement across languages exemplifies this flexibility, particularly in a transnational setting where fixed linguistic categories often prove insufficient.

Now residing in a small Scottish town near her study and workplace, Tafat's integration was eased by her accumulated social and cultural capitals in the new space. Unlike her husband, whose limited English proficiency and lack of institutional capital constrained his adaptation, Tafat quickly positioned herself within the social and professional hierarchies of her new environment. Her husband, by contrast, relied on ethnic networks to navigate the host society, seeking contact with other Algerians to compensate for linguistic and cultural disorientation. This contrast illustrates the uneven ways capital shapes immigrant trajectories and reinforces class-based dynamics in integration processes.

Although I had known Tafat's partner previously, he declined to participate in the study. Tafat, for her part, displayed limited overt political engagement beyond her academic

work, but remained highly alert about news in Algeria, suggesting that diasporic consciousness need not always take the form of visible activism. Her migration was, by her account, partly accidental, yet the decision to settle in Scotland was closely tied to academic motivations. Despite negative perceptions of her host town, citing historical gang affiliations, she explained that trust and alignment with her supervisors were decisive: *"I had the feeling they were the right ones for my research, and we established trust-based relationship since day one."* This underscores the role of affective and relational factors in shaping migration decisions, which are often overlooked in rationalist push-pull models. De Haas (2011) confirms the role of meso-level migration factors including networks additionally to macro-contextual economic and political factors.

Before the pandemic, Tafat formed strong bonds with other Algerian women, reinforcing existing findings (e.g., Gao et al., 2021) that highlight the importance of co-national networks in providing emotional security and mitigating the effects of displacement. However, the onset of Covid-19 disrupted these networks, suspending in-person interactions and distorting social rhythms for migrants worldwide. In response, digital platforms emerged as alternative spaces for maintaining community and narrative continuity. As De Fina and Koh (2023) argue, these mediated spaces enabled migrants to share experiences, articulate belonging, and sustain forms of social presence during periods of forced isolation. For Tafat, as with many others, social media offered continuity where physical proximity was temporarily suspended, underscoring the increasingly hybrid and mediated nature of migrant social worlds.

5.3.3 Personal and Professional Development: Meeting Ziri

Ziri is one of the key participants with whom I've met various times during data collection. He is in his mid-forties and has one of the richest profiles amongst the participants in terms of migration trajectories for he has been to different countries before arriving to Scotland. His experience spans multiple countries and forms of mobility, making his narrative particularly illustrative of what Sayad (2004) describes as the condition of the "eternal immigrant", a subject in perpetual motion, shaped by displacement both within and beyond national borders. Notably, Ziri described himself as a migrant even before crossing international frontiers, signalling a sense of dislocation that predates geographic exile.

His first experience of migration occurred in childhood, when he left his native village in the Babor mountain range of Petite Kabylie to live with extended family in the

Algerian capital. This internal migration marked the beginning of a long trajectory shaped by education, aspiration, and the pursuit of improved life chances. In line with Melo and Ames' (2016) interpretation of rural-to-urban migration, where education, access to services, and upward mobility serve as key motivators, Ziri's early move reflects the structural disparities between peripheral regions like Kabylia and urban centres such as Algiers.

Dirèche-Slimani (1997, 2004) similarly frames Kabylia as a historically migratory region, where mobility was driven not only by overpopulation and economic precarity but also by strong familial networks and a deeply rooted culture of commerce. Ziri's trajectory exemplifies this pattern: economic and cultural capital motivated his movement, while social capital, particularly kinship networks, facilitated it. His case highlights the blurred boundaries between internal and international migration, suggesting that displacement is not always defined by borders but by deeper processes of social mobility, rupture, and continuity over time.

As a young university graduate, Ziri had been granted a scholarship to complete a higher education degree in a European country where he collaborated with colleagues for various research projects in his field. His academic professional career was his main motivation to emigrate: "*I was looking for a job at a university where I could enhance my skills and learn more. This is the main reason why I left Tamurt. I did not leave Algeria just for any kind of work*." Greenwood (1997) suggests that education is a migration factor where high skilled individuals migrate more (cited in Etzo, 2008). Ziri also temporarily worked in other countries such as Cyprus and Holland before returning home. In Kabylia, he held a senior lecturer position in his hometown university for a few years before deciding to leave again to settle abroad. In addition to career development, he travelled to different countries for leisure.

Similar to Lydie, Tafat, and his wife Massa, Ziri did not identify Scotland as his destination when planning his immigration. He reflected: "*I got here by pure Luck*" and when I asked if there were particular reasons, he replied: "*One of the reasons why I settled here was because of my researcher career. I applied for some UK universities and got accepted in Scotland. Even if I am in Scotland, I still can collaborate with others from other UK universities which are good in my field*." Ziri also collaborates with people in different Algerian universities along with co-supervising research projects. This shows that Ziri's

immigration was not a direct product of economic factors and connections with his homeland are driven by factors beyond identity markers.

Ziri contacted me via my university email address after he came across the invitation picture that I posted on some of the Facebook pages and groups to recruit participants (see Chapter 4). The first contact with Ziri was entirely in formal English and as we switched to WhatsApp after our first meeting, he started sending texts in Kabyle as our conversations were more informal and not necessarily about the research project:

> "*Dear Hamid*
> *I just saw an advertisement in FB regarding your PhD research, at Uni Glasgow, on transmission of Kabyle/Amazigh culture.*
> *I don't know if I can be of any help, I am established in Scotland since 2019 and beyond that I know some Algerians who can be part of your research, as they are in Scotland since long time, and they founded families here.*
> *Best regards,*
> *Ziri*" [Email, 01/04/2022, 5pm]

> "*Azul fellak mass Hamid* [Hello Mr Hamid
> *Ssaramegh labass I tettilidh* [I hope you are keeping well]"
> [WhatsApp, 22/5/2024, 1pm]

However, French was also heavily relied on for texting, and this phenomenon is more present among the participants who hold university degrees. This shift in language use, from formal English to more intimate multilingual exchanges, mirrors the broader pattern observed among highly educated Kabyle participants, for whom French often functions as a default linguistic resource in informal digital spaces.

Benmokhtar (2013) observed that Kabyles switch to French as a subconscious habit shaped by long-term exposure to French through schooling, media, and professional environments in Kabylia. However, I would argue that this practice also reflects positive language ideologies and a context-dependent negotiation of identity. For instance, Ziri's use of Kabyle in WhatsApp greetings, *"Azul fellak mass Hamid"*, signals familiarity and shared cultural grounding, while his earlier use of English in the email serves as a marker of professionalism.

The digital recruitment process also highlights the role of online platforms in building social capital. Ziri's response was not only a willingness to participate but also an offer to extend access to a wider Kabyle network in Scotland, an example of how

participants themselves become co-ethnographers by facilitating access to hidden or dispersed individuals. This snowballing effect became especially significant given the limitations imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic, which constrained the usual fieldwork settings and pushed many social interactions into mediated, digital spaces. Ziri suggested we meet at his workplace's common room, rather than a café he used to frequent with other Kabyle acquaintances, due to social distancing rules, which altered the spatial routines and collective practices of the diaspora during that period.

Some months later, Ziri invited me for a coffee in the shop where he used to meet with others prior to Covid-19. When we were discussing the importance of networking in the host country, he told me that even though he did not look for Algerians upon his arrival, he feels that connections with people of one's country are important. Waldinger (2015) demonstrated that immigrants-maintained connections to other in group members in the host land or the homeland, that they maintained in different ways, are essential in the immigrants' experiences. Ziri associated that with feeling of security and source of support while relating to his immigrant experience in another country where he underwent grief.

Humans connect with each to meet emotional and psychological needs as well social ones like the need to belong to a group. Immigrant connections compensate the separation from family, friends and work context as a result of relocation (Marinucci and Riva, 2020). In relation to his assimilation, Ziri did not feel the need to connect with other Algerians and expand his social capital due to his legal status, his fluency in English and his previous immigration experiences. However, his views changed completely when his wife visited him a few times before joining him to settle in Scotland from a different country. For her, it is a natural thing to look for "*your people abroad*". She surfed Facebook searching for groups and pages where she could initiate contact with other Kabyles. Her immigration experience of years is a country, where the Kabyle community is significant, pushed her to feel the need to surround herself with people of the same origin. Marinucci and Riva (2020) found that immigrants' social connections with local or other minority populations, reduced risks of mental and emotional distress that could result from social exclusion.

5.3.4 Massa: "Scotland is my fourth country"

My first interaction with Massa occurred during an in-person meeting with her partner, Ziri, when she joined the conversation via phone. She expressed a strong interest in the project,

emphasising the urgency of promoting Kabyle culture and describing her own contributions in that regard. Now in her early forties, Massa comes from a town in Grande Kabylie, similar to Tafat, but her socialisation took place in a more secluded village setting. In such environments, ethnic identity is often conceptualised as collective heritage embedded in everyday life and transmitted as a shared obligation.

Massa's reflections reveal a deeply rooted and politicised sense of identity. She explained: *"I grew up in a place where we don't talk much about this Algeria [Arabic Muslim country]. We talk about 'village'... When we started going to school and were repeatedly told: 'you are Arabs, Muslims, etc.' We questioned that. Or I questioned that... I identify myself more with Kabylité than this Algeria."* This statement illustrates the tension between official state narratives and local identity formations. While the Algerian state's post-independence Arabo-Islamic ideology has sought to impose a homogenised national identity, Massa's experience underscores how these efforts often produce disidentification and resistance, particularly among marginalised ethno-linguistic groups.

Her account reflects a politicised self-identification shaped by both early consciousness and later critical reflection. Identity here emerges as simultaneously inherited and actively constructed, what Verkuyten and Fleischmann (2017) describe as a form of ethnic self-categorisation that is particularly salient among immigrants. Massa's rejection of dominant national labels aligns with the secular and cultural claims advanced by Berberist movements such as the FFS and RCD, which have long opposed state-led Arabisation and championed pluralism and Amazigh recognition. Her use of the term "*Kabylité*" signals not just a cultural orientation but a political stance, a reclamation of a distinct identity in defiance of state-imposed categories.

Massa was twenty-two years old when her father decided to move from the village and create a nuclear type of family. Her strong links to her mother and grandmother had led Massa to develop deep interest and affinities towards Kabyle orality, *timucuha* (tales) in particular. Story telling had long been a tradition in the Kabyle culture. Massa said to me: "*I have learned a lot through the tales my mother used to tell me. Now, I am writing them because I do not want them to fade away*" when we were discussing her contributions.

Massa's own migration journey reflects broader patterns of Kabyle mobility shaped by gender, political and educational aspirations. Her first cross-border movement was to metropolitan France in the early 2000s, during a period marked by the lingering aftermath

of Algeria's "Black Decade" and the Kabyle political uprising of 2001. In this context of national trauma and political unrest, Massa's decision to emigrate for education was deeply gendered. As she explained, the move would not have been possible without her brother's intervention in persuading their father reflecting the patriarchal structure of Kabyle families and their protective approaches towards female members during that period and reinforcing the notion of honour as extensively studied by Pierre Bourdieu.

The fear generated by Islamist violence in the 1990s produced a climate of heightened control over women's mobility, particularly among rural and Kabyle families. As Beloufa (2013) and Guemar (2019) have noted, for some professional women, teachers, doctors, and students, emigration became not simply a pursuit of opportunity but a necessary strategy for survival. Massa's departure is situated within this broader context of post-conflict migration, where mobility is both a personal aspiration and a gendered response to collective insecurity.

Her initial move to France was followed by further academic mobility: first to another European country for doctoral studies, and then eventually to North America, drawn by better funding opportunities and academic alignment. Despite this massive trajectory, Massa emphasized that her migration was never intended for permanent settlement. She described her early years abroad as shaped by an "*intrinsic*" desire to return, a form of emotional tethering to homeland rooted in familial attachment and national belonging.

However, over time, her perspective shifted: *"It was just a psychological defence. I have a totally different routine and lifestyle and different objectives."* This evolution reflects the transformation of identity and intention common among long-term migrants. While the myth of return persists in many diasporic narratives, Massa's case demonstrates how lived realities often diverge from these imagined trajectories. As Chachoua (2018) observes, the obligation to return once functioned as a kind of social duty in Kabyle migratory culture, but for many, this has been replaced by symbolic returns through short visits, remittances, or cultural continuity abroad rather than physical repatriation. Massa's story reveals that migration is not a linear journey from departure to return, but a dynamic process of reorientation shaped by evolving transnational subjectivities.

After eight years in Canada, where the Kabyle community is active and visible, Massa moved to Scotland to join her husband and start a new professional career. Scotland, as her fourth country of immigration, was serendipitous although some personal motives lie behind the choice: joining her husband and securing a position at a Scottish university. As I will discuss in the next Chapter about similarities and differences between Scotland and Kabylia, Massa felt more uprooted in Scotland than in Canada. All along our discussion, she kept referring to her previous country of residence as if it was her second homeland and comparing it to the UK. For example, she said:

> *In Canada, there is a strong community and is very active. They organise gatherings and cultural events, etc. There, you would feel like you are in a village. In Scotland, it's completely different. When I arrived in 2021, I was panicking because there was no one. Ziri did not know anyone. I started looking on Facebook to find some people. I went on some Facebook pages, and I contacted the admin of the page on which you posted your invitation.*

Massa seemed to have lost her points of reference though several years spent in immigration and her positive experience in Scotland. Her answers suggested that connecting with other Kabyle people was her way to reposition herself in this new space. In a sense, to define (or re-define) her own identity, in immigration, she first needed to rebuild her feeling of belonging to her group. In this regard, Tajfel explains that identity is 'that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership in a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership." (1981, p. 255 as cited in DeFina, 2003, p. 16)**.** Massa eventually initiated contacts with people with whom she is keeping good connections, over the phone and in person. As disclosed by Ziri in his email above, the couple made friendships with one of the families participating in this project. Massa's motives behind her settlement in Scotland are, therefore, both professional and personal.

As I will elaborate later, one of the recurring features in Kabyle migration patterns is the presence of a pre-existing contact, typically a relative or friend, who facilitates the migration process. This support ranges from assistance with visa procedures to help navigating the early stages of settlement. As both Sayad (2004) and Chachoua (2018) argue, migration is rarely an isolated act; it is embedded in social relationships that condition and enable movement. De Fina similarly notes that such ties not only ease logistical hurdles but

also “accentuate the immigrant sense of identification with others” (2003, p. 101) during the vulnerable period of initial resettlement.

In this context, Massa and Ziri became central figures of support for Yanni, the final participant recruited and the most recent arrival to Scotland. Yanni’s trajectory differs significantly from others as he had never travelled to an Anglophone country before, and his limited English proficiency, coupled with the disorientation, common among newcomers, shaped his early experience of migration. His decision to participate in the research was initially marked by hesitation, primarily due to concerns about political surveillance and the implications of voicing dissent. As he cautiously stated: *“I accept, but do not mention the MAK”* because it was classified as a *“terrorist organisation.”* His explicit request to avoid references to the Movement for the Autonomy of Kabylia illustrates how political anxieties persist even in diasporic contexts, especially when national policies label certain affiliations as dangerous. My agreement to this condition, acknowledged silently by Massa and Ziri with a knowing smile, underscores the delicacy required when navigating political sensitivities in ethnographic encounters.

Yanni’s temporary immigration for a training course and his dependence on Ziri’s support highlight how differential forms of social and linguistic capital mediate migrants’ adaptation. Our only meeting took place at Massa’s home during a dinner gathering, a culturally familiar space that served as a microcosm of “home” away from home. In this setting, Yanni appeared to re-align with familiar norms and boundaries shaped by his prior socialisation. His reluctance to discuss politically sensitive topics, even miles away, reflects what Blommaert (2015) describes as the influence of “timespace configurations”, contexts where certain behavioural scripts are (re)activated depending on who is present, where the interaction occurs, and what symbolic cues are at play.

For Yanni, the dinner table, surrounded by fellow Kabyles, hosted in a home rich with cultural familiarity, acted as a social field in which elements of his *habitus* resurfaced. The affective atmosphere, trust embedded in relational networks, and the performance of hospitality encouraged a particular kind of behaviour: cautious, respectful, and politically reserved. Such moments illustrate how cultural norms are not simply carried across borders but are recalibrated within the specific dynamics of diasporic interaction. Here, identity is not static, but enacted, framed by context, power relations, and the interplay between memory, fear, and belonging.

This situation evoked what I previously referred to as the "Kabyle Myth", the persistent distinction drawn between Kabyles and Arabs in Algeria, a dichotomy deeply rooted in both colonial constructions and postcolonial state ideologies (see Chapter 3). While this dichotomy certainly persists in the diaspora, as I will discuss in the following Chapters, I also observed another differentiation: intra-Kabyle regional distinctions, particularly between *Grande Kabylie* and *Petite Kabylie*, two divisions of Kabylia that date back to the French colonial era (see Chapter 3).

These internal cleavages surfaced in casual yet telling ways. During a dinner gathering, Massa, aware that both Ziri and Yanni were from *Petite Kabylie*, made a light-hearted comment about the behavioural and linguistic differences between the two sub-regions. Though presented as a joke intended to ease the atmosphere, the remark carried latent value judgments, implying that one region's inhabitants were more articulate and more respectful toward women than the other. Humour in this context functions as a form of boundary maintenance, softening but not erasing symbolic hierarchies within the ethnic group (Bourdieu, 1984). As Silverstein (2004) has observed, even within supposedly unified Amazigh communities, deeply entrenched internal stratifications persist, often based on geography, language practices, and perceived degrees of Arabisation.

This sense of internal distinction was further reinforced during my discussion with Massyl, a participant from a region often considered one of the most "Arabised" Kabyle speaking parts. Visibly uncomfortable with this association, he expressed feelings of humiliation and repeatedly attempted to challenge the validity of that label. His reaction reveals how regional identities are imbued with symbolic capital and how individuals may engage in identity work to assert their cultural legitimacy. These micro-boundaries become especially pronounced in diasporic spaces, where ethnic identity is already under external pressure and where internal differences can be re-intensified through in-group comparison (Brubaker, 2005).

Ultimately, these interactions illustrate that diasporic identity is far from homogenous. The Kabyle diaspora, while united by shared language and historical memory, is fragmented by regionally inflected perceptions of authenticity and belonging. The diaspora becomes not only a site for negotiating boundaries between self and "other" (e.g., Arabs, Scots), but also an arena where internal distinctions are rearticulated and sometimes contested although not to a serious degree.

Materiality is one of the forms of negotiating one's cultural identity and a contributing element in the re-making of home (Burrel, 2008a and 2008b) as I will discuss in Chapter Six. For example, a cross around someone's neck is a semiotic symbol that reveals a persons' Christian beliefs. Showing identity through symbols and materiality is a common trend among Kabyles, particularly outside Kabylia and in the Diaspora. Massa proudly narrated to me an important presentation she gave wearing a Kabyle dress and shared pictures with me about that. When she and her husband invited me over to their place, she was also wearing a casual Kabyle dress and preparing Kabyle dishes was an important matter to her. During one of my visits, she prepared a special couscous dish made with *Tayeddiwt* , a type of African thistle, called Golden Thistle, found all over Kabylia. That day, she served the food in a Berber symbol decorated dish set she brought during her last visit to Algeria (see Figure 3). Interestingly, Massa also brought items each time she visited her previous country of residence. This shows her attachment to both countries. In her study of the Kabyle community in the UK, Belabbas (2020) also observed that material objects helped Kabyles not only keep an attachment to Kabylia but also negotiate their *Kabylité.*



Figure 3: Couscous dish set brought by Massa

While migration is often conceptualised through frameworks of forced displacement or structural push-pull dynamics, the four cases discussed above complicate this binary. As de Haas (2011) argues, migration decisions are shaped by a complex interplay of structural constraints and individual agency, often defying clear-cut categories of forced or voluntary migration. In these narratives, cross-border mobility emerges as a multifaceted and, at times, serendipitous or unplanned process, driven by personal aspirations rather than direct coercion or immediate crisis.

For instance, Lydie, Tafat and Massa's, to France and North America, moves illustrate what Koser (2010) refers to as "informal, unregulated migration" that nonetheless remains legal and opportunity-driven, especially in contexts like education or professional

development. Their mobility was not part of a state-sponsored plan or collective displacement but rather reflected personal ambitions and the utilisation of available social and educational capital.

Ziri's account further illustrates how migration can be understood as an expression of personal freedom and self-realisation, enabled by transnational opportunities unavailable in the home context. Such cases echo recent findings in the literature on lifestyle and aspirational migration (e.g. Benson & O'Reilly, 2016), where migration decisions stem from a pursuit of autonomy, meaning, or status beyond strictly economic motivations.

Massa's trajectory highlights the entanglement of multiple motivations, where political dissatisfaction, career development and personal relationships intersect: fleeing persecution, higher education, professional career and joining a loved one. This supports the argument by Carling and Schewel (2018) that migration decision-making often results from "incomplete freedoms," where individuals act within limited but meaningful fields of choice, rather than as passive victims of external pressures. Zayen's case, migrating to join a friend, also confirms de Haas' (2011) statement that not all migration is a passive result of crisis or labour market but can rather be due to private subjectivities because people are humans who can take decisions and take full agency of their choices.

Therefore, these cases suggest that migration, even when seemingly unstructured or unplanned, should not be viewed as chaotic or irrational. Instead, as contemporary migration theorists suggest, such movements often reflect strategic navigation of constraints and opportunities by individuals whose decisions are deeply embedded in personal biographies, emotional geographies, and social networks. In short, the push-pull model fails to describe migration as a process (de Haas, 2010a cited in de Haas, 2011) shaped by various reasons including economic determinants.

5.4 Economic Capital: The Immigrant's Dream

Despite the diversity of individual biographies, a common thread emerges across participants' narratives: the pursuit of improved socioeconomic conditions. This finding echoes Hamani's (2018; 2021) conclusion that aspirations for economic betterment are a central driver of Kabyle migration, both within and across borders. Similarly, Dirèche-Slimani (1997, 2003) has documented the historical continuity of economic motives in

Kabyle internal migration, underscoring the importance of these in shaping mobility patterns.

The significance of economic capital as a driver of migration is not unique to the Kabyle context. Parkins (2010), in her study on Jamaican migration, also found that limited local opportunities and socioeconomic stagnation are powerful motivators for outward mobility. Urbański (2022) broadens this analysis by situating economic deprivation such as poverty, unemployment, and low wages, within a wider matrix of social insecurity, immensely contributing to mobility in addition to social (discrimination and social insecurity) and political factors (corruptions, human rights abuse and political instability).

However, recent scholarship urges caution against overly deterministic interpretations. De Haas et al. (2019) argue that while economic inequalities are important because "What may appear as low salaries and poor working conditions from a destination-country perspective can represent a major gain in income, status, and well-being from an origin-country perspective" (p. 897). They suggest that economic inequalities are not sufficient conditions for understanding migration factors. In this sense, the decision to migrate is not only reactive but also projective, embedded in imagined futures of success and security (see above cases).

Among my participants, this aspirational logic is evident in the way they articulate their motivations. The UK, for instance, is often idealised as a space offering better living standards, stable employment, and sociopolitical security. These imaginaries function as symbolic resources that frame the host society as a site of opportunity and dignity—particularly in contrast to the perceived stagnation, precarity, or injustice at home. Economic capital, in this context, is not merely a resource to be gained but a metric of personal fulfilment and self-worth, tied to broader desires for autonomy, recognition, and stability.

Although economic motivations were central to most participants' decisions to migrate, Idir represents a notable exception. A man in his forties, Idir left Algeria primarily in search of safety and personal security. I first encountered him by chance at his workplace in Glasgow, where he had recently relocated after a brief and challenging stay in London. Initially intending to settle in London, after one month his plans changed due to difficulties securing employment. With the support of informal contacts, he was able to obtain a job aligned with his professional expertise in Scotland, despite lacking legal documentation at

the time. This shows the importance of networks and kinship as part of the meso-level factors of immigration (de Haas, 2011).

Idir's trajectory reflects the unpredictable and non-linear nature of some migratory journeys, which are often shaped by shifting opportunities, constraints, and personal networks rather than long-term planning. His sudden relocation, undertaken without his family, had a visible impact on his mental health and posed challenges to his adaptation, an issue I explore in more detail in the following Chapter. Nonetheless, his ability to reposition himself socially through connections with other Algerians, Muslims, and Kabyles suggests that ethnic and religious networks played a critical role in helping him navigate an unfamiliar social environment.

This case aligns with Berry and Hou's (2019) argument that individuals with multiple identities, national, ethnic, religious, and cultural, tend to report greater life satisfaction and psychological wellbeing. However, this does not necessarily translate into smoother acculturation processes. Drawing on Putnam's (2000) distinction between bonding and bridging social capital, one can observe that while Idir's bonding ties within his ethnic and religious communities provided crucial emotional and practical support, they may also risk reinforcing social closure. As Uslaner and Conley (2003) caution, strong intra-group ties can sometimes hinder broader social integration by limiting contact with members of the wider society. Conversely, bridging social capital, connections across ethnic or cultural lines, is more likely to foster intergroup trust and facilitate deeper integration, as highlighted by Marschall and Stolle (2004, cited in Marinucci & Riva, 2020).

Although, every immigration is difficult for the disconnecting immigrants from familiarity and sources of support in the home country (Suárez-Orozco, et al., 2002 cited in Schwartz, et al., 2006), other participants moved to Scotland mainly for work and better economic conditions. For example, Aylan, a man in his late forty's, decided to migrate to Europe in the 1990s with the help of a fellow Kabyle to escape the precarious conditions resulting from the civil war. This period had in fact known a significant increase of migration to Europe including to the United Kingdom (Collyer, 2008; Hamani, 2018) because the UK government granted refugee status to Algerians during that period. After less than a year in Europe, Aylan moved to London where he stayed ten years working in cafés and restaurants owned by other Algerians before coming to Scotland starting his own business partnering with Arris, another Kabyle man whose trajectory is almost similar. Consequently,

Aylan and Arris, saw in their immigration a possible investment plan to enhance their economic capital.

Similarly, Ahmad, Ziri's friend, had a similar story as he migrated to the UK unexpectedly because he was not sure to get a positive reply for his visa application. He spent ten years in London where he functioned as a waiter or kitchen assistant. He then found more opportunities in Scotland where he holds a position in his own expertise. Leaving one's country is therefore an adventure that is moulded by individuals' experiences once in the hosting country. As de Haas (2011) explains, immigrants expected to go where they can earn higher salaries. Chavez (1992) described immigration as "the immigrant dream" for better social and economic life or for satisfying a need for adventure (p. 29-33 cited in De Fina, 2003, p. 38). An adventure that sometimes never ends when the immigrant refuses the idea of a return. In the following, I introduce Mazigh who mainly migrated to the UK for economic reasons but also for permanent settlement.

5.4.1 Meeting Mazigh's Family

Mazigh, a Kabyle man in his late forties, lives in Scotland with his wife and two sons, aged four and six. He established his family after several years of residence in the UK. Initially, he arrived in Scotland to join his Scottish partner, but the relationship ended in divorce after six years. Reflecting on the separation, Mazigh attributed it to irreconcilable cultural differences, stating: *"When culture differs, it's not easy to be happy. One always beats the other. In terms of culture and way of life."* He spoke of the "*culture shock*" he experienced and emphasised the importance of *"lasel"* (origin), a value that he is committed to transmitting to his children. His narrative shows that certain British traditions are incompatible with the values upheld in Kabyle society. As a symbolic expression of this commitment, he gave his sons traditional Amazigh names and actively teaches them the Kabyle language. This intentional effort reflects broader patterns of cultural preservation within diasporic contexts, where ethnic identity is maintained and reproduced through everyday practices.

This case illustrates what Brah (1996) calls diasporic positionality, where the migrant negotiates belonging and identity across shifting cultural terrains. Mazigh's commitment to maintaining Kabyle language and values suggests that for some migrants, cultural integration does not necessarily entail assimilation but rather involves selective adaptation

and cultural preservation. His experience also reflects what Hall (1990) describes as the construction of identity through difference, whereby migrants rearticulate their sense of self in contrast to the host culture.

Moreover, his actions resonate with Anthias' (2002) notion of translocational positionality, where individuals draw upon multiple identity resources, ethnic, linguistic, and familial, to navigate life in multicultural contexts. Through naming practices and language transmission, Mazigh asserts symbolic boundaries and stakes a claim to cultural continuity despite geographical displacement.

Mazigh's decision to leave Kabylia was primarily driven by economic considerations. Despite his strong attachment to his cultural identity and homeland, Mazigh explained that the lack of stable employment opportunities, limited career prospects, and broader economic stagnation in the region compelled him to seek a more secure and prosperous future abroad especially after failure of being a long-term employee in the Sahara where international oil companies provide higher wages. His case reflects longstanding patterns of Kabyle emigration, where socioeconomic hardship intersects with a historical legacy of marginalisation (Hamani, 2018; Dirèche-Slimani, 2003). For Mazigh, migration was not simply an escape from poverty but a strategic move toward upward mobility and long-term stability. His trajectory supports de Haas's (2011) argument that migration is often both necessity, and aspiration-driven, shaped by individuals' assessments of their prospects within and beyond the national borders.

I came to know Mazigh through Ziri, who shared my contact details with him. Shortly after, Mazigh reached out by phone and expressed enthusiasm about participating in the research, particularly highlighting the importance of promoting and preserving *taqbaylit* (Kabyle language and culture). After an extended phone conversation, he invited me to arrange a meeting. He chose a location familiar and meaningful to him, a restaurant owned and staffed by Kabyle individuals, signalling both convenience and a strategic desire to support the research by facilitating introductions to other potential participants. He arrived at the meeting with his family, eager for me not only to meet the chef and waiter, Aksel and Massinissa, but also to reconnect with Ziri, whom he had not seen since the easing of COVID-19 restrictions.

During the visit, I had the opportunity to meet Mazigh's wife and children. While his wife remained in the car to watch over their sleeping youngest son, the older boy participated actively in the focus group, frequently interrupting in both English and Kabyle. Each time the child spoke, Mazigh responded in Kabyle, reinforcing the use of the heritage language. For example, when the boy said he wanted to go home, the father corrected him, prompting him to use the Kabyle term *"axxam."* On another occasion, when the child greeted Ziri in Arabic, Mazigh asked him to say *"azul"* instead, underscoring a deliberate effort to linguistically socialise his children into Kabyle identity. I wrote in my notebook the following:

> [the boy wants to go out. Father asks where he is going. The boy answers 'home' and the father corrects and tells him to say '*axxam*']
>
> [the boy enters again and says '*alkhir*' to Ziri and Aksel. The father asks him to tell him 'azul fellak'. The boy says *'azul'* to Ziri.

Sometimes, the boy mixes between the two languages and the father would sometimes correct him or just go on with the conversation by answering his son in Kabyle such as:

> Boy: *vghigh ad ruhagh ar car* (I want to go to the car)
> Mazigh: *ih arju* (ok wait)

These moments reflect what Schwartz et al. (2006) describe as the dynamic nature of identity formation, particularly in migration contexts where sociocultural environments are in flux. For Mazigh, parental responsibility extends beyond basic caregiving; it involves the active construction of cultural identity, often in response to fears of assimilation or cultural loss. The first thing he asked his son to say in Kabyle, *"inas nekk d aqbayli"* ("tell him I am a Kabyle"), highlights a strong attachment to ethnic identification and the symbolic value of language as both a communicative and identity-building tool. This emphasis also seeks to mitigate the risk of what Sayad (2004) calls *"double absence"*, wherein second-generation migrants become alienated from both their host society and their ancestral homeland.

Mazigh's concerns were further illustrated through a conversation about others in the diaspora. He spoke about a Kabyle acquaintance who failed to transmit the language to their children, viewing this as a form of cultural disconnection. In contrast, Ziri recounted the case of a cousin in an Arab country whose children spoke fluent Kabyle at home and

Arabic outside demonstrating that bilingual fluency and cultural duality are possible outcomes in certain contexts when intergenerational transmission is prioritised.

The modes of transmission Mazigh employs can be situated within the framework developed by Gong (2010) and Gong et al. (2010), who distinguish between horizontal, vertical, and oblique transmission. Vertical transmission, which involves communication between biological generations (e.g., parent to child), is clearly evident in Mazigh's home practices. Oblique transmission, intergenerational learning through non-related elders, occurs less frequently in the absence of structured cultural spaces, such as community centres or cultural associations. In Kabyle villages, such transmission typically takes place during communal events and gatherings (e.g., in the tajmaɛt), but among immigrants, these opportunities often depend on organised cultural life in the diaspora.

Gong et al. (2010) argue that intergenerational transmission (vertical and oblique) supports the preservation of linguistic and cultural knowledge, while horizontal transmission, peer-to-peer interaction, facilitates adaptation and change. In the diaspora, the lack of formal structures for oblique transmission places greater responsibility on families like Mazigh's to preserve linguistic identity within the household. Aware of the dominance of English in the host society, Mazigh adopts a clear linguistic strategy: only Kabyle is spoken inside the home. This conscious boundary-setting echoes Spolsky's (2004) concept of family language policy, where parents regulate linguistic input to achieve heritage language maintenance. Smith-Christmas (2016) argues that depending on the quantity of exposure and input, the children would be bi/multilingual. In fact, Lyon (1996) and Varro (1998) have found that when it is the mother who speaks the minority language, the children tend to be fluent in the languages of both parents (cited in Smith-Christmas, 2016) due to their input from the mother, the primary caregiver.

His efforts are also framed by the perceived absence of institutional support for Kabyle identity in Scotland. Family Language Policies, or control of external sociolinguistic factors, can help maintain the heritage language and identity (Makihara, 2005 cited in Smith-Christmas, 2016) and most importantly encourage the development of dual or multiple identities as Romanowski (2021) has shown in a study on Polish Diaspora in Australia. In our conversation, Mazigh expressed frustration about the lack of a Kabyle cultural organisation and saw this as a gap that parents must fill individually. Romanowski

(2021) reports that raising bi/multilingual children can be viewed as being linked to good parenting identity. This lack of community infrastructure even influenced his temporary relocation to France, where the Kabyle community is more organised and where language transmission, he believed, would be more easily facilitated. However, after an unfavourable experience, he returned to Scotland, which he now considers home.

During the focus group, all four adult participants reflected on the absence of cultural organisations in Scotland and expressed initial interest in establishing one. Both Mazigh and Ziri have prior experience in associative life, and their discussion pointed to the potential benefits of such structures for intergenerational engagement, language learning, and cultural events. These findings will be further developed in the following Chapters, where I explore the reasons behind the lack of institutional organisation among Kabyles in Scotland and consider the sociocultural and emotional value of imagined or emerging communal spaces.

5.4.2 Massyl: "Scotland is my second Kabylia"

My initial contact with Massyl took place via Messenger, where he preferred using the voice call feature. Like all participants in this study, I engaged him through open-ended questions designed to elicit personal narratives. However, a recurrent moment at the beginning of each meeting was the participants' interest in my own background, especially the question: *"Where are you from?"* While seemingly mundane, this question carried symbolic weight and often shaped how participants perceived me. Their assumptions about my language proficiency and cultural capital hinged on the place I named. For example, whenever I replied, "*I'm from the village of Si Muh Umhend*," I signalled not only my origin but also my *'Kabylité'*. Si Muh Umhend was a nineteenth century Kabyle poet known for the fact that he was errant / nomad, who never settled, as well as his spontaneous poems that he never wrote himself but rather memorised and later collected and written by others. This disclosure had an immediate impact on the rapport with Massyl, who is originally from Bouira, a region whose Kabyle identity is often questioned. In our exchange, he was relieved to learn about my origin, responding: "*I can assure you that we speak real Kabyle*." This interaction illuminates how language and regional stereotypes intersect in constructing in-group hierarchies and belonging. In their distinction between 'native speakers' and 'new speakers' of Galician, O'Rourke and Ramallo (2013) argue that native speakers have received immense scholarly attention for their use of "real" and "authentic" language and

therefore have linguistic authority and agency for the promotion and protection of the language in question and 'new speakers' efforts are devalued. Bucholtz (2003) affirms that authenticity is not given but rather constructed and demonstrated through the validation of one's own or others' identities as legitimate or trustworthy (Bucholtz, 2003 cited in O'Rourke and Ramallo, 2013). In Massyl's narrative, the historically imposed shame of the "village dweller" is reversed, as Kabyle authenticity is reclaimed and revalorised. I had this conversation with him when he asked:

> "*- Can you tell me Where from you are, please?*
> *- Tizi-Rached. The village of Si Muh Umhend.*
> *- Ok, welcome. I am from Tubirett (Bouira)*
> *- OK*
> *- I can tell that you are surprised.*
> *- Actually, yes because I do not know anyone from Bouira.*
> *- Many people tell me that they think that people from Bouira are Arabs and not many speak Kabyle. I can assure you that we speak real, pure Kabyle*."

This subtle but powerful moment also illustrates how identity is relational, context-dependent, and shaped by power dynamics within the social space (Bourdieu, 1989, 1991; Schwartz et al., 2006; Safa et al., 2025).

Massyl subtly challenged my researcher positionality by pointing out the absence of a Kabyle version of the participant information sheet and consent form. He remarked, "*Some people might not like that there is a French version but not a Kabyle one*."

- "*I can put you in contact with some people [in Scotland], but some might not like that there is a French version but not a Kabyle version.*
  I worked a lot in associative stuff in London and I know a lot of people but many of them might not like the idea and might no respond to you when you send them a English and French versions only.
- *Ok, so you mean I need to make a Kabyle version?*
- *Yes, exactly. It needs to be in Kabyle, in Tamazight*
- *Thanks for that but as I told you, the Tamazight lacks technical terms and that would take me time to do it, which I don't have*
- *You are wrong. It does have a lot. You can use them. Our language is rich, but we don't use it and we forget what it has*."

His use of collective pronouns, *'our'* and *'we'*, hit my researcher's position as someone who is committed to the promotion of the Kabyle language. This moment destabilised my assumed insider status and underscored the complex politics of representation within ethnographic fieldwork. While I explained that standard Kabyle lacks widely understood technical terms, particularly for academic concepts, this exchange

underscored the tension between linguistic ideology and practical limitations. For example, the term 'psychology' can only be expressed via the use of the French term '*psychologie*'. With most participants, interviews were conducted in Kabyle and for technical terms, I used definitions. For example, instead of using the word 'ethnography', I explained it as 'when you spend long periods of time with the people you study'. Despite efforts to render the study inclusive, the dominance of French and Arabic in formal literacy remains a challenge, especially given that standardised Tamazight, while institutionalised, is still largely taught as a foreign language in Algeria (Achab, 2001).

Massyl's migration trajectory fits within the broader push-pull framework of Kabyle emigration. As Hamani (2018) argues, Kabyles often emigrate in search of better salaries, social mobility, and a more dignified lifestyle while fleeing domestic socio-political instability. Like many other Kabyle migrants, he sought to improve his economic capital by pursuing opportunities abroad that were unavailable in Algeria. His migration to the UK, was driven by the hope of achieving financial stability, professional development, and a better standard of living as well as a safe place for political expression. This dual motivation, both ideological and economic, reflects what de Haas (2011) describes as the complex interplay of aspirations and capabilities in migration decisions, moving beyond simplistic push-pull binaries. As Koser (2010) also notes, economic migration is rarely a purely rational or linear process; it is embedded in broader life trajectories, social ties, and identity negotiations.

Yet, Massyl's case is further complicated by political affiliation. Unlike some participants who remained discreet, he openly identifies with the Kabyle independence movement and was active in community organisations such as '*Les Kabyles de Londres'* and '*Amazigh Aid UK'*, the latter of which he co-founded. His political activism reveals how migration enables the flourishing of suppressed identities and nationalist discourses that are often censored or marginalised in the homeland. For Massyl, enhancing his economic capital abroad did not mean abandoning his cultural and political identities; rather, it allowed him to reinvest in his community through initiatives like Amazigh Aid UK, thus transforming personal mobility into collective benefit.

What further distinguishes Massyl's experience is his articulation of Scotland as a symbolic extension of Kabylia. He spoke about Scotland as his "*second Kabylia*," echoing the transnational imaginary through which diaspora members map emotional and cultural

geographies across borders. His frequent travels to Scottish cities, especially in the Highlands, are facilitated by a dense web of social networks. He invoked the words of Matoub Lounes: "*Anida yella Uqvayli, ad tneqsed, ad at nsehdar*" [*Wherever a Kabyle is, we reach him and make him a witness*] to emphasise the moral imperative of diasporic solidarity. Such affective bonds are often maintained through shared cultural symbols, including the Berber identity T-shirt he wore, which once helped him identify and connect with isolated Kabyle immigrants in the Highlands.

His mention of a now-closed café, Café Rouge, as a discrete gathering space for these immigrants illustrates the fragile and shifting nature of diasporic social worlds. Although he withheld further details for reasons of confidentiality, this episode highlights how informal meeting points and cultural markers facilitate micro-communities of recognition and belonging. As explored in the next Chapter, music, memory, and political symbolism serve as affective tools through which migrants like Massyl reconstruct a sense of collective identity, resilience, and rootedness in foreign spaces.

The migration experiences of Aylan, Mazigh, and Massyl underscore the complex and multilayered nature of emigration, where economic capital acts as a significant but not singular driver. Their decisions to leave Kabylia were shaped not only by structural economic inequalities such as unemployment, precarious labour markets, and limited upward mobility but also by personal aspirations and socio-political constraints. While the UK offered favourable economic prospects and thus fulfilled the role of a "pull" destination, framing these cases solely through the classical push-pull paradigm (Mejía et al., 1979) inadequately captures the full spectrum of motivations at play. As de Haas (2011) and de Haas et al. (2019) argue, migration is better understood as an outcome of intersecting macro-, meso-, and micro-level dynamics, with individuals exercising agency within enabling or constraining structures. In this context, Massyl and Zayen's emigration was also politically motivated, as they sought refuge in environments where expressions of Amazigh identity and pro-Kabyle activism were not suppressed resonating with recent findings on the intersection of political exclusion and mobility (Carling & Talleraas, 2016; Ibrahim, 2023).

Moreover, Mazigh's trajectory illustrates how social capital, particularly kinship ties and diasporic networks, functioned as a critical meso-level facilitator of mobility, aligning with transnational theories that emphasize the role of connectivity in sustaining migration

flows (Levitt & Schiller, 2004; Ryan et al., 2015). The cases collectively reinforce the idea that migrants are not passive recipients of structural forces, but active navigators of opportunity and constraint within transnational social fields (Glick Schiller & Salazar, 2013). As Crawley and Skleparis (2018) contend, any meaningful analysis of migration must move beyond simplistic binaries, forced vs. voluntary, to engage with the lived realities and complex decision-making processes of migrants as Hamani (2021) found.

5.5 Negotiating Native-ness: The Second Generation

Three of my participants, Aris, Nelya and Dalil, do not fall under the category of first-generation immigrants, but rather belong to the second generation, having been born in Scotland. Similarly to the participant mentioned above, their parents, fathers in the case of Nelya and Aris, and both parents in the case of Dalil, migrated to Scotland in search for better opportunities. Their narratives reveal a dual sense of belonging, shaped by both their Scottish upbringing and their Kabyle heritage. While they are socially and linguistically integrated into Scottish society, they also maintain strong emotional and cultural ties to Kabylia, often expressed through family traditions and symbolic practices such as visiting Algeria or engaging in Amazigh activism. This bicultural identification aligns with findings in second-generation migration literature, which highlight the fluid and negotiated nature of identity among children of immigrants (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Crul & Schneider, 2010). Rather than experiencing a rigid cultural split, these participants demonstrate the dynamic identity formation process influenced by multiple cultural reference points. Below, I introduce Nelya for her active contribution to the study and her rich narratives that I could not get from the others due to withdrawal.

5.5.1 Nelya: “I identify with both Kabylia and Scotland”

Nelya, a woman in her late twenties born in Scotland to a Kabyle father and a Scottish mother, exemplifies a diasporic subject negotiating her dual heritage in a multicultural context. She is one of the few participants I identified independently through online searches. Typing terms such as “Kabyle” and “Amazigh” yielded no meaningful results in the Scottish context; however, when searching “Berbers in Scotland,” I encountered an article about a book launch centred on Berber folklore. The author, Nelya, had published a collection of Kabyle oral stories transmitted by her grandmother and translated into English with the help of her father. Despite not speaking Kabyle herself, she actively engages with

her cultural roots through literary and creative production. Upon contacting her, she agreed to participate in the study and suggested a meeting at a café where she and her father are regulars and friends with the manager, Mayas.

Prior to our meeting, I familiarised myself with her work, including her book, a short film, and articles about her and by her. Her creative portfolio foregrounds Kabyle identity, revealing a conscious curation of cultural memory and heritage. She expressed that having dual heritage allows her to "*take as much of it [Kabyle culture] as I want*," describing her identity as flexible, yet layered with responsibility. As she puts it:

> "*I think I am in a fortunate position where I can have a relationship with that culture [Kabyle] that's exactly what I want it to be. I can take as much of it as I want, and I can feel as much Scottish as I want. I think because I have the two cultures, it's a bit confusing but it's up to me how much I engage with it and I could just say I am just Scottish but that wouldn't be true. I think for me to say that I am Berber I need to know more and need to experience it more to actually justify that*."

Such reflexive engagement with identity resonates with Bhabha's (1994) concept of the "third space," where hybrid identities emerge not as diluted but as generative of new cultural expressions. Nelya's identity is therefore shaped by intersecting ties to place, culture, and social location rather than fixed ethnic categories.

Although Nelya and Aylan's son, Aris, do not speak Kabyle, they exhibit strong feelings of belonging through regular visits to Algeria and emotional attachment to familial ties. This transmission of identity, despite the absence of language, reflects a form of symbolic continuity (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004). Nelya acknowledged this gap in language as a source of frustration, revealing a sense of lost intimacy with her grandmother's stories and expressions when she said: "*I always had a bit of, not resentment, but kind of annoyance towards my dad for not teaching me when I was younger*". Nevertheless, both participants' familial acceptance buffered the experience of Sayad's (2004) "double absence," where individuals feel out of place both in the host and home countries.

Nelya's father left Kabylia in the 1980s amid the region's political and socio-economic repression, initially settling in Italy before moving to Scotland. His early migration trajectory, characterised by undocumented status and economic hardship, delayed his return visits to Algeria until his situation was regularised. Since then, annual family visits resumed, conducted mainly in French, except for the father who maintained his use of Kabyle. This linguistic shift within the household reflects broader diasporic patterns where

heritage languages become fragmented across generations (Fishman, 1991; O'Rourke, 2019).

Nelya articulated the dissonance she felt during her visits to Algeria, particularly in comparison with her female cousins' constrained lifestyles. Her reflections demonstrate the emotional labour of negotiating privilege and disconnection, common among second-generation migrants (King & Christou, 2011). One symbolic response to this perceived distance was her tattoo of the Tifinagh letter (ⵣ) on her forearm (see Figure 4). She described the tattoo as a way to reaffirm her connection with Kabylia, especially during the Covid-19 lockdowns that amplified feelings of isolation. As she explained:



"*I always wanted to have a tattoo simply because I wanted to, and I wanted something that I wouldn't regret. I wanted it to mean something that has to do with part of me. Then I just thought I wanted something that makes me feel more connected to Algeria. At the time, it was the first year of covid and the lockdown when I booked it. I felt so disconnected from Algeria during that time because I didn't know when would be the next time I could be there. I remember thinking 'no one is going to care if I had a tattoo, but they [her family in Algeria] will, so I might get something meaningful'*
It [the tattoo] kind of reminds me that regardless of my relationship with Kabylia, it is always part of me."

Figure 4: Nélya's tattoo

As I will explain in Chapter Six, symbolic acts such as tattoos, clothing, or even naming practices operate as embodied forms of diasporic identification and homemaking, particularly when physical return is limited (Brah, 1996; Fortier, 2000; Choluj, 2019). Nélya's connections to both her Scottish and Kabyle sides are strong, and she reflects them through her works. She informed me about and article she wrote about the Gorse flower and a second tattoo she was planning to have. The yellow spiky plant is common to Scotland and Tizi-Ouzou, a district in *Grande Kabylie*. In the latter, the noun 'Ouzou' refers to the Gorse and the whole name can be translated as 'the Gorse Valley'. Comparably to Massyl, Nelya mirrors Kabylia in Scotland and Scotland in Kabylia due to her dual identification. She said: "*for me that plant symbolises Scotland and Tizi-Ouzou in my mind. It is my favourite in*

Scotland and whenever I am in Tizi-Ouzou I see it as well. So, it is like a connection between the two places." For her, the plant becomes a living metaphor linking her dual geographies. In the following Chapter, I will also discuss the symbolic power of plants among immigrants in reconstructing a sense of self and a feeling of home.

Nelya's narrative illustrates how diasporic identities are not merely inherited but are continually (re)constructed through selective engagement, emotional resonance, and symbolic practices. Her story underscores the agency of second-generation individuals in shaping their transnational affiliations in the absence of formal community structures or institutional support.

5.6 Amjaḥ: Lost in Immigration

Following successive waves of migration, aphorisms such as *ulac win ur nesɛi ara aqrib deg Fransa* ("everyone has a relative in France") or *ruḥen uk medden ɣer Fransa* ("everybody went to France") have become widespread in Kabylia., The word 'Fransa' (France) is still being used by mothers, grandmothers and war survivors to refer to living in a foreign country. They generally use it as a synonym of the term 'L*ɣurba'* meaning immigration or life in a western country as the term stems from the word (غرب) meaning 'west'. Having a husband or son living abroad whether for work or to pursue studies has always been seen as a life achievement that procures certain pride because as Soehl and Waldinger (2010) argue, immigration, in a richer country, provides access to resources for immigrants to support their loved ones back home. However, a certain type of immigration provokes remorse feelings and contrition among wives, mothers and other family members, particularly in the past before the normalisation of 'leaving one's family'. It is that of *Amjaḥ,* a subaltern figure of immigration.

Amjaḥ, that relocated villager who ceased all connections with *tamurt,* denotes a "depreciated image of the immigrant in Kabylia" (Adli, 2012, p. 27). The notion of *Amjaḥ* appeared as a result of labour migration. Most husbands and sons who worked in France, generally living according to the communitarian lifestyle of the society of origin, sent the impatiently awaited *lmanda* (money order). These labour migrants concentrated in a number of towns of the French capital creating close and bonded communities. Along with *lmanda, they also sent tavratt* (letter) as a reassurance for their wives but also to communicate their stances regarding land inheritance matters or serious issues within the family or with another family of the village. Sending letters across borders was not unique

to Kabyle migration but common to other immigrants. On Immigrant communities in the US, Waldinger (2015) writes that “millions of letters crossed the Atlantic to be read, sometimes by the individual recipients, sometimes by one of the literate villagers … and the envelop didn’t contain news only: looking inside, one found cash” (p. 2). The *tavratt* was later replaced by the tape (Sayad, 2004) invoking even deeper connections with homeland and stay-at-homes by hearing their voices. Waldinger (2015) contends that yesterday, the letter bridged the distance between the ’here and there’ and today, cross border communication is instantaneous. Blanchard (2018) explains that bonds that two immigrants developed in France can crumble and even turn into honour enmity because their two kids back home fought for non-serious things. This demonstrates the capacity of the tavratt and tape to connect immigrants with the ones left behind. It is also generally these kinds of futilities that a*mjaḥ* tries to escape.

A*mjaḥ* is the immigrant lost in exile (Sayad, 1979) that adopted a lifestyle that is incompatible with the society of origin (Blanchard, 2018). This chosen exile is predominantly the corollary of internal struggles driven by social obligations such as honour. For Kabyle people, A*mjaḥ (*plural *imjaḥen)* is the person bewitched by France through life pleasures it had to offer; “women, games and alcohol” (Chachoua, 2018, p. 51). These persons bring disgrace and humiliation to their families because they are seen as “people who failed” and who violated the regulations of the “cyclic return” (Adli, 2012, p. 28). They terminated all ties with home and adopted a French life generally starting a family with French women and living separated from other Kabyles.

After years of voluntary displacement, some of the *imjaḥen* return back to their country where they experience complicated re-integration and re-assimilation. Though they are welcomed, and their reappearance celebrated, they find it difficult to fulfil the husband or father positions again. Their return, in Kable traditions, is believed to be the result of a ritual called *‘asiwel*’ (the call). Women climb the highest summit in the area and invoke spirits and saints. From up there, or from the top of a tree, they call the lost immigrants by their names and start talking to them, as on a phone conversation, and ask them to come back. This ritual, as observed by Chachoua (2018), has been replaced by silent longer prayers following Islamic teachings. Religious beliefs along with developing technologies contributed to the slow evaporation of the term. Moreover, “emigration is no

longer a wrongdoing, but rather a desired fate" (Chachoua, 2018, p. 54) that parents support and fund.

For many years, the notion of A*mjaḥ* is linked to Kabyle migration to France. However, though no academic papers mention it, there exist similar cases in other countries where Kabyles have settled. Among my participants, none view themselves as *imjaḥen,* but some have met Kabyles who they qualified as lost immigrants. Massyl revealed to me two cases that he met himself in the Scottish Highlands. I did not have the opportunity to meet them because Massyl judged that disclosing their details was unethical and that he could not go against their desire to live away from others and break their trust. After all, A*mjaḥ* is the "marginal", the "deviant", the "individualist" (Sayad, 1997, 2004). Massyl later admitted to me that he himself did not have any of their contact details and that he came across these cases randomly when he was on a road trip because of his T-shirt with a visible Berber symbol. This piece of clothing allowed him to be approached by Kabyles whether in the capital or in the most secluded places of the UK. Expressing one's identity through materiality and symbolism will be a topic in the following discussion Chapters.

Both people are married to Scottish women and have been living in the UK for over 30 years. At least two or three years are needed for one to be considered as A*mjaḥ* by his/ her family, to make sure it is not a 'boutade' or joke but rather a deliberate auto-disappearance (Chachoua, 2018 and 2019). Immigrants who live in the host country for a long time are more inclined to give up on the idea of return (Reagan and Olsen, 2000; Morano-Foadi, 2005). Marriage and starting a new family are two of the factors that blur out the immigrant's return (Jensen and Pedersen, 2007 cited in Senyuerekli & Menjivar 2012, p. 5). The 'double ménage' has long been a haunting thought for Kabyle women.

Houcine and Said are both sexagenarians and live in the far North parts of Scotland. When Massyl unpremeditatedly met Said, the latter invited him, and his road trip companions to his place where he owns a farm. Massyl told me that Said lives the 'British way', and no one would tell he is an immigrant originating from a Muslim country. His social and cultural capitals have changed throughout the years constructing another self that is unbound to all previous social stigma and norms. They certainly adapted and adopted the culture of the host country favouring it over theirs. It could be said that their minds have been trained within Scotland's culture for years, leading them to acquire a more Scottish habitus. Attitudes like intergroup relations and lifestyle preferences are some of the

behavioural changes that occur during acculturation on the individual level (Berry, 1992).. From the perspective of other Kabyles, these cases may resemble what Berry (1992) terms marginalisation, a state of psychological withdrawal from the original culture, although the absence of direct interviews makes it difficult to determine how Houcine and Said themselves understand their identities and social affiliations.This confirms Schwartz, et al., (2006) and Berry and Hou (2018) claims that acculturation and immigrant identities are intertwined as both bring changes in each other.

My efforts to know more about these two cases from Massyl were fruitless and as meeting them was not a convenience, I remain unaware of the rational intentions behind their voluntary exile and what kind of connections Houcine and Said have with homeland, if any at all. The reasons of *jiḥ* (the act of disappearing in immigration) during labour migration to France are not similar and do not apply to I*mjaḥen* of other immigrations and the definition of the term has evolved. With the ample expansion of the Internet, lost immigrants can maintain virtual connections with individuals of the same ethnic group including family. They can also send remittances, material or financial. However, *Amjaḥ* remains that person self-inflicting exile. Though the term Amjah is specific to Kabyle language, the notion is not a distinctive social feature of Kabyle immigration in France.

At the same time, the figure of Amjaḥ can be interpreted differently. While relatives and co-ethnics may perceive these individuals as having become detached from their culture of origin, their trajectories may also reflect a deliberate pursuit of autonomy and distance from social obligations associated with homeland communities. Rather than simply being “lost” in immigration, some may have reconfigured their attachments and developed alternative forms of belonging centred on the host society. This further illustrates the diversity of migration trajectories and the limitations of reducing them to a single explanatory framework.The lost immigrants inspired several songs, and to the present day by male and female artists who either experienced the auto-disappearance themselves or through their life partners, husbands. Slimane Azem, whose immigrant’s sufferings were deepened by “the curse of exile” (Bedrani, 2024, p. 252), is certainly the most influential of all the artists of immigration. In a number of his songs like ‘*A Muh, a Muh*’ (1951), he reveals the difficult dilemmas of return that the *Amjaḥ* faces. Bedrani (2024) equals life in exile to hell in which *Amjaḥ* permanently carries the thought of return and being dearly awaited but hesitates to take the decision. This song, along with others by

the same author, has been played two times in an event that I attended for the celebration of *Yennayer* 2972 (2022 on the Gregorian calendar). This suggests an important impact of immigration on my participants (see following Chapters). Artists like Akli Yahiaten or Bahia Farah, featuring Slimane Azem, also tackle the notion of *Amjaḥ* in *'Jaḥaɣ bezzaf d amezyan'* (young, I got lost in immigration) and '*aṭas ay sebraɣ'* (I waited for a long time) respectively (Adli, 2012). One out of the modern composers and singers, Noria, released a song entitled '*Amjaḥ'* in 2023 in which she speaks out for women whose husbands flew and carried off by games and French women leaving their families in precarious conditions.

5.7 Conclusion

From voluntary migration with aspirations of return to exile and auto-disappearance in the country of immigration, the uprooting of oneself is motivated by diverse and often intersecting factors that produce unique migratory trajectories and significant personal, economic and sociopolitical transformations. In other words, mobility disrupts continuity and contributes to the emergence of new and hybrid identities. While push and pull factors as introduced by Mejia et al. (1979) provide a useful framework for understanding some of the structural conditions that shape migration, the participants' narratives demonstrate that migration decisions cannot be reduced to a single explanatory model. Consistent with Hamani's (2018, 2021) findings, Kabyle immigration to the UK is partly rooted in sociopolitical conditions in Algeria, particularly the Berber Spring and the Black Decade..

The participants' narratives also reveal that as it is the case with a significant number of world migrations, Kabyle migration is caused by the desire to enhance one's economic condition as it was the case historically since 1871 when Kabyles fled Kabylia due to land dispossession that caused poverty (Stora, 2018 cited in Harzoune, 2023). This factor one that is common to all the participants regardless of their migration trajectories. Moreover, while only forced migration is unplanned, and voluntary migration is usually well thought about, some of the participants' immigration to Scotland was unexpected but seized the opportunity as they saw in migration a source of better education, better life opportunities and a place of professional and personal development. In short, people migrate to have a better life (Sonn, 2002 cited in Navarette and Huerta, 2006a).

About the participants' immigration experiences in Scotland, none of them reported any negative aspects apart from the felt disconnection from home and limited interaction with members of their ethnic community that would help them to fully position themselves

as Kabyles in Scotland. Their positive, and at times idealised, perceptions of the UK and Scotland contributed to processes of acculturation and facilitated engagement with the local cultural environment (Berry, 1992). As I will explain in the following Chapters, Kabyles articulate their *Kabylité* through a number of strategies such as building a cultural organisation (Belabbas, 2025) and build new hybrid transnational identities or resurface other identities. For example, I observed that identification with larger groups such as Algerians or North Africans seemed to fill the gap caused by dislocation. Moreover, I witnessed their identities changes as the context they interacted with changed and built chronotopic identities (De Fina and Blommaert, 2015). Finally, my participants' accounts show that their experiences, as an ethnic minority in Scotland, are positive as none of them reported situations of marginalisation. This consolidates the claims of Devine and McCarthy (2018), McColum et al. (2014), Hepburn and Rosie (2014) and Westfall (2022) that the Scottish cultural environment has positive attitudes towards immigrants who are welcomed as 'New Scots' giving visibility to ethnic groups. Such claims manifest within the Scottish society such as the heroic acts of social resistance in 2022 events in the Pollockshields area of Glasgow when immigration forces wanted to remove two migrants, but the whole area united against the home officers and freeing the two men detained in their van.

As the first analytical chapter of this thesis, Chapter 5 examined the immigration trajectories of Kabyle migrants in Scotland and the diverse circumstances that shaped their mobility. By tracing participants' migratory journeys, the chapter demonstrated how migration decisions emerge through the intersection of historical, political, economic and personal factors, producing distinct experiences of settlement and belonging. It also showed that migration is not simply a movement across geographical space but a process through which identities, aspirations and social relationships are renegotiated. These findings provide the foundation for the following chapters, which explore in greater detail how Kabyle migrants construct belonging, maintain connections with homeland and negotiate their identities within Scotland's multicultural social landscape.

Chapter Six:

Kabylia in Scotland: Rebuilding a Feeling of Home beyond Homeland

"Home is an idea: an inner geography where the ache to belong finally quits, where there is no sense of 'otherness,' where there is, at last, a community" (Zandy, 1990, p. 1 as cited in Blunt and Bowling, 2006, p. 50)

"Importantly, migrants' home reproduction does not entail only gaining access to a dwelling place. It also requires some cultural and emotional retention of past, home and homeland, through everyday mundane practices such as the use of the native language, the ways of eating or dressing, and sociability and consumption at large (Hage, 1997)". (Boccagni, 2017, p. 52)

6.1 Introduction

There is no doubt that immigration results in the loss of connections with familiarity and continuity and a disruption in the sense of the self in an alien social space. This new space can develop into a home or a second home to immigrants who develop emotional attachments to it over time. Home in its contemporary definitions means things beyond being physically present in one's dwelling. In fact, home encompasses both tangible and intangible elements that are the foundations of one's life. Kim and Smets (2020) agree that individuals "take physical, emotional and psychological rest at home" (p. 609) and express who they are freely and safely, build up memories and affections to things and people around them. In short, home "is where one best knows oneself" (Rapport and Dowson, 1998, p. 9). It is a place and an emotional state where individuals experience security, familiarity and control (Boccagni, 2017).

Studies on immigrant communities suggest that home is both sedentary and mobile and not fixed to a single location (Ralph and Staeheli, 2011; Boccagni, 2017; Kim and Smets, 2020). In his influential work, Miller (2001) argues that home is a feeling and an imaginary that migrants build through memories and emotions. Blunt and Dowling (2006) conceptualise home as both a "physical location and a set of feelings" (p. 254) and the relation between these. Of course, as Ralph and Staeheli (2011) specify, such a conceptualisation of home also applies to people who did not cross borders. In this vein, Kreuzer et al., (2018) and Gao et al, (2021) argue that home is a complex multidimensional concept incorporating four dimensions: 1) physical such as the house, landscapes and region, 2) social such as the relationships with others in a particular location, 3) individual such as developed emotions towards the place, and 4) temporal such as past memories or future plans (Kreuzer, et al. (2018). Based on such claims, I will argue that home as a feeling and imaginary is (re)constructed through different views and practices as far as the Kabyle community in Scotland is concerned. It is through these emotional attachments, memories and everyday practices that migrants recreate a sense of home while negotiating belonging within the Scottish social landscape.

Building on the discussion of migration trajectories in Chapter 5, this chapter examines how participants develop a sense of home and belonging in Scotland. Rather than revisiting the reasons for migration, the analysis focuses on how Scotland comes to be emotionally meaningful through participants' perceptions of the host society and through

everyday practices of home-making. It argues that memories of Kabylia, affective attachments and nostalgic engagements with language, food, music and material culture enable migrants to recreate familiarity and continuity in a new social environment. The chapter also explores how these processes shape identity reconstruction and facilitate participants' sense of belonging within Scotland while maintaining enduring attachments to their homeland.

6.2 Why Scotland?

Regardless of the reasons for their movement, immigrants develop certain closeness with the place of their residence throughout their stay and sometimes higher levels of trust with political and public institutions (Roder and Muhlau, 2012). Often, affinities emerge and evolved once in the new space but sometimes people create them along with the mental image they have on that particular country. For example, Mayas, a male business manager in his mid-thirties, idealised Scotland after hearing about it from UK friends. His sentimental bonds grew stronger during his short visits and once he settled describing it as 'home'. As I will also show in the next sections, all participants in this study referred to a certain closeness and attachment to Scotland, Scottish people and the Celtic culture in their narratives.

As explained in the Introduction Chapter, Massyl's Facebook post "*Scotland is my second Kabylia*" reshaped my original research objectives by introducing the question of "why Scotland?" during the interviews in order to explore how everyone built up a relationship with the country and the local people. Their narratives demonstrated a strong level of attachment to Scotland particularly on the social, political, ethnic, linguistic and environmental panoramic levels. Portes et al. (2002) have shown that immigrants who developed strong attachments to the host country tend to participate in transnational engagements such as sending remittances as confirmed in Kushnirovich (2021, p. 398) revealing a positive association between good rapport with the host country helps immigrants maintaining transnational ties.

The affective relationships towards the place of residence help define the concept of home, which in turn sustains identity and a sense of belonging (Chaudhury and Rowles, 2005 in Gao, et al., 2021). Such relationships are driven by several factors such as the transcultural mingling efforts of the immigrants (Kreuzer, et al., 2018), family and kinship in the new space, resemblances between the home country and the country of residence, etc.

The feeling of home alleviates the detachment responses caused by the displacement. For example, new Algerian immigrants arriving to France do not experience uprooting effects to a high degree due to the large community and the presence of kinship and familyhood as well as the linguistic proximity with the French people. The hundred and thirty-two years of colonisation followed by years of linguistic imperialism with French as a mandatory subject in primary, middle and high schools left an impact in Algerians. Therefore, completing higher education or a language degree is not essential for people immigrating to France. I met a group of young Algerians during a short stay in Metropolitan France and none of them had reached high school. Their use of the language was extremely limited due to the voluminous Arab-speaking population they were daily interacting with. However, the population studied in this project had built a sense of home and attachments to Scotland notwithstanding the difficulties with the linguistic landscape, the small number of Algerians in Scotland and the worldwide pervasive coronavirus, during which this project started. Gao et al. (2021) argue that "home can be everywhere and anywhere so long as these feelings and kinships are maintained, although some societal changes or events such as the digital revolution or the current COVID-19 pandemic might provide some limitations to this statement." (p. 3).

The feeling of home not only helps in the process of acculturation and assimilation, but it also provides feelings of security and comfort (Cloutier-Fisher & Harvey, 2009). Cultural organizations immensely contribute to ensuring these sentiments to immigrants particularly during hardships through connections (see the following Chapter). In summer 2021, my participants and I, as well as other Kabyles around the world, went through an emotionally challenging period when a series of giant wildfires destroyed over 90 000 hectares between July and August of that year. In France and Canada, different organisations worked together to provide material support to Kabylia such as the economic contributions of *Tiwizi,* a Kabyle association based in Le Mans in France (Harzoune, 2023). Due to high numbers of Kabyles in these two countries, mental support had also been provided to help reduce the potential effects of isolation.

In Scotland, Kabyles relied predominantly on social media platforms to find support and overcome the distress caused. Aylan, a business owner living in Scotland for over twenty years, narrated to me how his fear and anxiety escalated whenever he checked his Facebook to monitor the spread of the wildfires. This same online platform also connected

him with his loved ones in Algeria and in other parts of the world when social isolation had been put into place as a governmental strategy to cope with Covid-19. Social media have been proven to alleviate social isolation faced by people of different generations “caused by real-life conditions, such as transnational relocations and pandemic lockdowns” (Li and Huong, 2024, p. 3) particularly among young adults (Cauberghe et al., 2021). This demonstrates the multidimensional aspect of the notion of home, i.e. it goes beyond physicality and materiality. In other words, home is also where family is (Gao, et al., 2021) in person or online, where one feels safe and welcomed, where smells are familiar and most importantly, home is a place and an imaginary (Blunt and Dowling, 2006) towards which an individual develops attachments, be it a physical or virtual space.

Participants were at different stages of settlement in Scotland, resulting in differing levels of social, cultural and symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1989). While their migration trajectories varied, as discussed in Chapter 5, their narratives converged around the gradual development of emotional attachments to Scotland. Length of residence, family formation and participation in local social life all appeared to strengthen participants' sense of belonging. Reeskens and Wright (2014) argue that immigrants who spent more time in the host country are more likely to develop patriotism towards it. On the one hand, some had higher education qualifications, important professions, large circles of friends and family while on the other hand, others barely spoke English, were jobless and had little or no kindship at all.

As seen in the previous Chapter, all immigration trajectories started with the desire to better one’s conditions in the country of origin. The overwhelming majority of the informants decided to move from Algeria to improve their living standards particularly through earning higher wages so as to be able to send a percentage of that as remittances (Lacroix, 2016) whether for altruistic or self-interest motives (Kushnirovich, 2021). All of my interlocutors currently hold diverse employment positions, including full-time, part-time, and self-employed roles.

Among the participants, five initially emigrated to pursue higher education in the UK, Canada, or Norway. These individuals later settled in Scotland, where they are now established professionals. In contrast, three participants left Algeria due to political constraints and lack of freedom of expression. Idir, a male in his early forties, fled the country and sought asylum in the UK after receiving death threats for his outspoken secular

and pro-autonomy views. As he put it, "*Tamurt [Algeria] gave us nothing*," underscoring the political disillusionment felt by many secular Kabyle activists (Bourouba, 2023; Silverstein, 2022). Yet as I observed, despite these convictions, Idir later softened his public views to assimilate more easily into his social surroundings in Scotland, demonstrating the mutable and negotiated nature of political identity in exile (Salih, 2020).

While each immigration story is unique, a number of participants were also driven by emotional or social motivations such as reuniting with loved ones. Both Mayas and Massyl, for example, initially came to Scotland to visit friends or partners but eventually settled due to the deep personal and cultural affinity they developed with the country. These emotional attachments and perceived cultural similarities between Kabylia and Scotland, particularly in terms of linguistic diversity, cultural pride, and values of community resilience, played a crucial role in smoothing the transition. Indeed, several participants described feeling an immediate connection to Scottish cultural norms, which they interpreted as being compatible with their own values and way of life.

The Scottish context appears to have met, and even exceeded, the expectations of many Kabyle immigrants. This alignment of values and lifestyle facilitated a relatively smooth adaptation process in terms of spatial, linguistic, and cultural integration. As Cantle (2022) argues, shared values between minority and host cultures can contribute significantly to a sense of belonging and reduce experiences of marginalisation. For Kabyle immigrants, the Scottish multicultural context offered not only a haven from political repression but also a fertile ground for rebuilding lives and identities in ways that retain links to homeland while forging meaningful attachments to the host society. Kabyle migrants appear to have not simply settled in Scotland; they reinterpreted Scotland through memories, values and cultural understandings derived from Kabylia, allowing them to transform it into a meaningful home.

6.3 Kabylia in Scotland: Recreating a Sense of Home

Kabylia, this overpopulated region, had been the first research arena for Pierre Bourdieu who reimagined his own village in Béarn in the light of Kabylia in his research on peasants' life with his research companion Abdelmalek Sayad. Bourdieu described the Kabyle people and culture as both "exotic and familiar" and identified himself as a Kabylo-Béarnais (Yacine, 2005 cited in Mead, 2017, p. 1). Geoffrey Mead explains Bourdieu's affectionate

connections between Béarn and Kabylia through what is referred to as 'practical Mediterraneanism' by Michael Herzfeld (2005), a stereotypical ideology holding the claim that Mediterranean societies holding common distinctive cultural features which is "intended to summon a pan-Mediterranean cultural unity." (Mead, 2017, p. 2). It has been concluded that Bourdieu's continuous Kabylia-Béarn cross referencing is a deliberate way of shifting colonial ties between the coloniser and the colonised to cultural ones.

Scotland may not be close to the Mediterranean region and yet in the eyes and hearts of my participants, it is closer to Kabylia and Kabyles than one can imagine. Participants actively interpret Scotland through memories of Kabylia. They recognise themselves in the reflection and analogies they see in the other (Mead, 2017). In a way, Scottish is the alter ego of Kabyle as it is shown in the participants' accounts or as one of the participants humorously commented: "*the Scottish people are the Kabyles of the UK*" or "*they (the Scottish people) are like us*" by another participant. This has been said when we were discussing the likeness of the two ethnic groups particularly in terms of political and cultural activism. Kabyles' self-perception in Scotland is therefore based on their views on and analogies they make with Scottish people. While reviewing the coded data of what my participants told me about their experiences in Scotland and particularly during their trips to the Highlands where mountains dominate the landscape, I could visualise their juxtapositions. From the data, the Scottish Highlander, as known historically, i.e., sturdy, ferocious man defending his freedom and culture, could be a replica of the *Amsedrar* in Kabylia, the mountain dweller whose way of life maintained an old ancestral almost pre-Islamic identity and language (see Chapter 5). Such comparisons underscore how spatial and cultural imaginaries can travel across borders, producing new affective cartographies of belonging.

For reference, it is known that Scottish Gaelic is more present in the Highlands and Islands that constituted its refuge as predicted by Jackson (1958) and currently play an immense role in keeping it alive. The Scottish Gaelic, although holding the status of the national language, is only spoken by 1.1% of the population in spite of early efforts of revival since 1970s (McLeod, 2021) keeping it in a weak position, proving people's low interest despite the fact that it is considered a symbolic icon of nationhood and patriotism for many. Similarly, Kabyle, though more widely spoken than Gaelic, is most strongly maintained in rural and mountainous areas, where there are less linguistic and cultural frictions and dominance and where people favour the ancestral language that they maintain (Issaadi,

2014). Issaadi also demonstrated the linguistic tensions between rural and urban Kabyle with the majority of his informants showing that 'good' and 'real' Kabyle is spoken in the villages. To a certain degree, his findings echo O'Rourke and Ramallo's (2013) when they found that new speakers' ways of speaking Galician are devalued due to their failure to comply with the authentic values of Galician.

The analogies drawn by Kabyle migrants between Kabylia and Scotland do more than express superficial cultural similarities; they construct a symbolic bridge that allows migrants to recreate a sense of home through shared histories of struggle, marginality, and cultural pride. This demonstrates how diasporic belonging is not simply a matter of adaptation to the host society, but of recognising oneself in the other, projecting memory, identity, and place across transnational landscapes.

Home feeling or simply 'home' is an idea that has been studied extensively among Diasporic communities around the world including Rapport and Dowson (1998), Hecht (2001), Miller (2001), Blunt and Dowling (2006), Burrell (2008a, 2008b), (Boccagni (2017), Kreuzer et al. (2018), Choluj (2019), Gao et al. (2021) to name but a few. The scholarly tradition tends to place considerable attention on the process of home (re)creation (Clarke, 2001) amidst refugees and asylum seekers in studies like Fadlalla's (2011) or Van Liempt and Staring (2023). However, echoing Blunt and Dowling's (2006) claims, I argue that home as a sense of belonging is also central to temporary workers as well as short term and undocumented residents. Living in a place that feels like 'home' is indeed important "to immigrants' adaptation processes." (Kreuzer, et al., 2018, p. 334) after their idea and feelings of home had been disrupted by their movement. Rebuilding a sense of home in the host country alleviates the conflictual tensions that arise from acculturation, 'acculturative stressors' to use Berry's (1997) words, and their desire to preserve their own culture. A place where self-expression is possible is therefore a home or a second home.

The literature around migration and home (re)making is divided when it comes to putting words on the concept of 'home'. Initially, scholars concentrated on the material characteristics of the home such as the house itself following pivotal works of Pierre Bourdieu (1972) on the Kabyle house, foods, objects, decorations or symbols. Eventually, other aspects of home had been given attention such as the everyday practices, rituals, religious rituals, emotional attachments of immigrants and even parenting and childbearing (Choluj, 2019). The scholastic community came to agree that home is a fluid multi-

dimensional concept that combines the physical and the emotional "including not only a tangible environment ... but also personal, social, and emotional" (Blunt & Dowling, 2006; Massey, 2005 cited in Gao et al., 2021, p. 3).

This study contributes to this literature by showing how Kabyle migrants in Scotland actively construct a sense of home that transcends the material domain. Participants engage in what Clarke (2001) refers to as processes of "(re)homing", a continual negotiation of attachment and identity in the context of movement. Material artefacts such as jewellery, Kabyle dress and *abernus (a handmade long sleeveless wool coat with a hood)*, flags, and food (e.g., various types of couscous) function as emotional anchors, sustaining ties with the homeland while symbolically marking cultural continuity in the diaspora. These practices mirror the claims by Kreuzer et al. (2018) and Gao et al. (2021) who argue that home is physical, emotional, social and personal.

However, home is not recreated solely through symbolic and material continuities with Kabylia. Participants also describe strong affective bonds with the Scottish landscape and people, frequently drawing parallels between Kabyle Mountain life and the Scottish Highlands. This relational attachment echoes Reeskens and Wright's (2014) findings that social interaction with native populations can enhance immigrants' emotional integration and positively influence employment outcomes. One participant, Mayas, encapsulated this affective resonance when he described Scotland as "*amzun d tamurt"* (it feels like home), suggesting that embodied and sensorial experiences, landscape, interpersonal kindness, cultural affinity, can contribute powerfully to a migrant's sense of emplacement.

To the question, 'why Scotland?', the participants offered diverse narratives rooted in personal trajectories. Yet an overarching pattern emerged: Scotland resonates with Kabyle identity on symbolic and experiential levels, and more. This convergence, particularly noted by long-term migrants, helps explain why many have come to see Scotland not as a mere host country, but as a second Kabylia, one shaped not just by external resemblance but by internalised affinities.

6.4 Kabyles and the Mountains

In his auto-ethnographic study about the Kurdish community in London, Ata (2022) asserted that creating a home-like space bestows successful integration and acculturation, essentially for newcomers. The author further claims that "a Kurd's home ends where the

mountains end." (2022, p. 18). Is this the case for Kabyle people? It is clear from the data that this assertion does not apply to the Kabyle community in Scotland albeit their strong connections to the Kabyle mountains that saw them grow up and that were central in developing their personal and collective identities (Benzenine, 2012 and Boukrami 2018) perhaps because they found in Scotland a certain familiarity. The participants' narratives suggest that the reconstruction of home extends beyond geographical proximity, emerging instead through emotional attachments, memories and embodied experiences of place.

Historically, the Kabyle people settled on top of the mountains and built their villages in a specific design to maximise protection from the different invaders (see Chapter Three). The mountainous terrain shaped and protected Kabyle identity through time and contributed to their reputation as fiercely dependent and culturally distinct (Lorcin, 1995). For Kabyles, the mountains are "symbols of the preservation of an ancient, indomitable, free and independent way of life" (Lazreg, 1983, p. 389). The majority of the participants taking part in this study are originally from villages they have left at different times of their lives. The Scottish Highlands and scenery were a point of reference when they discussed their different home regions. Belabbas (2020) argues that such environmental familiarity in host societies can generate feelings of security, nostalgia, and emotional rootedness, feelings that were echoed repeatedly by participants.

On a hillwalking trip, Ziri, an academic in a Scottish university from a village in Petite Kabylie, sent me different pictures and videos from his favourite place in a coastal region of the west of Scotland. He argued that the place positively affects his mental wellbeing, and the scenery not only reminds him of home, but it also brings back memories of the times he used to spend with his friends in Kabylia camping.

The temporal dimension of home in Immigrants' experiences is characterised by "recalling beloved memories" (Kreuzer, et al., 2018, p. 337). In the first video, Ziri said "'*Aqlin tedduɣ s adrar*" [*I'm heading to the mountain*] followed with a gentle laugh. In the next video he sent me as he progressed in the hike, he said "*aqlin tedduɣ ɣer Uẓru N ṭhur* " [*I am heading to Aẓru N ṭhur*] while laughing gently. *Aẓru N ṭhur,* literally the rock of the second Muslim prayer, is a rock mountain trail used by hikers, but its notoriety comes from the idea that it is sacred (Lasheb, 2015). It is also known to be a place where the women climb to practice the '*asiwel*', the call ritual asking the mountain gods to bring back Aɣrib (the immigrant) home. Ziri's mention of this place points to Kabyles attachment to their

mountains and the sacred spaces (Codur,2017). Rather than merely recalling a geographical location, Ziri reconstructs a landscape of memory in which Scotland becomes meaningful through continuous references to Kabylia.



Figure 5: Ziri's village surroundings

Ziri later shared images from a return trip to his home village, further evidencing how the visual and emotional resonances of mountainous spaces function as transnational emotional linkages (see Figure 5). As Blunt and Dowling (2006) suggest, home is not only the past remembered, but also the present lived. It is the place where affect, routine, and spatial belonging coalesce—a concept also echoed in Gorman-Murray (2006), who shows how everyday spatial practices contribute to emotional geographies of home. Ziri's narratives support this: for him, both Scotland and Kabylia feel like home, because each includes mountains, visual, emotional, and symbolic representations of identity and belonging. In other terms, home is also in the 'here' and 'now' or as the aphorism goes, 'home is where the heart is'.

The term *Adrar* (mountain) and references to the scenery are two recurrent themes in the participants' narratives. Consistent with the broader narratives discussed in the previous section, participants repeatedly invoked mountains as the most powerful symbolic link between Scotland and Kabylia. Ziri confirmed this in his narratives but added "Kabylia is very beautiful. Scotland is also beautiful but *á l'écossaise* (the Scottish way)". Gilroy (1993) and Clifford (1997) explain that immigrants' lives are interpreted in terms of 'roots' and 'routes' (cited in Blunt and Dowling, 2006), an ongoing balancing act between homeland attachments and hostland affinities while also indicating that the immigrant would always separate between the country of origin and the place of immigration. Lie (1995) states that "it is no longer assumed that immigrants make a sharp break from their homelands" (p. 304 cited in Cakmak, 2021); instead, diasporic lives are lived through overlapping temporalities and spaces.

The mountains are rooted in Kabyle's cultural heritage and historical identity (Lacoste-Dujardin, 2005) and this deep connection is present in arts and music. A number of Kabyle artists sang about *Adrar* (mountain) and *Taqvaylit* (*Kabylité*) such as Idir, Matoub Lounes, Akli Yahyathen or in different chants by *Urar N Lxalat* (a choir of women in every village). A choir of one village released a song as a poignant tribute to the victims of the 2021 wildfires. The long melody starts: "*sliɣ i udrar yuyes*" (I heard the mountain despairing) and ends: "*sliɣ i udrar yefṛaḥ, ṭṭejṛa tegred imɣi*" (I heard the mountain is happy, the trees resprouted). Musically, mountains and landscapes are an inspiration to Kabyle artists (Bedrani, 2024). Byrd (2015) argues that musical practices help Latino immigrants in the United States create communities where they feel at home whether they are musicians or part of the audience. Among my participants, Dan, an artist in his early fifties, expresses his reminiscence and homesickness through his art. In the cultural event where I met him, Dan shared some of his unpublished poems that had 'home' and 'immigration' as common themes. In some of his poems, he talks about emigration as the only way out of his childhood precarity while expressing his attachment to *Adrar*. Byrd (2015) and Bedrani (2024) also contend that music in the Diaspora rhymes with political expressions as Dirèche-Slimani (1997) and later Sayad (2004) described it.

To summarise, Kabyle immigrants in Scotland reconstruct home through both nostalgic recollection and active emotional re-engagement with their surroundings (Kreuzer, et al., 2018) by nostalgically summoning back joyful positive memories or regrettable disheartening pains. Therefore, longing for the past is not simply a backward gaze but a mechanism of re-grounding in the present. Physical objects reinstate "turbulent experiences which are consciously hidden away and 'forgotten'." (Burrell, 2008, p. 66). Through memories, landscapes, objects, and affective ties, participants rebuild a feeling of home that is simultaneously local and transnational. Moreover, home as a feeling is rebuilt by virtue of the emotional connections developed towards Scottish culture and landscapes that signify home (Blunt and Dowling, 2006). Mountains seem to be the element that connects Kabyle immigrants to their 'imaginary' homeland. More than a physical landscape, the mountain emerges as an affective and symbolic bridge through which participants connect Scotland with memories of Kabylia. It is through this emotional geography that Scotland comes to feel like home without replacing the homeland itself.

6.5 Landscape and Biodiversity

Kabylia is known to be an agrarian region where the population was predominantly peasants. In his early ethnography in Algeria, Bourdieu showed his proximity and self-positioning to this 'peasant-ness' in his Kabyle-Bearn connections (Reed-Danahay, 2004). Therefore, there has been, and there is still in some area, solid farming traditions in Kabylia's villages where most of the participants in this study are from. From olive harvesting and olive oil making, cattle raising to foraging and making foods from wild plants, my participants experienced Kabyle 'peasant-ness' at a certain time of their existence. Once abroad, the sight of a familiar plant reminds them of home. One day in the Spring of 2022, Ziri, an academic with a well rooted Kabyle-ness, suggested to meet and go on a day trip. He suggested an outing to Stirling, a small city in Central Scotland around 26 miles Northeast of Glasgow. Having been to Stirling on a few occasions, I decided to take him to the National Wallace Monument, a famous tower that commemorates Sir William Wallace, a 13th century Scottish freedom knight best known for leading Scots to victory at the Battle of Stirling Bridge in 1297 against the English army. On our walk towards the monument, Ziri told me the different Kabyle names of the plants he pointed to while comparing them to Kabylia's. He also tasted and smelled the leaves and berries (hawthorn berries for example) and narrated to me how some of them are used to treat certain health conditions. Tastes and smells, of foods and the atmosphere, revive the sense of belonging in immigrants through longings (Hecht, 2001; Morgan, 2005; Sandu, 2013; Dinmohamed, 2023).

In Massa's accounts, her statement "*here, I pay more attention to plants*" indicates that plants seem to be one of the triggers for recalling home and home feeling (Blunt and Dowling, 2006). She compared Scotland to the country where she had been living for years and described the vegetal landscape as exotic in: "*Here I pay attention to the plants. We have the same ones in tamurt while in [country] everything is exotic. Everything is new*". Massa also sent me pictures of the plants that she could recognise and that she knew exist in Kabylia such as dandelion, three-cornered leek, and milk thistle. That was her way to feel home i.e., through familiarity around her. Later, she also shared pictures of her garden where she tries to grow vegetables that she is familiar with like peas, broad beans, cardoons and *Tayeddiwt*. Brook (2003) argues that migrants engage in the creation and adaptation of gardens and other spaces to maintain symbolic links with their homelands and to negotiate new senses of place in their countries of settlement (cited in Head et al. 2018).

Similar thoughts have been shown in Tafat's narrative, a young academic and student, as well as in Dan's poems with heavy reference to Kabyle life. In one of his poems that he called '*the dream of the immigrant'* that he recited in the Yennayer event in Birmingham, Dan talks about his nostalgic dreams in which he sees himself as a child, his parents, birds, olive trees, women harvesting olives and the landscape. Morgan (2005) demonstrated that plants, in her participants' gardens, have the ability to remind immigrants of the home they grew up in and help them forge a new sense of self (Wen Li, et al., 2010), such as most material objects like pictures and books (Kreuzer, et al., 2018).

Interestingly, plants' abilities to cause a feeling of home also applies to the second generation of immigrants on their visits to Kabylia. Nelya, a Scottish born young female with a deep sense of belonging, told me in the following fragment how happy she felt when she knew that the Gorse flower, her favourite, could be found all over the Kabyle region as shown in Figure 6:



Figure 6: Gorse flower found in Scotland and in Kabylia

N: "So …the piece [article she wrote] is about a second tattoo that I was about to get. Do you know the Gorse flower? It is found in Scotland. It's like yellow with spikes. I'll show you a photo. It is the flower in the name Tizi-Ouzou. [biggest city in Grande Kabylie].

H: Oh yes, I know that.

N: In Scotland, there is the same type of flower. [pause]

So, I wrote a piece because I have a tattoo planned on my arm and I wrote a piece about. For me that plant symbolises Scotland and Tizi-Ouzou in my mind. It is my favourite in Scotland and whenever I am in Tizi-Ouzou I see it as well. So, it is like a connection between the two places."

Nelya's account supports her 'double belonging' (Salih, 2002) that she had built through her homeland visits as a child as opposed to 'double absence' (Sayad, 2004). Because Nelya is from Tizi-Ouzou, literally translated as the valley of Gorse, this plant is a manifestation of her connection to her father's hometown as was the case for Morgan's (2005) participants with the Cuban sugar cane, the guavas and the banana trees that reminded them of their countries.

The distinctive natural landscape of Kabylia is therefore a signature of the *Kabylité.* Similar images of this landscape provoke Kabyle people's identity and a thought of their home. Blunt and Dowling (2006) explain that particular landscapes and climates signify home, particularly to homesick migrants. Massa, Ziri's wife and academic, told me during the interview that unlike the country where she had been living for years, which she described as a "*a big country with small history [that] does not have a spirit as Scotland",* in Scotland, her home-ness feeling is more apparent due to a geographic and cultural proximity according to her. She later added explaining that "w*hen I walk here [in Scotland], small streets and doors remind me of tamurt. It's a nice thing. Even the climate, when the sun shines, I tell myself that it's same as tamurt. When I see and smell smoke, that reminds me of village life. Even the people".* Later, Ziri sent me some pictures of the "*small streets and doors*" that Massa mentioned. The characteristic of the streets that reminded them of home is the stone-built walls as shown in Figures 7 and 8 that are also a feature of traditional Kabyle houses. This is another similarity that helps Kabyles in Scotland to reconstruct a certain sense of home through past memories encouraged by the present context of residence.

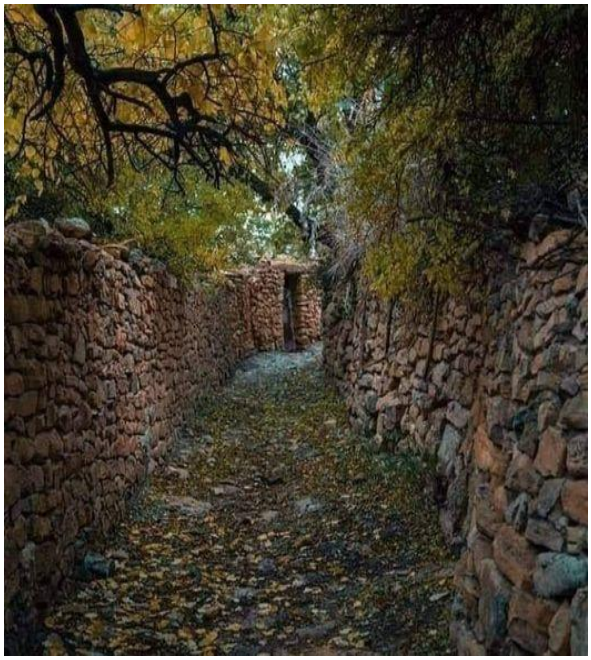


Figure 7: A Kabyle village lane



Figure 8: A lane in a Scottish town sent by Ziri

One day, Ziri and Massa invited me to join them for an afternoon hike in their area. Massa's mother who arrived in Scotland in the previous weeks was also part of the hike. Throughout the trail, the mother and daughter walked together while sharing with me their

habits back home. For example, the mother picked a bouquet of Bracken Fern, the most common fern in the UK, and the daughter told me that her mother used to pick the same plant in Kabylia and consumes it a as a medicinal tea. As proven by Blunt and Dowling (2006), Gao et al. (2021) and Liu and Gallois (2022), plants enhance a sense of belonging and a cultural continuity.

At a certain point of the hike, both the mother and daughter exclaimed of the landscape and said repeatedly, *"ad as tiniḍ d tamurt"* [it's like tamurt] and mention places in their homeland they have been to. Here, the mother's practices in Scotland cause the recalling of home memories in the immigrant daughter's mind making her feel at home with the physical presence of the mother that signifies comfort. This reflects Maurice Halbwachs' (1992) conception of memories as "active selections and reconstructions in the present" (Heise, 2024, p. 7) that are shared with other individuals in the social space where they are manifested. The reimagining of home and homeland in the host country simulates a return because as Vardanyan (2016) argues, "Diasporans always return" whether be it a physical, virtual or imaginary return (p. 76).

In summary, the natural environment of a host country can act as a catalyst for the evocation of nostalgic memories and emotions linked to a sense of security from one's past helping in the reconstruction of home. Consequently, Kabyles residing in Scotland seek to reconstruct their sense of home through familiar elements within their new space. The ability of place to "speak back" to migrants through sensory triggers reinforces Scotland as a lived archive of memory and an affective "second Kabylia."

6.6 The Scot, the Kabyle's Alter Ego?

Participants frequently interpreted Scottish society through comparisons with Kabylia. Rather than viewing Scotland solely as a destination of migration, they recognised in Scottish history, language and culture experiences that resonated with their own. These perceived affinities contributed to the reconstruction of home by enabling participants to identify with the host society without relinquishing their Kabyle identity. Portes and Rumbaut (2014) explain that immigrants adapt to and negotiate their identities in comparison to the local population, contributing to their sense of home. A home that is both a physical site and an "imaginary that is imbued with feelings" (Blunt and Dowling,

2006, p. 2). In my participants eyes, the local population of Scotland resembles the Kabyles in several aspects: ethnolinguistic, social, political and cultural.

6.6.1 Ethnolinguistic Affinities

A clear review of the literature around the linguistic landscape of Scotland proves that the number of Scottish Gaelic speakers, a Celtic language similar to Irish, has been undergoing a process of language shift since medieval Scotland (Nance and Moran, 2022). At the present moment, statistics are approaching 57 000 speakers according to the Scottish Government in a 2022 census claiming that numbers stabilised between 2001 and 2011 with 60 000 speakers. Nance (2021); Nance et al. (2016) and O'Rourke (2015) agree that language revitalisation policies and strategies have been put into place for restoring the vitality of this language whether through education and mass media sensibilisation. Despite grassroots activism and some degree of government intervention through policy interventions, figures remain low. However, awareness is widely spread across Scotland where "Gaelic clearly has a significant national resonance" (McLeod, 2020, p. 3 as cited in Nance, 2021, p. 622) despite the Scottish National Party's (SNP) limited focus on this minority tongue.

Politically and culturally, Scottish Gaelic is the national language of Scotland and not a heritage or regional language. McLeod (2021) stresses that "negative or dismissive attitudes towards Gaelic are so deeply ingrained in Scotland" (p. 4) to the point that researchers gave it almost no attention. He also explains that the local population uses English in communicative everyday practices "sometimes through active choice, sometimes through acquiescence to changing community norms, sometimes perhaps almost unconsciously" (p. 332) leading numbers of speakers to keep falling regardless of its presence in media and governmental institutions. O'Rourke (2015) agrees on the modest numerical growth of Gaelic but also acknowledges its increasingly significant symbolic and cultural presence, particularly among new urban speakers.

In Mediterranean Africa, there exists linguistic dominance of Arabic over the Berber languages as it is the case in different countries where diglossia is a phenomenon, a situation where two historically distant forms of languages co-exist and where one occupies the High position, used mainly in religion, education and institutions while the other holds the Low position that is used in everyday life communication spaces such as the home and workplace (Fishman, 1967). As stated in Chapter 3, the Kabyle, a dialect of Berber, is a

minority language on the verge of endangerment (Berriane and Ben Rabah, 2015) due to political and cultural oppressions after independence although the UNESCO Atlas of Languages (2022) considers it as 'no longer vulnerable' with an 'institutional' vitality, sustained by institutions beyond the home and community, according to Ethnologue (2023). The participants of this study showed awareness of the sociopolitical condition of their language on which they claimed their nativity and assessed it in accordance with Scottish Gaelic.

Mazigh, a father of two with a strong desire to transmit Kabyle values to his children, explained to me: "*as you know, we are looking to preserve our culture language and identity. It is the same thing for them [the Scottish people]. They also want this and are even asking for independence*". Here, Mazigh's statement reflects his awareness of the minority status of Kabyle and implicitly showing support to the Scottish independence movement, a movement which has historical roots and that gained formal political organisation since the establishment of the SNP. During an informal discussion over a dinner, Massa, an academic with a passion for history, and Yanni, the last participant recruited, narrated to me their felt closeness to Celtic people and their sympathy to Scottish people who according to them "*they have been oppressed by the English for a long time and therefore they tend to affirm their identity and who they are*". These accounts are two examples of the ethnolinguistic affinities that the participants developed towards the Scottish people creating a feeling of home (Portes and Rumbaut, 2014). Participants therefore interpreted Scottish and Kabyle experiences through a common narrative of linguistic marginalisation, cultural resilience and identity maintenance. These perceived parallels fostered a sense of familiarity that contributed to their emotional attachment to Scotland and reinforced the idea of Scotland as a place where Kabylité could continue to be expressed rather than abandoned.

6.6.2 Social Affinities

Scotland is home to a number of immigrant communities from different origins representing over seven percent of the overall population, particularly since 1945 (Devine and McCarthy, 2018). Although no figures exist, the Kabyle community is part of the 12.9% of population with a minority ethnic background according to the Scottish 2022 census. These communities create social ties with other communities based on shared aspects such as religion, ethnic origin, or the part of the world they are from. Herdagdelen et al. (2016) distinguished four types of ties that immigrants develop in the receiving country enhancing

assimilation and the feeling of home. First, 'migrant in-group ties' refer to the connections between members of a given community. Second, 'transnational ties' are any links that immigrants keep with their country of origin. Third, 'migrant inter-group ties' are when immigrants develop connections with people of different communities sharing a characteristic, for example, people from Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco and Egypt may identify all as North Africans or Berbers. Fourth, 'migrant-local ties' refer to the relationships between immigrants and local populations. This study's informants developed all the above-mentioned ties and are discussed throughout the analysis Chapters. In this Chapter, the focus is on the fourth type that falls into what Putnam (2000) refers to as 'Bridging Social Capital' as opposed to 'Bonding Social Capital', the relationship one has with in-group members and works to deepen them.

Immigrants developing social networks in the host country with different communities, including the majority group, boost their social capital, to borrow Bourdieu's term (1989), and facilitate their assimilation and sociocultural adaptation after the immigration process broke it (Kushnirovich, 2021). When I met Massa, a female academic, for the first time and asked her about her experience in Scotland after less than a year of settlement, she told me:

> *"These [the Scots] are different. ayhoo!!! [surprised]. They are very warm and have our spontaneity. They gesticulate as us. Sometimes they don't hide their emotions. In [a North American country where she lived for years] culture, you should not show you are angry or have pain and need to keep emotions to yourself. Here, Scottish people get angry during meetings. Just like us. It reminds me of us. Also, here there is still social behaviour left. They like helping others. They come to me and ask if I need any help. In [country], no. They would never get closer to you if you don't ask for help. If you do ask, they would say of you "he is not autonomous". They have what they call 'ma bulle' (my bubble). It's my space and no one is allowed inside. Scots ask if I needed anything every day. That's how they are. Just like us, we like to help and don't have any issue with that."*

Massa constructs Scottish sociability through repeated comparisons with Kabyle social norms ("just like us"), positioning Scottish society as culturally familiar rather than foreign. Her narrative therefore transforms what might ordinarily be perceived as cultural difference into a source of emotional proximity. Massa's experience is similar to other participants who reported the easiness of their settlement in Scotland and their attachment to their fostering country, particularly in Mayas' narrative, a young business manager who moved to Scotland after years in London. These findings contradict the social integration theory proposed by van Tubergen (2007), which posits that the longer an immigrant resides

in the host country, the greater the likelihood of developing attachment to it and the greater their acculturation (Reeskens and Wright, 2014). In fact, feelings of familiarity and belonging are developed almost immediately after arriving to the host country. I wrote in my fieldnotes the following:

> *"One of the answers Mayas gave when I asked him about his reasons of moving to Scotland. He said: [Amzun d Tamurt] "Here, it is like Tamurt. Scottish people are like Kabyle people, they are chatty and nice and care for others. They chat with you in the street, on the train. The bus driver waits for you when you are a bit late and have to wave to him."* He later added *"you won't find this in London."*

In her study about Mexican migrants in the US, Anna DeFina (2003) explained that when immigrants share their stories, they generate new meanings, shape and share images of themselves and others, and offer interpretations of the migration experience and their roles within it. The phrases "just like us" "*amzun d tamurt*" and "Scottish people are like Kabyle people" in Massa's, and Mayas' narratives show how immigrants (re)identify themselves in relation to the local people in the host country. In this respect, Zimmerman (1998) considers identity as "as a means of referring to and making inferences about self and other" (1998, p.87) notably among immigrants. Both subjects mentioned above compared their own ethnic group to the Scots and compared these to people of their previous places of residence. I therefore argue that the higher the 'Bridging Social Capital' (Putnam, 2000), the better immigration experiences. While maintaining closed ties with people sharing the same national background and faith provides a feeling of comfort, these encapsulated social capitals cause hostile attitudes of the local people towards immigrants such is the case of Muslims in Britain (Phillips, 2008 in Ralph and Staeheli, 2011). As Sarup (1994) argues, the view of others on us is a reflection of our own views of ourselves.

On the social affinities towards the Scotland's image by immigrants, Ahmad, an engineer in his late thirties, told me and Ziri in one of the group interviews that "*the Scottish people are the Kabyles of the UK*". Here, Ahmad refers to "*openness and acceptance of others*" and secularism as well as the ethnic pride these people have. This is supported by Lydie and Ziri when he said: "*Scottish people are very simple, and they would not look down at you.*" Belabbas (2020) proves in her study that the Kabyle society, particularly in the Diaspora, separate themselves from religion and self-identify as secular. Ahmad also referred to the socio-political history of the two groups and their activism.

6.6.3 Political Affinities

Kabylia and its people is known in the literature, particularly French history books, as the epicentre of Berberism. Also referred to as *Amazighism,* a political movement that demanded ethnic recognition of Berber identity and manifested against Arabo-Islamic policies (see Chapter 2). Sheel (2009) writes that Kabyles in the villages are known for "their lack of religiosity, or rather of 'religious fanaticism', their love of freedom, their settled way of life, their materialism and egalitarianism." (p. 3-4). Most of the people participating in this research expressed their openness and acceptance of others regardless of their religion or ethnicity. Ahmad said that because of this, the Kabyles "*can easily integrate to other cultures*" and echoing Khellil's (1991) ideas on Maghrebi people integration to French culture and agreed in Sayad (1994). This section examines how participants interpret Scottish political culture through their own experiences of Kabyle political mobilisation and how these perceived similarities contributed to their sense of belonging.

As discussed in Chapter 2, Kabyle political movements (the FFS and the RCD) have long centred on demands for linguistic recognition, cultural rights and, for some groups, political autonomy (MAK). Harris (2018) argues that the Kabyle independentist movement was "focused on identity, recognition and visibility." (p. 184). Several participants interpreted Scottish debates surrounding devolution and independence through this historical experience, seeing parallels between the two contexts despite their obvious political differences.

Mhenni, the founder of the MAK, and his newly created provisional government created in exile in 2010, GPK (Provisional Kabyle Government), are advocates of other populations' independence movements such as Catalonia and Scotland. They participated in different marches and pro-independence marches of Scotland in Edinburgh and Glasgow.



Figure 9: Scottish Independence march in Edinburgh September 2021

Kabyle and Scottish independentists marched together using the same slogan 'Scotland and Kabylia Under One Banner' (Siwel, 2019). In September 2021, a few of my participants took part in an independence rally in

Edinburgh and posted photos of them holding the MAK flag and the Scottish flag (see Figure 9). As I was unaware of it until that day, I followed and observed their progression on a live streaming on the Facebook page '*Siwel: Agence Kabyle d'Information'*, the official social media page of the MAK. The event received a good amount of support from Kabyle people, particularly from France, in the comments section. The protest was an opportunity for them to initiate contacts and connections with other Kabyles that travelled to Scotland for the same reasons. The MAK proponents developed the tradition of supporting other independence movements such as the Catalan independence movement. In September 2017 for example, both the Scots and the Kabyles marched together in Glasgow as a solidarity to the Catalan referendum (Siwel, 2017). For his ethnographic study on Tamazgha from a geopolitical perspective, Harris (2018) have immersed himself in the practices of the Kabyle independentists in Paris who accepted him and issued him a Kabyle ID card.

The independence movement was not a topic that I deliberately wanted to discuss with my participants because I knew that it is a strongly sensitive topic. Additionally, prior to the start of data collection, the Algerian ministry of defence classified the MAK as a terrorist organisation. Therefore, my participants, as well as other protagonists, had to conceal their adhesion and their political affiliation. Regardless of the trust-based relationships I developed with them, they viewed my research as a possible exposure. However, some of them opened up and they brought up similarities with Scottish movements. On the degree of activism, Ziri said ""*they also have a rebellious part just like ours*" and added "*harcawit*" [they are coarse]. Here, Ziri refers to the historical past of the Scottish people and their resistance towards certain imposed policies as well as the current beliefs of some of the population. For example, I met a person at the International Conversation Corner at the Wellington Church, that I joined during my first months in Glasgow to help develop my competence in English (see Chapter 2). The person said to me that they voted 'Yes' for Scotland independence in the 2014 referendum and voted 'No' in the 2016 Brexit. This person divulged to me that they have and will always identify as Scottish and compared themselves to me saying: "*you wouldn't necessarily identify as Arab because you are from Algeria*" reminding me that I told them I was Berber.

According to the *Siwel,* the official website of the MAK, an official "Scottish-Kabylian Friendship" organisation is one of their future projects to expand and fortify the cultural partnership of the two people. Massyl and Zayen openly promoted this friendship arguing

that "*Scottish people have good relations with Kabylia*" and that "*independence will help in the preservation of the Kabyle identity and language*". This shows how they feel accepted in the host country which feeds their sense of home. A place where one's cultural and political assumptions are mirrored is a place that mirrors home. Home is therefore a place where one feels free to express their political identity. De Haas (2007) argues that strong immigrants' attachments to the host country may replace their attachment to their country of origin and reduce their engagements in transnational activities (cited in Kushnirovich, 2021). For these participants, Scotland was valued not because it reproduced Kabylia politically, but because it provided a democratic space in which Kabyle political identities could be expressed openly. In this sense, political affinity contributed to home-making by enabling participants to experience recognition rather than suppression. Scotland therefore became not simply a place of residence but a place where aspects of Kabylité could be publicly affirmed.

6.6.4 Cultural Affinities

The demands of Kabyles post-independence were mostly focused on claiming recognition of the Tamazight language as an official language, a vehicle of their rich culture (Lacoste-Dujardin, 2006). Some of the early scholars working on North Africa described the Berber culture as distinct from the other inhabitants and Kabyles were viewed as "community possessing its own variant sub-culture within the broader ethnic ... category of Berbers" (Roberts, 1982, p. 321). On the cultural level again, my participants consciously and unconsciously compared their habiti and their cultural capitals to that of the host country from the initial days of their immigration. The similarities they narrated to me brought up a feeling of familiarity and security that help them reconstruct or reimagine home in the new space.

In addition to the ethnolinguistic, social and political affinities, Kabyles in Scotland developed emotional ties with the local culture. On the material aspect of culture, Ziri and Zayen mentioned the Scottish bagpipes as homologous to the Kabyle *lɣiḍa,* an instrument made of goat skin with a blow stick and a few drones. Hearing the bagpipes brings back beloved memories helping them keep "their experience of home alive" (Kreuzer et al., p. 337). Having grown up in a village that's active in terms of cultural expression, I join Ziri and Zayen's claims as the sound emitted by a bagpipe reminds me of the loud melodies played during cultural events and that could be heard from the neighbouring villages. Zayen and

Ziri also made allusions to music, thinking that certain types of Berber music are resemblant to Scotland's. They gave me the example of Sidi Bemol and the group 'Mugar' as musicians who make Kabylo-Celtic music. In their CDs, like 'Scottish Mezwed' (2005), eleven musicians mix between highland bagpipes, tin-whistles, low-whistles with Amazigh *lɣiḍa, zorna, t'bel* and *bendir*, a Kabyle frame drum.

On the intangible aspect of culture, Massa and Nelya invoked the traditional tales and stories. On a trip to the Scottish Highlands, Massa, a cultural activist for many years, bought a book about the Scottish tales that she believed Kabyle people tell and that sparked her curiosity. After I showed my astonishment, she said: "*yes, exactly the same with tiny insignificant differences. I would really like to investigate that and try to know if the stories came from tamurt to here or went from here to tamurt.*" She also explained that the tales she read reminded her of her childhood when her mother used to tell her stories before bed. Additionally, her interest in exploring the similarities further suggests that affinities have been developed and a significant degree of acculturation (Berry, 1997). Boccagni (2017) explains that over time, immigrants' acculturation affects their experience of home and their identity because as Ralph and Staeheli (2011) argue, "one's identity is 'at home'" (p. 524). On this matter, Massa showed me a picture of her during her wedding ceremony in Scotland wearing a white Kabyle dress with a long cape. She was standing next to the cameraman wearing a traditional Scottish kilt and who suggested to her to take the picture together after she told him about the Kabyle people having distinctive clothing and expressed her disappointment in that her husband could not get the traditional Kabyle men's clothes for the ceremony.

6.7 (Re)creating Home through Materiality and Symbolism

Home is certainly conceptualised beyond the house and homeland for immigrant communities. Following movement and displacement, searching for home is important for individuals' self-expression and feeling of safety. Blunt and Dowling (2006) define the sense of home as the relationship between individuals and their space. The home feeling is achieved through a number of ways in transnational contexts. Home is a "multilayered, interactive and productive process" (Wiles, 2007, p. 123). For example, as it will be discussed below, immigrants rebuild certain physical aspects of their home in homeland in

their new place of residence by including material objects with attached emotional relationship and that symbolise home.

6.7.1 Objects and Artefacts

In her study about the Kabyle community in England, Belabbas (2020) showed that immigrants negotiate their Kabyle-ness and maintain transnational ties through material objects. Economically, the insufficient agricultural revenue of the mountains pushed Kabyles to improvise and make additional incomes from craftsmanship (Lacoste-Dujardin, 2006) such as pottery and jewellery making. Over the decades, Kabylia is known for the handmade artefacts to which its people developed strong attachment, particularly people in the diaspora who use material objects to recall the past and to reduce the symbolic emotional distance from home. Although not all of them, my participants have different physical possessions reminding them of home that they brought themselves the first time they travelled or during their visits to Algeria. Some of these belongings were also brought to them by friends, sent by family, or bought online.

Blunt and Dowling (2006) insisted that home is both material and imaginative. In other words, a home is what surrounds us and our emotions towards the surroundings. Hecht (2001) demonstrated that immigrants' sense of home is strongly linked to surrounding oneself with cherished possessions. As it is the tradition with Kabyle immigrants, my participants brought material objects with them as "*rriḥa n tmurt*" [a smell of tamurt] to remember home. Interestingly, this is more common among the female participants. For example, all the females brought Kabyle dresses and jewellery with them and occasionally wear them whether for events or nights out. Hage (1997) points out that, in addition to getting access to a house, home also necessitates the cultural and emotional preservation of one's past as well as different modes of eating and dressing (cited in Boccagni, 2017). After two years in Scotland, Tafat visited Algeria for the first time after the pandemic and when I asked her what she brought she said:

> *T: I brought some Kabyle dresses and jewellery.*
> *H: Did you have the opportunity to wear them here?*
> *T: Not yet because it's too cold. Now I got one with longer sleeves. I will go to the Highlands and wear it [laughing]. It's important to me.*

Through her Kabyle dresses, Tafat wants to give visibility to her *Kabylité* in Scotland. Bourdieu and Nice (2010) argue that cosmetic, clothing styles and home decorations serve

as opportunities to engage with or assert one's position within social space (cited in Belabbas, 2025). Additionally, the fact that she chose the Scottish Highlands shows her association between the Kabyle identity and the mountains. The landscape and the clothing style here function as means of building a sense of home and identity articulation.

On the side of the male participants, only Mazigh, a father of two, mentioned to me that he brought a Burnous, the traditional Kabyle male clothe. However, compared to Tafat, Mazigh did not show interest in showcasing this part of his identity. A reason behind this could be a feeling of shame that would result from the judgements of other people or the fact that the multicultural aspect of Glasgow would not give it visibility.

> *M: I have my Burnous at home.*
> *H: You don't wear it?*
> *M: I don't come here often. Very busy with work and the kids. I do wear it at home. I can't wear it outside where I live as people would ask about it and what that means. But here in Glasgow I can wear it, and I know no one would say anything.*

Mazigh's desire to conceal Kabyle material identity in public places could also be linked to the Kabyle myth. As I will discuss in the next Chapter, slight Arab-Kabyle distinction could exist among Algerian community in Scotland. Additionally, I myself packed a traditional handmade Kabyle jacket that resembles a Burnous that I wear occasionally to some events or if I am invited by the participants. Still, clothes are one of the material objects that help immigrant's self-expression as well as home remembering.

Moreover, the Berber flag containing the letter (ⵣ) is another object Kabyles easily pack and towards which they are emotionally attached. The flag was present in the Birmingham *Yennayer* event that I attended but not in the 'International Couscous Day' or other events organised by more generally themed organisations such as North African Community in Edinburgh. The Berber flag was also present along with the flag used by the MAK during the various independence marches in Edinburgh and Glasgow. Aylan, a business owner, narrated to me his pride and astonishment when his Scotland-born son brought a Berber flag with a Berber sign from a trip to the USA. At first, Aylan was worried about the flag as he told me "*Thankfully he did not buy the flag of Ferhat*" [the flag of the MAK movement]. In Aylan's narrative, a material object can signify potential threats and danger and/or painful memories. Hecht (2001) explains that objects "bind our past with

our present and our possible futures, thereby framing and reflecting our sense of self." (2001, p. 123).

6.7.2 Food: A Taste of Home

If objects play a role in rebuilding the sense of home among immigrant communities, food, as a material culture, is associated with "smells of one's natal home and more generally the 'taste' of one's homeland" (Miller, 2001, p. 9). Because food can be perceived through a range of senses, it evokes "home as a sensory totality" (Petridou, 2001, p. 89). Additionally, food making as a social practice contributes to the creation and maintenance of social and family ties through a sense of 'togetherness' (Choluj, 2019). A number of my participants brought different products in their luggage as a 'smell of home' to occasionally cook Kabyle dishes for themselves and the people in their surroundings. In homemaking practices, immigrants "use specific products domestically to materialize their belonging (Walsh, 2006 in Kreuzer et al. 2018, p. 336). Items such as dry couscous, dry figs, dry meat, dry herbs, Kabyle traditional bread, pure honey and particularly olive oil seem to be on top of the list. Khellil (1991) observed that these products maintain immigrants' relationship with their homeland in his study on Maghrebi in France. Belabbas (2025) also writes that "Food, particularly couscous and olive oil, is by far some of the most indispensable elements in the Kabyles' everyday cooking practices and social performative occasions." (p. 15) as it is ingrained in their ancestral culture. Couscous with olive oil is present in every important event whether in local or migratory settings.

The products brought or sent from home or locally bought from Algerian shops are usually used to prepare traditional Kabyle dishes during special events such as *Yennayer,* the Amazigh New Year (see Chapter 2), or when inviting friends over. The authenticity of the products ensures reconnections with homeland and closeness with the hosting society. At the end of one of my visits to Kabylia, I asked Ziri and Massa if they needed anything and they requested me if I could bring *tayeddiwt*, a type of thistle used in Kabyle cooking during springtime. After handing them the product that



Figure 10: Massa's thistle couscous

I accompanied with fresh olive oil, they invited me over for a diner. The dish made was "*seksu s tɣeddiwt"* (couscous with thistle) that is Massa's favourite dish. She served the couscous in a couscous dish set made with clay that she brought from Kabylia herself decorated with Berber symbols (see Figure 10). Interestingly, Massa then offered us some verbena tea with honey she brought from her first country of residence where she lived for ten years. This points to the affinities she developed towards that country considering it as another home. She showed attachments to both Scotland and her previous country of resident, where she is now a citizen, while maintaining romanticised ties with Kabylia.

The taste and smell of food stir up memories of the past and promote the reimagination of homeland. In the beginning of data collection, I invited Ziri to my place, and we agreed to make *Yennayer* couscous, a type of couscous cooked during New Year's Eve mostly with legumes, dry meat and traditionally with a sacrificed chicken. Months later, we prepared the same dish with the company of Mazigh. At the end, Ziri told me that the taste and smell are exactly as he remembers how *Yennayer* is celebrated with his family in Kabylia. Cooking and eating food in a social environment strengthen social relations (Choluj, 2019) and turn the taste into something significantly "profound and rooted that it can appear as a more solid version of the home" (Miller, 2001, p. 9). On this point, I went with Massa and Ziri to pick 'Vivra' (Three-cornered Leek), a plant that is widely consumed in Kabylia during Spring, and later on the car ride back home, Massa said to me that the garlicky smell that propagated in the vehicle reminded her of home. Later that day, both shared pictures of the dish made with that plant.

6.7.3 Symbols and Symbolism

In addition to cooking traditional foods and maintaining cultural and religious rituals, displaying national and cultural symbols keep immigrants' home experiences active in their imaginary (Kreuzer et al. 2018). Belabbas (2020) claims that Kabyle diaspora community in Britain use symbols to publicly articulate their ethnic belonging and political identities, particularly the symbol *Yaz* (ⵣ), the last letter of the Tifinagh alphabet that is printed on the Berber cultural flag. Symbols also have the ability to instigate social connections. This is reflected in Massyl's narrative when he visited different Scottish cities wearing a t-shirt with a Berber symbol:

M: One way I got to know some Kabyles here in the UK is that I wear a T-shirt with Amazigh symbols. When they see me, they stop by and spend time together over a cup of coffee or lunch.
H: So, you met them by coincidence?
M: I knew some of them and others we met by coincidence. It was our adventurer's spirit. I wear a big Berber Z. I got it from Amazon.
H: Good. I think I will get one. You wear that T-shirt to say that you are Kabyle and Amazigh?
M: I wear it with pride. I want to wear it. Let me explain. Scottish people are very curious and always want to know what things are. If they see a flag they never seen, they will ask about it. That's then a good opportunity to socialise and explain to them.

Massyl then makes use of symbols to express his *Kabylité* in public environments and as a strategy to meet other people whether "curious" British or other Berbers, to whom the Yaz symbol is familiar and represents home.

During the 2022 *Yennayer* event where I met with some participants, Kabyle people came from different cities of the UK to gather and create a community as a way to enhance their sense of belonging and summon memories of the past. Groups and communities, to whom members feel belonging, reinforce the collective identity and recreate a home like environment where everyone feels safe and comfortable. I observed a range of symbols in the event that organisers made to be as visible as possible. For example, mid event, after the traditional couscous had been served, a large cake with the four colours of the Berber flag and a plate of cookies with the Yaz symbol were also served, with some of them representing traditional jewellery (see figure 11). Additionally, most of the women were wearing Kabyle dress**,** which is a symbol of *Kabylité* in itself.



Figure 11: Decorated biscuits in the Yennayer event 2022

Similarly to objects, symbols preserve my participants' links to Kabylia and *Kabylité* and the belonging to it. Navarette and Huerta (2006a) argue that symbols maintain community bonds.). Nelya's tattoo, for example, is a way for her to bridge the distance between her Algerian and Scottish sides when she told me "*It [the tattoo] kind of reminds me that regardless of my relationship with Kabylia, it is always part of me*." Tattoos and their symbolic significations are therefore a means of reducing the distance between individuals and their home particularly during times of temporary disconnection such as the pandemic. Tattoos also function as a self-expression among immigrant communities (Cory, 2024) that keeps tattooing a post migration art practice that integrates them to the new society.

6.8 Music: Bridging the Distance

Along with food and symbols, music was abundantly present during the Birmingham event and during my meetings with the participants. Similar to the effect of smelling and tasting food, music summons past memories and feelings. Immigrants feel home when they hear songs and music from their folk (Volk, 1998 in Karlsen, 2013, p. 163). In fact, music has the power to bridge the gap between the country of immigration and homeland and redefining the boundaries of belonging (De Martini Ugolotti, 2022) while allowing the dissemination of ideas (Maas, 2014). For the duration of the *Yennayer* event, the guests moved, talked, dressed and behaved as they would do back in their own villages. Not only that place and moments reminded them of home, but they gave them the freedom of being themselves. Hage (1997) explains that using one's native language is one of the different ways immigrants reproduce their sense of home (in Boccagni, 2017).

The music played reawakened their ethnic, political and linguistic identity and reminded them of home. However, another type of music also reminded them they were

immigrants and away from home. I observed that a number of the songs played were immigration songs that tackle topics like forced migration, loneliness, uprooting and homesickness. In a way, the music refreshed their memories about their double hybrid identities. Identities that were not set in stone and permanent. Khellouz (2022) explains that a song to a Kabyle artist is "a vehicle of a vivid emotion" (p. 204) even to sing about his sufferings in exile. For example, the songs '*A Muh a Muh'* by Slimane Azem in which he tells about his experience as an immigrant who could not go back to the country. Slimane Azem is is politically engaged with texts that are devoid of provocative language relying mostly on satire and irony to convey political thoughts on local and translocal matters (Bedrani, 2024). This was played in addition to '*Tabalizt*' [the suitcase] in which the singer, Ali Amrane, narrates his immigration experience from his excitement after the Visa process to his disappointment once in France. Other songs played were politically driven too including '*Arraw N Tlelli*' [the children of freedom] or '*Pouvoir Assassin*' [assassin government] by Oulahlou. The former narrates the different colonisers that successively invaded North Africa from the Phoenicians, the Romans to the Arabs and the French. The latter is inspired by the 1980s and 2001s riots when protesters used the slogan '*Pouvoir Assassin*'. Consequently, music is both a factor for reconstructing a feeling of home and safety, self-expression and self-reconstruction. Chachoua (2023) writes that music had been an essential canal for political and cultural activities throughout Kabylia's history.

6.9 Family, Kinship and Home Visits

The traditional conception of home is the physical house and the place where the family lives together though it's clear that a house "is not necessarily nor automatically a home" (Blunt and Dowling, 2006, p. 3). Family and friends reinforce someone's imaginary of home particularly when they are away from the house. In fact, family relationships that provide support and care are the main aspect of a sense of home (Dyck et al., 2005; Lewin, 2001 in Gao et al., 2021, p. 3). My participants maintain strong bonds with families back home, either physical or online, and with friends too as home is also where smooth social interactions happen. Substantially, home is where and when family and social relationships are kept.

To help them through their immigration processes, my participants maintained physical and virtual ties with their families. While all of them had access to the Internet and social accounts, a small number of them had the opportunities to physically travel to Kabylia

or bring family members to Scotland. During holiday periods, Massinissa, a male in his mid-thirties, Massa, a female scholar, and Mazigh, a father of two, received the visits of some of their family members and showed them excerpts of their lifestyles in Scotland. For example, Massinissa took his parents to some iconic places in the country including the highlands. He posted pictures of them on Facebook with Kabyle background music. Moreover, Mazigh invited his sister to spend some time with his wife and children. Because Mazigh lost his parents, he was convinced that his sons needed to be in contact with his family. In this case, family members are not only elements of feeling of home but also elements in transmitting identity and belonging. Home-making and the sense of belonging are results of domestic family practices and rituals, sacred or secular (Choluj, 2019).

Regular visits to homeland and family house also restore immigrants' sense of home (Willes, 2007) in addition to soothing emotions of homesickness and nostalgia. A number of my participants, particularly the parents, made family visits to Algeria an annual ritual. Every year, they plan a month stay in Kabylia with their Scottish born children. This is important for them to maintain connections with Kabylia and an opportunity to introduce their children to their extended family and build their *Kabylité*. Aylan told me about his son who naturally picked his Kabyle identity from the yearly visits to Kabylia. Because Aylan's son does not speak Kabyle, he told me: "*he learns more from his mother than he does from me. But he does know he is a Kabyle not an Arab. I told you that he got the flag without me knowing. He also got himself a necklace with a Berber symbol from Algeria."* Nelya also narrated to me that her strong connections with her father's homeland is due to her frequent visits as a child. She compared herself to her younger siblings who do not seem interested in their Kabyle identity for her because they had spent less time in Kabylia. She also commented on her father:

> "*My dad is a different person when he is there than he is in Scotland ...he would act like the person they have always known ... after dinner, my mum joins the women to clean the dishes while the men are partying or watching a football match ... whereas here, he cooks and cleans dishes.*"

Once in the familiar spaces, immigrants recall memories of themselves. These physical aspects of home bind the individual's past with the present as material objects do (Hecht, 2001). In the homeland, particularly in the family house, old identities resurface, and immigrant identity is deliberately left at the border. The individual reacts to different social

patterns that are specific to the homeland and the family house -different timespace configurations (Bakhtin, 1981 in Blommaert and De Fina, 2017).

To summarise, Kabyle community in Scotland re-imagine home in the host country through various social strategies confirming the idea that home among immigrants is a process, i.e., home is made and remade. The data presented above corroborate with the advanced theories of home as a multidimensional concept. Therefore, I join Rapport and Dowson (1998), Miller (2001), Blunt and Dowling (2006), Willes (2007), Boccagni (2017), Kreuzer, et al. (2018) and Gao, et al. (2021) arguing that home, for immigrants, is an elastic notion that extends beyond the house and the geographical distance with homeland.

The sense of home is built simultaneously with the sense of self through connections and relationships. The sense of self is preserved in a home like environment where authentic interactions occur. Another way my participants reconstruct a home feeling and maintain their sense of self is through initiating connections with other Kabyles creating groups and small communities. In the next Chapter, I will discuss how Kabyles in Scotland keep connections with each other, pre and post Covid. Additionally, I will demonstrate to what extent these connections are crucial to my participants' experiences in Scotland, coping with homesickness, the 'immigrant's sufferings', and preserving their ethnic and cultural identities.

6.10 Conclusion

In this Chapter, I explored the multifaceted strategies employed by Kabyle immigrants in Scotland to reconstruct a sense of home and belonging in a transnational context. This chapter explored the multifaceted strategies through which Kabyle immigrants in Scotland reconstruct a sense of home and belonging in a transnational context. The analysis has shown that home is not a fixed geographical location but an ongoing process, continually produced through affective attachments, memory, everyday practices and social relationships.

I began the chapter by examining how Kabyle migrants positioned themselves within Scottish society. Rather than simply reproducing homeland abroad, participants actively reinterpret Scotland through Kabyle cultural memories and symbolic associations. Scotland becomes not only a place of settlement, but a place emotionally reimagined as a

"second Kabylia", where similarities in landscape, minority language, political history and social values enable migrants to establish new forms of belonging.

The Chapter then explored how feelings of home are negotiated across physical, emotional, and symbolic dimensions. Scottish landscapes and topographies, especially mountains and rural acted as sensory and symbolic continuities with Kabylia. At the same time, emotional and social bonds with neighbours, co-workers, and fellow migrants played an equally central role. As Reeskens and Wright (2014) argue, meaningful engagement with locals enhances immigrants' attachment to the host country, contributing positively to both social integration and subjective wellbeing.

Material culture emerged as another critical axis through which home is reconstituted. The use of specific foods, clothing, domestic artefacts, and symbols such as the Amazigh *Yaz* formed part of a larger strategy of cultural preservation and identity expression. As Miller (2001) and Petridou (2001) suggest, such material and sensory practices are essential in forging a "solid version of home," where affect, memory, and embodiment intersect. Cooking and eating traditional meals, displaying ethnic symbols, and even tattooing culturally significant motifs were shown to mediate belonging and continuity across temporal and spatial divides.

Moreover, these homemaking practices are deeply relational and often performed collectively. Events such as Yennayer celebrations function not only as moments of festive gathering but also as performative re-enactments of collective identity and cultural continuity. They transform otherwise dispersed diasporic lives into shared symbolic spaces, resonating with Navarrete and Huerta's (2006a) notion of diasporic ritual as 'symbolic homecoming.'

Overall, the Chapter underscores that for Kabyle immigrants in Scotland, home is not merely a place but a practice, a constellation of feelings, routines, relationships, and representations negotiated in everyday life. Homemaking is both an individual and collective process, simultaneously rooted in memory and open to future re-imaginings.

Chapter Seven:

Connections, Community Formation and the Sense of Belonging

"Being homeless means having no shelter, no community ties, no sense of self."
(Blunt and Dowling, 2006, p. 128)

7.1 Introduction

While the previous chapter examined how migrants reconstructed home through affective attachments to Scotland's landscapes, people and material culture, this chapter turns to the social infrastructures of belonging, focusing on how community networks and cultural organisations enable Kabyle migrants to sustain collective identities in Scotland. Firstly, I start by delving into the participants' ways of forming different types of community in person and online. Virtual platforms such as Facebook represent a safe space where untethered identity manifests. The data suggests that hybrid connections are maintained particularly in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic. Secondly, I discuss how community formation in the new space contributes to more tranquil resettlement and smooth integration through feelings of home and a sense of belonging. I will stress the role of the cultural organisations. Lastly, I will evoke the different reasons behind the absence of Kabyle cultural organisations in Scotland stressing on inherited political and religious ideologies. My participants' narratives show that while a cultural organisation would help them promote and preserve their ethnocultural identity, safety and avoidance of national division hinder the process of creating one.

Kabyle diasporic communities and organisations in France have been central in the promotion of the Berber culture and development of political movements. The lack of cultural and political engagements of Kabyles in Scotland with all their attention on their economic capital and ethnic distinctions are some of the reasons according to the data gathered. Throughout the Chapter, I draw on Pierre Bourdieu's (1983) concepts of Social and Economic Capitals and Robert Putnam's (1993, 2000) dyad; Bonding and Bridging Social Capitals to examine how community ties are formed and sustained. Also, building on the previous chapter's discussion of home as a multidimensional process, this chapter focuses specifically on its social dimension, examining how community formation and collective practices contribute to belonging among Kabyle migrants in Scotland.

Additionally, I refer to Transnational Community of Immigrants (TCI) and Virtual Transnational Community of Immigrants (VTCI) as presented in Navarette and Huerta (2006b). Digital spaces serve as extensions of social life across borders. Finally, drawing on Fishman's (1991), I will demonstrate how cultural organisations act as 'breathing spaces' where Kabyle minority ethnic and linguistic identities can be freely manifested away from inherited fears and dogmas.

Ultimately, this Chapter will provide answers to the third research question that tackles the nature of connections and their roles in immigrants' self and collective repositioning in the new space, the process of remaking a sense of home through community formation and maintaining ethnic identities via enhancing the feeling of belonging. It attempts to explain how participants negotiate belonging in a context where institutional support for Kabyle identity remains largely absent.

7.2 Building Connections and a Sense of Community

Human contact has been a core component in societal development over the human history. In the postcolonial era of human movement and relocation, keeping connections literally helps maintaining one's identity away from home. Forging bonds with members of the same ethnic group and forming a community in the host country contributes to the assimilation of its members to the local culture and eases what Sayad (2004) calls the 'immigrant's sufferings' such as loneliness, social exclusion and a certain loss of agency in the homeland. Community also forges a sense of belonging, eases depression and enhances assimilation (Navarette and Huerta, 2006a).

Community is an essential theme in migration studies focusing on building a sense of home. Zandy (1990) defines home as the physical place of shelter where one can feel at home. Zandy also writes that "home is an idea: an inner geography where the ache to belong finally quits, where there is no sense of 'otherness,' where there is, at last, a community" (1990, p. 1 cited in Blunt and Bowling, 2006, p. 50). Communities and the sense of community is reinforced by active voluntary charitable organisations such as cultural or village organisations. Community organisations strengthen the group's internal cohesion through bindings its members together (D'Angelo, 2008 in Ata, 2022) and connecting them to their homeland via a myriad of cultural and political practices. Croy and Allan (1994) argue that community is important in "generating people's sense of belonging" (1994, p. 6 as cited in Bonnerjee, et al., 2012, p. 26). McMillan and Chavis (1986) defined sense of community (SOC) as the "feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and shares faith that members' needs will be met through their commitment together" (p. 9 as cited in Navarette and Huerta, 2006a, p. 2).

Ties in an immigrant community enhance the sense of self, develop belonging and home feelings. Immigration is association with relocation and home is connected to the

notion of identity (Sarup, 1994). Blunt and Dowling affirm that being homeless not only means having no shelter and no sense of self but also having "no community ties" (2006, p. 128). Kabyle diaspora communities in France and Canada are highly active in promoting the Berber culture, generating and expressing Amazigh political movements and in encouraging immigration through maintaining local as well as cross-border ties. This is done through the hundreds of cultural organisations created over the generations. Dirèche-Slimani (1997), Lacoste-Dujardin (2006), Tilmatine (2017) and others observed that France is a nest of the proliferation of Kabyle political, cultural and pedagogical organisations as well as identity expression.

The very first Beber cultural association emerged in 1954 (Harzoune, 1994) aimed to bring people together and to supply financial support to Amazigh people in France and in their home countries, specifically Algeria, hence its name 'T*iwizi Tamazight*'. *Tiwizi* in the Kabyle language means volunteering and mutual aid. Such organisations are usually created by educated immigrants (Rao, 1998 cited in Navarette and Huerta, 2006a) confirmed in Lacroix (2016). Britain, and to a lesser extent Scotland, has witnessed an extremely limited Kabyle activism because of it being a less favourite destination (Belabbas, 2020). However, London appears in a number of papers reporting Berber activism. For example, Collyer (2008), a pioneer in Kabyle ethnographic research in the UK, attended a protest in support of the Kabyle people in 2001. The protest against oppression was part of the wider movement –the Black Spring-.

Because of the lack of concentration of people, little attention has been given to the Kabyle political and cultural expression in the UK. At the start of data collection, I was seeking organisations that brought Kabyles together in order to recruit participants before focusing solely on Scotland. I found that there are less than ten cultural organisations and only three of them were rather active and visible to the Kabyle diaspora, at least on Facebook. These are '*les Kabyles de Londres*' and 'Kabylian Community in the UK' in London and 'Association Kabyle UK' in Birmingham. Their activities are centred around celebrating *Yennayer,* screening films, teaching Kabyle language and posting content online. In Scotland, Kabyle cultural activism is totally absent due to several reasons that I will discuss in this Chapter. I found two self-proclaimed organisations on Facebook whose objectives are to create a sense of community among Algerians and North Africans: 'Algerian Association in Scotland' and 'Inclusive North African Community in Edinburgh'.

The need for community feeling is stronger among people living away from home (Sonn, 2002, cited in Navarette and Huerta, 2006b) as is their sense of belonging. I observed that though my participants are members of these groups, the organisations do not meet the informants' expectations of ethnocultural activism. Navarette and Huerta (2006b) argue that community members share more than just a nationality or a piece of land. In fact, they should have a common heritage and a shared history of struggles and traumas. In France, it is a common annual tradition to celebrate the Berber Spring on April 20th, a traumatic event that Kabyles and Amazigh people will always remember. In April 2024, the '*collectif des diasporas amazighes*' [Amazigh diasporas collective] called for a peaceful march from *Place de la Republique* to *Place de la Bastille* as a commemoration and tribute of the victims.

Nonetheless, many participants have managed to forge hybrid networks that connect them with both local Kabyles and diasporic Amazigh communities elsewhere in the UK. These "virtual transnational communities" (Navarrete and Huerta, 2006b) play an increasingly central role in sustaining ties to the homeland while negotiating new forms of belonging in the host society. However, as one participant pointed, because of a lack of *tagmatt*, meaning brotherhood, an official Kabyle organisation might not be a possibility. These hybrid networks compensate for the absence of formal organisations, allowing participants to maintain cultural ties while developing new social relationships in Scotland.

7.3 Togetherness and Belonging

The Kabyle term *lγurba*, referring to the state of being away from one's homeland, encapsulates the enduring emotional and symbolic weight of migration, often equated with hardship and estrangement. Though this idea is a simple inheritance from labour migration, it is still ingrained in people's minds, particularly the parents. Although the type of migration is now different, the struggle and the sufferings of immigrants are alike. It is therefore natural for immigrants to seek comfort and safety. As research in migration studies suggests, the emotional toll of displacement often compels migrants to re-establish a sense of familiarity and support in the host country (Ryan, 2011; Kilkey & Merla, 2014). Epstein and Heizler (2016) confirmed that immigrants, particularly newcomers, require social support whether for finding a job, an accommodation or any "information regarding the alien environment and local culture" (p. 1137-38). Additionally, Immigrants seek to build networks with others for mental and emotional support that result from the stresses of the displacement process. Connections also encourage the assimilation and integration of

newly arrived individuals. Norris (1975) explained that "immigrant associations provide new immigrants with a basis of familiar relationships and interactions on which they begin to build their new lives" (1975, p. 165 cited in Owusu, 2000, p. 1159).

The participants in this study also sought and cultivated connections, though their efforts were constrained by the absence of formal community structures. The search for Facebook groups yielded limited results, revealing the lack of visible or institutionalised Kabyle diasporic organisation in Scotland. Consequently, my research relied on snowball sampling to access interconnected yet scattered individuals. I asked every participant if they were aware of any organisations and most answers were negative. I then observed that the Kabyle community in Scotland is linked in different ways. Although most of my participants did not know all each other, there has always been a connecting agent, sometimes it was me. Epstein and Heizler (2016) concluded that networks in the diaspora, whether between immigrants or with natives occur with the help of middlemen, a friend of a friend (Liu and Gallois, 2022). This networking has led to the formation of small groups of Kabyles that keep contact in person and online. Navarette and Huerta (2006b) call these 'hybrid virtual communities'.

These groups knew a rather long interruption due to the global pandemic that severely hit the UK. But some of them maintained virtual contacts to cope with covid social isolation. Clark et al., (2018) confirmed that the use of social media platforms increases "felt connections and perceived social support" (2018, p. 34) and enhances immigrants' experiences decreasing their separation and marginalisation in the host culture (Berry, 1997) due to higher risks of depression and anxiety disorders (Alegria, 2017).

When I contacted my first participant, the pandemic was still hitting. Therefore, the first contacts were online. All of my participants heavily relied on social media platforms, Facebook and WhatsApp, to develop and maintain connections. As the social isolations eased, the contacts turned hybrid. For example, Lydie, a young female academic, keeps her bonds with her friends and cousin in other parts of the UK via social media particularly Facebook and Instagram. Bora (2018) proved the positive effects of social media platforms on bridging social capital and immigrants' acculturation and wellbeing (Clark et al., 2017). The first time I met with Lydie, she had returned from a meeting with her Kabyle friend and the second time I saw her, she was with her cousin and two non-Kabyle friends that came to visit her. She also paid them visits regularly prior and after Covid in their respective cities.

Although the group is extremely limited, it provides Lydie with a feeling of security, a sense of belonging and connection to homeland. Lydie's social capital grew even stronger through her new international and Scottish friends and colleagues increasing her bridging social capital (Putnam, 2000). According to the gathered narratives, the participants of this study created hybrid communities of immigrants (Navarette and Huerta, 2006a) keeping contact both online and face to face.

The two families taking part in this study, Ziri's and Mazigh's, also maintain strong bonds between them. Ziri and Mazigh first met on Facebook and regularly come together in town in a café. In addition to the habitual texts and voice calls, they developed the habit of occasionally inviting each other at their houses for dinner or to do other activities such as sightseeing and hiking and event celebrations. These everyday practices play a fundamental role in producing a sense of home, understood here not merely as a fixed location but as a constellation of social routines and emotional connections (Blunt & Dowling, 2006; Miller, 2001). Massa, Ziri's wife, underlined this point, stating:

> *"It's important to have your own people around you so that they would find each other in bad moments. In a foreign country, you would only find your brother [she is referring to Kabyles] in bad moments. Scots may help you a bit but it's the Kabyles that would get back to you often and do their best to help you, not someone else ... I witnessed a few things in [her previous country of residence], whether it's death or disease, Kabyles are tight knit ... you would find them when you are down. We have this quality".*

In Massa's narrative, as in Aksel's, Massyl's and Mazigh's, Kabyle communities have the quality of brotherhood. However, they observed that this quality is dormant among the community in Scotland for several reasons that I will discuss below. Ziri compared Kabyles to the Armenian community in France who according to him is tightly connected. His claims are based on his observations of the community through his colleagues' experiences and their told stories. The phrases "*Kabyles are tight knit*" and "*We have this quality*" in Massa's account demonstrates her positive experiences in her previous country of residence and explains her expressed disappointment in the quality of Kabyle connections in Scotland only after a short time after her settlement. Her emphasis on kinship and mutual support reflects a shared perception among many participants that Kabyle communities possess a deeply rooted ethic of solidarity.

Another example of small groups my participants formed to overcome the immigrants' hardships is a group of five male individuals. Ziri, an academic in a Scottish

university, Mazigh and Ahmad, employers in private companies, Aksel and Massinissa, owner and employer in a restaurant, gather together in a café, coffee shop or a restaurant. Though the meetings are informal and intended mostly to keep friendship and feel supported, some discussions are centred around the absence of a Kabyle organisations in Scotland. I met all these people at the same place when I was interviewing Mazigh. I took the opportunity to ask questions to the others. While Aksel viewed it difficult to create a Kabyle community, the others were confident that an official cultural organisation would be beneficial for the community if they could get beyond the hindering factors that I will discuss below.

Interestingly with Ziri, his initial views were against the communitarian aspect of the Algerian culture. In fact, he did not feel the need to connect with other people of his community and rejected the Kabyle tribal tradition and the notion of *tajmaɛt,* meaning assembly. He told me: "*one should not be bound too much on the tribe. The tribe concept bothers me because I identify as an individual in a tribe*." On the tribal system in Kabylia, Ziri told me that in his region, members of *tajmaɛt* only accept unanimity when voting on decisions and this suppresses the individual. However, when I met him a few months later, his views had changed influenced by his wife. After our meeting, I wrote these fieldnotes:

> *"As we were discussing networking in the host country, he said that even though he did not look for Kabyles here in Scotland, he feels that it is important to have connections with people of his country. He associates that with safety and support i.e. If something happens to you, you may have people to turn to. He also mentioned remittances."*

Ziri and his wife associate connections with people of their ethnic group with safety, support and comfort. The shift in Ziri's position further illustrates the evolving nature of diasporic belonging. Initially resistant to ethnic bonding, he later acknowledged its importance, particularly in moments of vulnerability. His changing views align with scholarship on the dynamic nature of migrant subjectivities, where shifting contexts and relationships transform perceptions of identity and community (Al-Ali & Koser, 2002; Ehrkamp, 2005). Not only do social engagements reduce loneliness and enhance immigrants' psychological health (Park, et al., 2019 cited in Liu and Gallois, 2022), they also deepen immigrants' feeling of home (Kreuzer, et al., 2018) as "[h]ome is the fusion of a feeling "at home", sense of comfort, belonging, with a particular place'." (Blunt and Dowling, 2006, p. 22). Being a

member of a TCI maintains a sense of togetherness (Navarette and Huerta, 2006a) and builds a sense of community and belonging that have positive effects on assimilation.

Overall, the social practices of the participants observed suggest that home and belonging are continuously produced through relational, symbolic, and material practices (Kreuzer et al., 2018). While the absence of formal Kabyle organisations in Scotland limits the scope of collective action, small-scale connections and hybrid communities serve as critical resources for navigating the uncertainties of immigrant life.

7.4 Connecting with Homeland

The social capital that immigrants develop in the host society plays a central role in sustaining a sense of closeness with the homeland. This capital manifests not only in relationships with in-group members but also in ties with members of the host society, creating affective attachments that contribute to feelings of comfort, familiarity, and belonging. The ability to engage in everyday social interactions, such as greeting locals, participating in casual conversations, or simply being recognised in public spaces, generates a sense of acceptance and familiarity. For instance, Mayas, a coffee shop manager, repeatedly expressed that “it feels like home” referring to when some of his customers greet him and like to chat with him even when they unexpectedly meet him outside of his shop. This echoes Cristoforetti et al.'s (2011) findings that mundane practices such as interactions with neighbours or local shopping routines foster place attachment and emotional bonds with the host environment,what Liu and Gallois (2022) frame as crucial dimensions of immigrant homemaking.

Importantly, all participants reported establishing social connections with the local population. For example, Massyl and other individuals who are not officially taking part in this research have a common Scottish friend who is a politically engaged fervent advocate of Kabylia’s independence movement. Belabbas (2020) found that “building relationships with non-kabyles is important to sustain their Kabyle-ness” (2020, p. 33). Such trans-ethnic friendships support the notion that relationships with outsiders do not threaten but rather reinforce immigrants’ identity. These close social relationships paired with the emotional attachments my participants have with their perceived resemblances between the homeland, and the host land enhance their home feeling. In fact, Liu and Gallois point that “[h]ome for immigrants is a combination of homeland and foreign land” (Liu and Gallois, 2022, 464). In other words, if an immigrant’s social and emotional needs are met in the

'foreign' land, then that land is home. His/ her satisfied needs represent a connection between homeland and the host land.

Moreover, in addition to material objects, as discussed in the previous Chapter, I observed that the ties my participants maintain with their homeland are through connecting with other Kabyles. These connections are both online and physical. They can be regular audio or video calls with family members and friends, intermittent visits to Kabylia during holiday seasons or inviting family members, parents and siblings, over to Scotland for a period of time. Whenever a participant invited a family member over to Scotland, it is as if they have brought part of Kabylia to their place of residence particularly in the case of Massa's mother who represented her childhood and a strengthened emotional connection to Kabylia. Choluj (2019), Gao et al. (2021) and Liu and Gallois (2022) all claimed that ongoing relationships with kin, even at a distance, are essential to preserving emotional continuity and fostering a stable sense of home.

Furthermore, the data I gathered indicated that my participants' connections are not limitedly ethnicity based. They extend to nationality, religion and personal interests. These ties and interactions summon the individual's memories of their past. For example, Ziri has developed strong ties with his Asian colleague with whom he goes camping as he used to with his friends in his region in Kabylia. Tafat's husband, newly arrived in Scotland with limited proficiency in English, prefers to connect with other Muslim people particularly in the mosque or with other Algerians in what Tafat described to me as "*Iqahwa n les Algeriens*" [Algerians' café] where they sit in groups and sip their favourite coffee drinks, the Algerian way. Tuominen et al. (2023) observed that efficiency in the local language is associated with high levels of social capital as well as integration. These daily social practices connect them to their past and their lives in the homeland. Longing for the past is one of the essential steps in the home remaking process according to Kreuzer et al. (2018). Blunt and Dowling (2006) write that in the transnational space, home-making practices bind "lived experiences of home to memories of past homes" (p. 254). It is important to repeat what has been said in Chapter Six that longing for the homeland past re-grounds immigrants in the host land present.

In summary, the Kabyle Diaspora in Scotland connects to their homeland, Kabylia, through establishing ties with other in-group members that symbolise safety and homeness. Additionally, recreating social habits and memories of home by the bonds they

develop with the local population and other immigrant communities. These practices demonstrate that social capital—whether bonding or bridging—serves as both a psychological anchor and a practical tool in the reconstruction of home in migration contexts. In other words, large and strong social capitals are homologous to positive immigration experiences. It is evident from the literature on Kabyle diasporic communities in France and Canada as well as other immigrants' communities, such as the Punjabi and the Kurds in Britain (Lacroix, 2016; Ata, 2022), that cultural organisations strengthen the home feeling and maintain constant contacts with the places of origin.

7.5 The Role of Cultural Organisations

In the context of Kabyle identity and linguistic activism, the Kabyle diaspora in France significantly contributed to the advancement of Amazigh cultural expression in Algeria (Tilmatine, 2017b) and across North Africa. This involvement hindered the development of a 'national unity' ideology that the Algerian government sought to foster through rigorous Arabization policies following independence.

As highlighted by Lacroix (2016) and other scholars, various types of organizations exist that assist immigrants throughout their migration process. These include organizations that manage repatriation of death cases, facilitate the gathering of members from a single village to coordinate yearly remittances, and offer support and guidance to newcomers. The United Nations counted forty-eight billion dollars of remittances sent to North Africa in 2022 (United Nations, 2024). The country-of-origin benefits economically from the remittances sent by the immigrants. This type of transnational practices provides funds for local development (Navarette and Huerta, 2006b) as well as having political effects in the home country. Here, I examine the role that cultural organisations play in maintaining contacts between immigrant members through ensuring a home-like environment.

Cultural organisations or Hometown Organisations' roles are innumerable to immigrant communities. For example, in the case of minority groups, a cultural association can be the first point of contact with home in the new place. Khellouz (2022) mentions an active Kabyle cultural association named "Tagmat Community Association" that gathers the community living in Kansas, USA. Every year, Yennayer, the Berber New Year, is celebrated the traditional way with "couscous and an orchestra with purely Kabyle repertoire" (2022, p. 206). A cultural association has a dual function according to Lacroix (2016): "providing assistance to expatriates and securing the maintenance of long-distance ties and their

associated moral obligations" (2016, p. 13) such as transmitting language and contributing into the village treasury. Additionally, as shown in Silverstein (2004) and Tilmatine (2017a), an active organisation contributes to the development of a transpolitics fostering better political relationships between the host country and the country of origin.

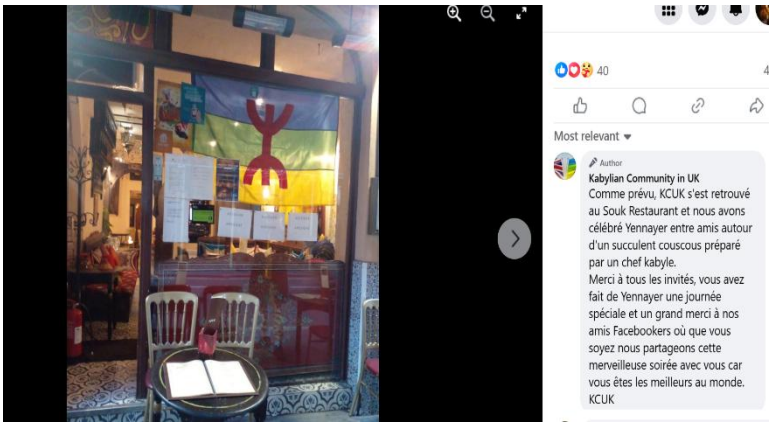


Figure 12: Yennayer 2974 after celebration Facebook post by 'Kabylian Community in the UK'



Figure 13: Beber Spring celebration by 'Kabylian Community in the UK'

In the UK, similar dynamics are emerging as I observed online. The 'Kabylian Community in UK', a virtual Facebook-based group with approximately 2,000 followers, functions as a digital cultural hub and organises events to bring together Kabyles. For example, the group celebrated Yennayer 2974 (The Berber New Year that corresponded to 2024) in a small restaurant in London as well as the Berber Spring in 2020 (see Figures 12 and 13) and organised film screenings to promote their culture and provide a sense of belonging to its members while participating in their integration to the host culture (Schrover and Vermeulen, 2005). Lacroix (2013, 2016) observed that Kabyle organisations in France recreate a village-like environment in restaurants or cafeterias owned by Kabyles. A trusted organisation is for Kabyles a safe space where to expose their collective memories of their past lived in their homeland. As Kreuzer et al. (2018) note, online spaces can extend the terrain of 'home' and enable dispersed populations to collectively reaffirm ethnic identities. Hamani (2019) found that the Black Decade and the Berber Spring "had reinforced the ties between Kabylia and the diasporic community in the UK" (p. 27).

Though I stress that based on my data, there exists no official cultural organisation that formally gathers and consolidates the Kabyle community or the Berbers as a whole in Scotland, my participants are aware of the two existing associations mentioned above. In fact, as I explained, while the informants are members of these organisms to which they feel they belong to as Algerians or as North Africans, they all expressed the desire to have a Kabyle organisation to allow them to come together and celebrate cultural events like the new year. When bringing up the topic of organisations, Ziri told me that *"L'association: d tinna i I d azetta [an association is the weaving mill]. If people come together, they get it as a habit and then later can talk about other things like projects".* Ziri's use of '*Azetta*', meaning weaving mill in Kabyle, is a metaphorical connotation that an association is the first contact a newcomer can have and then snowball to getting to know the community. Additionally, an organisation is the starting point of other activities such as teaching Tamazight or collaborating with other immigrant communities.

The participants expressed a strong desire for a Kabyle organisation because as shown in Devine and McCarthy (2018), immigrant associations provide emotional support, enhance the social and cultural lives of the members, are hubs for cultural reproduction and activism and help weaving networks. Yet, my participants also cited obstacles rooted in inherited ideological divisions. Inherited fears surrounding political fragmentation, especially those based on the historical Kabyle-Arab divide, appear to undermine collective mobilisation efforts. These anxieties reflect long-standing divisions stemming from colonial legacies and post-independence national policies, which continue to shape diasporic interactions (Silverstein, 2003; Roberts, 2014; Boum, 2013).

Mazigh's views of an organisation are centred around reviving the language, culture and history and transmitting these to his children. During the interview, we were discussing the importance of being part of a community in the host country, he told me:

> *"M: of course, it's important. But honestly, sometimes I feel sad when I know that there are Kabyles, and we are not unified/ we don't get along each other well.*
> *Maybe, there are things that we can do all together but unfortunately that's not possible.*
> *H: what kind of things?*
> *M: Well for example, we celebrate Yennayer. Why not? Create an association here, we gather together, collect some money and we bring artists to sing, have a show/ performance and we will transmit to the children the dates we commemorate*

events. They will learn. People will get together and know each other. They have fun."

Aylan, a business owner, shares Mazigh's views and told me about the time when he was living in London where he could join an association more than two decades ago. In his narrative, he recalls memories of the events that they organised together as a community: "*I remember one day, we had Masa Bouchafa (female Kabyle singer whose many of her songs are about women emancipation and life away from home), Ferhat Imazighen Imoula as well. We used to make couscous; we had Kabyle movies nights in the cinema*." Mazigh and Aylan's accounts confirm that culturally loaded music is a carrier of memories and promotes gatherings promoting their sense of belonging (see Chapter Six).

Organisations encouraging connections, whether themed or not, act as 'breathing spaces', to borrow Fishman's (1991) term, where identity freely manifests. Given the minority status of the Kabyle community in Scotland, it is invisible to other immigrant communities and locals. Even more seriously, the members are invisible to each other. On a phone call with Massa, she told me that with her husband, they met a Kabyle couple who has been living in Scotland for years even though the latter lived in the same small town as them. Therefore, borrowing Fishman's (1991) notion, I conceptualise cultural organisations as breathing spaces where not only ethnic identity is "not seen out of place and where speakers are not asked to justify their linguistic behaviour" (O'Rourke and Fernandez, 2024, p. 57) but also spaces that weave connections and create communities.

Contact and community enhance the sense of belonging which contribute to a feeling of home. When Ziri visited his friends and family in Paris, he felt at home because he could hear and use the Kabyle language in different places. He said that "*when you go to Paris, it's like if you went to tamurt*". Liu and Gallois (2021) found that using one's own language in the new place of residence fosters a feeling of home among Chinese immigrants in Australia. In her study on African migrants in Scotland, Piacentini (2018) also found that one's language, folk music and foods strengthen formed communities and the sense of home. My participants reported to me that while they identify as Algerians and speak and understand Arabic, they do not identify as Arabs. This Kabyle-Arab distinction, that originates from the Kabyle Myth, the divide and conquer strategy adopted by the French colonisation (Silverstein, 2003, 2004; Lacoste-Dujardin, 2006; Roberts, 2014; etc) (see

Chapter 3), prevented them from being active members of the 'Algerian Society in Scotland' association.

7.5.1 The 'Algerian Society in Scotland'

The 'Algerian Society in Scotland' is an unofficial association that exists since 2012 on Facebook. Although, they do not have an official headquarters, the committee members, based in Glasgow, made it known on social media with almost a thousand and a half members. The content on the Facebook group is mostly religious, in relation to the Palestinian case and predominantly in Arabic, though some English is present both in texts and videos. Since independence, Algeria has been a supporter of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation and refusing any diplomatic relations with Israel to the present day providing logistical, financial and military support (Haugbolle and Oslen, 2023). Every Friday, they share live Jumuah prayers (the Muslim Friday prayers). However, there are also some posts that advertise services like sales, cooking, Arabic and Quran teaching or money exchange or death announcements. However, strictly no post is linked to the Amazigh culture in general nor the Kabyle culture specifically. The organization facilitates the repatriation of deceased individuals to Algeria and coordinates fundraising efforts through solidarity campaigns, supporting both Algerians and Palestinians.

Some of the participants who have been living in Scotland for several years like Mazigh, Ahmad, Massinissa, Aksel and Aylan, narrated to me the opposing views of its committees and first members. Participants attributed these disagreements largely to enduring Arab-Kabyle tensions and differing understandings of national unity. Over half of the founders of the association were Kabyle and this had led to questioning the equity though the aim of the association was to bring Algerians together while embracing the ethnic and linguistic diversity. In a focus group interview, Mazigh, Ziri, Aksel, a former member of the association, and I had the following conversation:

> *"M: and it's not only about culture. We would help new people here.*
> *A: there is an association. [referring to the Algerian Society in Scotland]*
> *M: where is it?*
> *A: there is a committee, there's an association, they have an account. There is everything*
> *M: I didn't know about that then*
> *A: they do fundraise, but they get nothing*
> *H: what's the name of this association?*
> *M: I don't know*
> *A: Algerian Society in Scotland*

M: I don't know it
A: they are also on Facebook
Whenever there is a committee, they would say that's not the right one. They [the members of the association] would say: 'that one is Kabyle. That one is this and that one is that'. It's presided by Kabyles.
A: there is a committee, but they can't agree between each other
Z: if they don't agree, it's like if the association doesn't exist
A: Since I saw that, I didn't want to join anymore."

Aylan's statement *"They would say: 'that one is Kabyle. That one is this and that one is that*" shows that the Kabyle-Arab ideology weighs over unification. His remark exemplifies how ethno-political anxieties, and nationalist ideologies permeate even the diaspora, echoing Bourdieu's (1983) notions of symbolic power and habitus, where unspoken assumptions about legitimacy and identity shape communal dynamics. According to him and other participants, the association is not very successful due to its members' disagreements in terms of the number of Kabyle committee individuals. Moreover, Ziri's response to that summarises my participants' dissatisfaction regarding the association.

The current president of the association is Kabyle and yet no Amazigh cultural or political events are organised. Massa expressed her disappointment saying:

"*the 'Algerian Society in Scotland' does practically nothing. They do not celebrate Yennayer nor April 20th because of the Arabs majority ... If you tell them that you want to celebrate 'April 20', forget about that because they would never accept. You tell them you would celebrate Yennayer, they would not accept ... For them being in an association, we should only celebrate religious events and Independence Day and war day*".

For her, the current association severely interferes with her identity and her own habitus giving her a feeling of not being accepted of who she is and being imposed a different identity. Unconsciously, Massa recalled views and feelings caused by the major political events she witnessed in Kabylia such as the Black Decade, a significant migration factor (Guemar, 2019; Hamani, 2019, 2021). As observed by Harris (2018), *Yennayer* and *Tafsut* (Berber Spring celebrated on 20th of April) are two of the main festivities Amazigh associations celebrate in France. The absence of these celebrations nourished Massa's discontent in addition to the livelihood of such celebrations in her previous place of residence. *Yennayer* is an event that marks the beginning of the Berber New Year that is celebrated on the 12th of January on the Gregorian calendar. It is based on the Amazigh Agrarian calendar and symbolises a connection to the nurturing earth (Ouaras, 2022) and

has become a symbol of *Amazighité*. In France, this celebration is more and more hosted at municipalities (Merabet 2016 in Harris, 2018).

Massa's frustration with the association's refusal to celebrate Yennayer or the April 20th Berber Springreflects the broader exclusion of minority narratives from state-aligned diaspora organisations. Her statement that the association *"does practically nothing"* speaks to a deeper misalignment between the organisation's orientation and the lived experiences of Kabyle migrants.

Further, Aylan told me about one of the events he attended and when I asked him for more details, he said: "*I don't remember. We had couscous I think it was Eid. And when you leave the event, you leave without learning anything ... you just get in and eat the couscous and come back out ... No singers, no comedies, nothing about culture. There are no such things"*. Aylan's account also demonstrates the dissatisfaction of Kabyles regarding the association's non-involvement in cultural aspects. Aylan's characterisation of a community event as little more than "*eating couscous and leaving*" suggest that cultural organisations, far from being "breathing spaces" for minority identities (Fishman, 1991), may instead act as hegemonic structures that reproduce national paradigms and inhibit the expression of subaltern cultural forms.

The 'Algerian Society in Scotland' holds a private Facebook group with no possibility for members to post anything without the administrators' confirmation. I joined the group a while before the start of data collection. My membership had been accepted though the administrator never responded to my messages. Yet, on several occasions during the course of this research, my requests of posting content had not been accepted. For example, I posted the participation invitation image (see Methodology Chapter), but it had never been approved on this group nor an invitation to a small-scale study on Kabyle inclusion as an ethnic minority in the UK workplace. This demonstrates a lack of emphasis on promoting Algeria's ethnic and cultural diversity, instead prioritizing other unifying elements, such as Arabo-Islamic ideologies.

During one of the meetings with Massa, she described the 'Algerian Society in Scotland' Facebook groups as a "morgue" when she said: "*If you visit his page you'd see. I even told him 'Your page is a morgue'* [laughter]. *It's only about deaths and only Arabic and can only see bearded sheikhs*". Massa's metaphor of the group as a "morgue" saturated

with “bearded sheikhs” encapsulates the dominance of religious and patriarchal ideologies, which she and others see as incompatible with Kabyle secularism and pluralism (Roberts, 1982; Silverstein, 2003; Belabbas, 2020). In this context, Putnam’s (2000) distinction between bonding and bridging social capital becomes salient. While the association may provide bonding capital for Arab-Muslim members, it fails to cultivate bridging ties across Algeria’s diverse ethnolinguistic groups, thus limiting its potential to foster a more inclusive diasporic public sphere. Similar views have been revealed by the participants in regard to the other existing association.

7.5.2 The ‘Inclusive North African Community in Edinburgh’

Similarly to the Algerian Society in Scotland (ASIS), the Inclusive North African Community in Edinburgh (INACE) operates without a physical headquarters and primarily exists through a Facebook group, established in 2017. Its founder describes it as “an NGO that works to empower North African citizens here in Edinburgh.” The group’s online content is eclectic, encompassing commentary on politico-religious conflicts in the Middle East, philanthropic initiatives, Algerian-specific issues, and occasional humorous posts.

One of the most publicised annual events organised by INACE is the “International Couscous Day,” held every November. I attended the 2023 edition of this event, where I met the group’s founder, a Berber Chaoui Algerian who has lived in Scotland for many years, as well as Agraw, a Kabyle man residing in Edinburgh. Although Agraw agreed to participate in my research, we lost contact after our initial meeting due to time constraints. During our conversation, however, he expressed his enjoyment at being among fellow North Africans and sampling various types of couscous and traditional goods sold at Middle Eastern and North African stalls. For him, the event was not just about food, it was a powerful sensory and emotional experience. The couscous evoked the “*smell of tamurt*”. The convivial atmosphere and familiarity of smells, sights, and social cues helped reinforce his sense of belonging in the diaspora and momentarily mitigated the emotional toll of migration, particularly following the loss of a parent, a common stressor that compounds post-migration challenges (Alegria et al., 2017).

This highlights how events like these, while general in focus, can momentarily recreate a sensory space of home and comfort for individuals navigating displacement. However, several participants voiced dissatisfaction with the INACE due to its limited engagement with Amazigh or Kabyle identity. While the organisation portrays itself as

inclusive and community-oriented, it was repeatedly described to me as operating more like a profit-driven venture than a non-profit NGO. One participant expressed dissatisfaction after being charged to attend an event that lacked meaningful cultural content. For them , the expectation was not only to enjoy familiar food but to experience a "*sense of belonging and gathering your people*".. Such perceived limitations of these organisations led my participants to reflect on the idea of creating a Kabyle cultural organisation. In what follows, I explore why such an initiative has not yet materialised and examine how a dedicated Kabyle association could play a vital role in community formation, cultural continuity, and the reconstruction of home in diaspora.

7.6 A Kabyle Organisation: Causes of an Absence

Cultural organisations in the Diaspora "translate shared sentiment for the sending community into a sense of community belonging" (Lacroix, 2016, p. 6) in the host country to which organisations participate in their members' integration (Schrover and Vermeulen, 2005). The participants face a certain degree of perceived ideological exclusion from existing organisation.

Though ethnic segregations are visible among Algerian communities in France and Canada, they had been overcome, and hundreds of Kabyle associations emerged throughout the hexagon and North America. This is predominantly due to the large number of Kabyles and the longstanding history of immigration in these places. The organisational movement in England is more recent and less active for it not being a destination par excellence for Kabyles. Belabbas (2020) and Hamani (2021) however observed that the phenomenon is growing with the ever-growing numbers of Kabyles choosing the UK as well as their desire to reconnect their new space to homeland and creating a homelike atmosphere abroad (Hamani, 2019). This type of dynamism is completely dormant among Kabyles in Scotland and as the data shows, this is not solely a statistical matter. Because there exists no census that counts Kabyle communities separately from Algerians, an estimation is a hard task. Rather, participants identified a range of historical, ideological and political factors that continue to shape relationships within the diaspora.

7.6.1 The Kabyle Myth beyond Borders

As discussed in Chapter Two, the colonial "Kabyle Myth" created an enduring distinction between Berbers and Arabophone populations (Silverstein, 2002). Although rooted in

colonial ethnography, these distinctions continued after independence through Arabisation and Islamisation policies that marginalised Berber identities (Silverstein, 2003; Roberts, 2014). Participants suggested that these historical divisions continue to shape interactions within the Algerian diaspora in Scotland.

The tensions linked to the Kabyle Myth manifest visibly in diaspora relations. For example, Collyer (2008) experienced this ethnic demarcation when he attended two protests in Marseille in 2002 that were supposed to gather Algerians but witnessed a strong Berber presence because of the first anniversary of the Black Spring. Collyer met Algerians who told him: "*I don't understand those people, they want us all to learn Berber in school, what do I care for Berber? What use is it to me?*" and "*I've come here today because it's important, but I don't normally hang out with these people*". This demonstrated that the conflicts and disagreements travelled through time and space. This confirms Sayad's (2004) saying that one migrates with their own culture and beliefs and one's habitus and capital (Bourdieu, 1986).

In the Scottish context, participants repeatedly framed their experiences through the lens of this enduring divide. While most acknowledged the demographic smallness of the Kabyle community in Scotland, their narratives underscored a deeper obstacle: the perceived ideological hostility of Arabophone Algerians. For example, Tafat, a young academic, felt a certain exclusion and highlighted ethnic distinctions in her husband's experiences when she said: "*When my husband tells me about the football games [that he plays with other Algerians], I could feel the Kabyle-Arab conflict. They label people according to their regions; qbayli [Kabyle in Algerian Arabic], chaoui. I think this is a bit of a clash.*" Her account reveals how seemingly mundane interactions are suffused with broader discursive divides

Similarly, Ahmad, a private company employee, considered this labelling as an act of racism from the Arabs who he thinks are *"less open minded*" and who "*don't know that they are not Arabs themselves*" according to Ziri, an academic at a Scottish University, referring to the idea that Berbers accepted the Arabo-Islamic identity. Based on his own experiences, Ahmad expressed his despair regarding a potential Kabyle organisation when he said: "*it is impossible to create a Kabyle cultural association in Scotland*" and when I asked why, he referred to "Racism" and an *"Anti-Kabyle mindset"* of other Algerians. His concern was less about the practical feasibility of establishing an association than the social

consequences of doing so. Participants feared that creating a Kabyle organisation would be interpreted by other Algerians as an act of separatism rather than cultural preservation. The Kabyle Myth "clearly continues to structure Arab-Berber relations and dictates how individuals respond to a situation" (Collyer, 2008, p. 699) such as creating a cultural organisation and initiating political activism from across borders.

The colonial Arab-Berber differentiation led the Algerian government to declare Algeria to be an 'Arab- Muslim country' and decry "regionalist identities as 'feudal survivals' and 'obstacles to national integration'" (Silverstein, 2003, p. 89). This fed into the two ethnicities' mutual detestation. On one hand, the Arabs viewed Berbers as Franchified secular people while on the other hand, the Berbers described their fellow Algerians as Arabised religious passionate. The views of Arabs as the 'other' versus the Kabyle self 'us' are also echoed in Massa's and Mazigh's accounts when they said:

> *"For Arabs and for them to accept 'khawa khawa' [meaning brothers brothers, it is a slogan during the 2019 Hirak [movementagainst President Bouteflika's condidency to a fifth term]], they want you to identify as an Arab and speak in Arabic" [Massa]*
>
> *"Whenever you tell Arabs 'I am Kabyle', just to identify yourself as such without meaning that you are rejecting them. This does not mean that you are better than them. They don't like that. For them that means that you are a racist." [Massa]*
>
> *"For them to like you and let you be in their group, you need to identify as Algerian and never mention your Kabylité." [Massa]*
>
> *"An association that works well can be destroyed by bringing power to the centre when someone brings the Arab-Kabyle distinction to the table. While normally it shouldn't be the case. As I said earlier, on a cultural side, we can create one only for Kabyles."* [Mazigh]

The distinction is clear in both narratives particularly in Massa's use of the pronouns 'they' and 'them' that stress the differentiation. Her reliance on the pronouns demonstrates ethnic and political separation that is fed by her experiences with the "Arabs". This voluntary separation also shows the informants' desire to position themselves in Scotland as a distinct ethnic group. Zimmerman et al. (2007) argue, ethnic self-identification plays an increasingly important role in multicultural societies where individuals seek both recognition and differentiation.

The findings presented here show complex connections between Kabyles and other Algerians resulting in in-group tensions compared to the finding introduced in the previous Chapters that showed the positive relationships that Kabyle have with the Scottish people

and other immigrant communities. Based on Putnam's (2000, 2007) idea that immigration "disrupts communities and positive social interaction" (p. 559), Griffiths (2021) also observed in-group hostility and out-group civility when studying Polish immigrant in North-West England. Rather than lacking bonding social capital altogether, participants distinguished sharply between bonding with fellow Kabyles and bonding with the wider Algerian diaspora. While relationships with Scottish people often generated positive bridging capital, ideological divisions limited the development of bonding capital across the broader Algerian community. The Kabyle Myth, far from being a historical artifact, continues to shape diasporic subjectivities and institutional possibilities across borders.

7.6.2 Trauma, Localism and Fear of Oppression

In the middle of data collection, I contacted a potential participant, Mernis, a self-employed male Algerian to extend my population sample. However, I experienced the ethnic tensions through his answers. I snowballed to Mernis from a Moroccan business owner with whom the former collaborates. Mernis accepted my invitation through text and called me for more information probably due to a lack of literacy in the written English language or simply a matter of trust. After orally explaining my research plans and objectives, he responded in a hostile way only using Algerian Arabic: "*we are all Algerians here in Scotland my brother and there is no distinction between Kabyle and Chaoui*" and added "*we have a committee, and we work as Algerians*". He refers to the 'Algerian Society in Scotland' organisation.

Mernis is Kabyle but grew up in the capital Algiers. He is an 'Algerois', a resident of the Capital Algiers. Algerois people are associated with stronger identification with Arabophone national identity (Belabbas, 2020). His response appeared to reflect a certain fear of being labelled as a separatist promoting localism when after he grasped my research interests and asked me, "*are you going to write them [the answers and the names of participants] in a report?*" Though I ensured him confidentiality and anonymity, I failed to get his trust and disappeared as he applied a blockage to his WhatsApp. Mernis' accounts suggest that the Algerian community in Scotland is bound to the political and religious ideologies of the country of origin. Moreover, Maas (2014), as well as Harris (2018), also observed the tense ethnic conflict between the Kabyle self and the Arab in her ethnographic study among Kabyle communities in Paris and Kabylia demonstrating how Kabyles exhibit a fragile balance between nationalism and localism.

These ideologies limited my participants to create a cultural organisation centred around the Kabyle culture. All the participants on the exception of one, Zayen, an undocumented newcomer, felt the need to conceal their political tendencies as I predicted prior to entering the field. This feeling accentuated after the Algerian government characterised the MAK movement as a terrorist organisation in 2021. The founder of the movement, Ferhat Mhenni residing in France, had been issued with an international arrest warrant "*pour création d'une organisation terroriste et atteinte à l'intégrité territoriale et à l'unité nationale"* [for the creation of a terrorist organization and for harming territorial integrity and national unity] (LeMonde, 14 November 2022). This led to the fear of being "considered as a political opponent and also the fear of being targeted by the Algerian army" (Harzoune, 1994) justifying the absence of an organisation.

Similarly to Mernis, Mazigh interrupted me during the interview and asked me, "*I hope you will remove all the bad things I said from the recording?*" The "bad things" consisted of some critics about the Algerian central government's politics. This highlights Mazigh's fear of being labelled as a political antagonist. Ahmad and Aylan showed explicitly their consternation of expressing their regional identity and their political views. The former responded to me and Ziri regarding the idea that what other Algerians would think of a potential Kabyle organisation did not matter when he said, "*be careful at the airport when you go to Algeria*". His apprehensiveness of lack of security is confirmed when, at the beginning of the interview, he categorically refused to be recorded though he showed his disagreements with the MAK political plans. Moreover, the latter told me "Y*es, there are many [supporters of MAK]. They participate in the independence marches in Edinburgh and Glasgow. But they tend to be undercover*" and "*they are mostly worried about their families back home*." Aylan's account demonstrates the fear of being oppressed that had been implemented by the Algerian authorities such as the Berber Spring as a shadow of the past (Hamani, 2019 and 2021). This traumatic response exacerbated after what Kabyles now refer to as the Black Summer, the traumatic 2021 wildfires across the region and the imprisoning of hundreds of pro-MAK Kabyles.

Massa, a Kabyle female academic, narrated to me her experience of the 'others'' labelling of her as a separatist in her previous place of residence:

> *"I remember in [her previous country of residence] when I was a student, some students came from Tamurt and they started speaking in Arabic. That got me angry.*

They would talk to me in Arabic, and I always responded in French. They started asking why I didn't speak Arabic. I told them that I did not know any Arabic and I grew up in a village. I would not make the effort to speak Arabic. But actually, I do know how to speak Arabic but I did not want to speak it. Sometimes, I tell them that I do not understand it just for the sake of telling them that they would not impose it to me again. They have a 'superiority sentiment', so I do not answer them or talk much with them. They ended up saying that "Massa is a separatist" like the MAK movement. They thought I was a member of the MAK [surprised]"

Her refusal to respond in Arabic can be interpreted as an act of linguistic resistance rather than simply a communicative choice. The interaction illustrates how language becomes a symbolic marker of ethnic identity and political positioning. Dorian (1994) explains however that linguistic purism can be exclusionary of 'new speakers' or other speakers who use non pure nor authentic linguistic forms considering the flexible aspect of languages i.e., languages can borrow from each other for example.

As seen in Chapter 3, the Arabisation policy resulted in the marginalisation of the Berber languages and the creation of a shameful feeling among the speakers of these varieties. This is reflected in Massa's statement "*they have a superiority sentiment*". Furthermore, Massa's quote "*they will not impose it to me again*" shows the traumatic residue of historical events such as the Arabic invasion of NA and the Berberist movement that promoted the creation of secular cultural organisations in France (Harzoune, 1994). Her choice of using French with them may have been encouraged by the fact that her previous place of residence is French-speaking or her level of education because as seen in the literature review, Algerian intellectuals tend to use French due to it being viewed as the language of the civilised. Arabic could have been consciously avoided due to its religious association (Almasude, 2014).

Massa's facial expression and tone of voice when she reported accusations of being a separatist can be interpreted as a feeling of concern and fear. Being labelled as a *"MAKist"* [MAK supporter] is a concerning social etiquette. The MAK, according to Tilmatine (2017b), became the most mobilising political movement in Kabylia compared to the FFS and RCD. However, advocacy remains covert and clandestine. While in Massa's previous place of residence, Kabyle organisations flourished as they transcended the religious and socio-political barrier, it is clear from the above that these remain an obstacle to ethnic community formation in Scotland. The persistence of fear, ideological stigmatisation, and a lack of critical mass prevent the emergence of such cultural infrastructure. These dynamics

underscore the limits of diasporic community formation when homeland politics and traumas continue to govern interpersonal relations abroad (Boccagni, 2017).

7.6.3 Secularism vs Religiosity

The marginalisation of the Amazigh under Algeria's Arabo-Islamic nation-building project, reinforced by events such as the Berber Spring, the Black Decade and the Black Spring, strengthened Kabyle secular political consciousness. In reaction to state-imposed Arabisation and Islamisation, Kabyles increasingly embraced secular politics, resulting in the emergence of secular political parties, including the FFS in 1963 (see Chapter Three).

While Kabyles are described as Muslims, other faiths including secular beliefs are part of the covert social and religious landscapes. The Algerian constitution declares Islam as the religion of the State and applies punishments to anyone who tries to convert people to other religions. However, a number of Kabyle traditions remain pagan proving their partial embracement of the Islamic faith (Daumas and Fabar, 1847 as cited in Silverstein, 2004). Kabyle activists in France have long denounced Algerian government's involvement in what is considered private matters such as observing Ramadan (Maas, 2014). Secularism is then salient in the Amazigh culture (Almasude, 2014). Maddy-Weitzman (2011) concluded that secularism is more widespread among Kabyles, both at home and in the Diaspora, in comparison to other Berber groups. Subsequently, Kabyle people have secular traditions and heritage.

This secular self-positioning remains salient in the diaspora. All participants in this study explicitly or otherwise, declared themselves as secular and do not follow strict religions and expressed a clear preference for separating religion from cultural and organisational spheres. Such views are not encouraged by Islamophobic or Arabophobic intentions but rather by their awareness of the religious diversity of members of such organisations. This is a recognition need that had not been met by the INACE and ASIS organisations. In my participants stories, the Kabyle self is secular, open and inclusive. Such views clearly reproduce the claims of the Kabyle Myth. Belabbas (2020) found that her participants' discontentment of the existing Algerian organisations in London led them to create their "secularised and yet decidedly non-political space." (p. 5). This space recreated the distinctive traditional Kabyle *qanun*, the "village code of by-laws" (Maas, 2014, p. 73) that excluded religion from the village matters.

The openness and acceptance of the participants is clearly reflected in their narratives. Ahmad, Ziri, Aylan and Lydie for example acknowledged the idea of the multi-diverse characteristics of modern societies and the importance of acceptance. Ahmad said: "*All what matters is the person. If they are like-minded, everything else is superficial*". Lydie asserted *"One must acknowledge the historical realities that Arabic existed in Algeria for 14 centuries since the arrival of Arabs and Muslims who came, supposedly, to bring Islam*" and later added that acceptance is not "*about diluting the self in the other. It is to be with [stress] the other not against the other, and not to be lost in the other"* proving the importance maintaining personal identity. And when discussing a potential Kabyle organisation, Aylan said, "*An association in which others will be welcome to join but we will be the ones who command"* and then added by stressing that *"if they join the association [referring to Arab speaking Algerians], we will be and remain the only ones in control of the group [referring to the people who would create the association]".* The accounts above show that while religion, ethnicity and political views are superficial to the respondents, preserving the self and a context where the self can be expressed freely is also important.

When on a walk with Ziri, he brought up an incident that happened in a Kabyle village that he heard about on Facebook. The committee organised a musical concert in the village common place which happened to be adjacent to the mosque. The gala was schedule late at night to avoid a clash with the Ramadan night prayers. From the inside of the mosque, the Imam used the speakers to address the guests describing them as "*religious-less*" and "*shameless*" in colloquial Arabic. Ziri showed that while he is not against religion, "*religion is not mandatory, it's a personal choice, open mindedness is really needed*". Ziri's statement supports the idea that Kabyle people tend to be more secular (Weitzman, 2011; Maas, 2014). The Imam was dismissed from his position by the mayor of *M'cheddala*.

Such view is reflected in Yanni's narratives when he was expressing that religion as part of the government, is an obstruction to freedom of expression and stressing that religion should remain a personal choice. On another level, Zayen, a politically motivated Kabyle, claimed "*wetnaɣ s ddin*" [they destroyed us with religion] to show that religion is a limiting, persecuting and manipulative governmental strategy to supress cultural, politic and ethnic diversities.

As we were discussing a potential Kabyle organisation, Aylan and Massa narrated to me their experiences as members of the existing associations gathering Algerians emphasising the lack of openness and the religious obsession of these. Aylan said: "*They always bring up religion with culture. Arabs always bring up religion and say that this or that are not allowed, Haram, Halal. So, there will never be an association this way. I don't know, but there is something missing that I can't explain.*" However, on prospective Kabyle organisation he declared "*It will be open to anyone and accepting but with some boundaries. There will be no alcohol. There would be people gathering, guitars, singing, dancing...*" While Aylan views religion as an impeding hurdle to Kabyle diaspora, following a 'no alcohol' protocol refers to a certain degree of religiosity or simply a transmitted belief ingrained in tradition over time.

This religiosity had been imposed to Kabyles in Scotland according to Massa when she said "*When Kabyles come here, they only follow. They* [Arab-speaking and Muslims] *make you feel obliged to say 'Insha'Allah' all the time and get into their thing*" and "*to be in the association, you need to be Muslim and perform prayers [Laughter]. You need to be practicing. There is a certain extremism in order to be accepted*." Massa's reflections on performative religiosity in existing Algerian associations, such as needing to say *Insha'Allah* or observe prayer to belong, further support the notion that religion functions as a boundary-making mechanism, excluding those who do not conform to Islamic norms. These dynamics undermine the possibility of building bridging and bonding social capitals (Putnam, 2000) while fostering social bonds capital grounded in cultural affinity rather than religious conformity. Religion is then a factor impeding the construction of positive social capital and inter-group relations whereas secularism shows as a bonder of durable social relations. Social Capital is clearly built based on political and cultural investments (Bourdieu, 1980).

7.6.4 Economic Capital and Lack of "*Tagmatt*"

Beyond the emotional challenges of displacement, participants repeatedly identified time constraints resulting from work and financial obligations as a major obstacle to community participation. Most of the participants initially migrated to better their socio-economic conditions in Algeria. As shown by Belabbas (2020) and Hamani (2021), the main motives of immigration are socio-political conditions of Kabyles in their homeland, escaping from

oppression, and the desire to better their economic capitals. The data I collected throughout this research among Kabyles in Scotland adds to these findings.

This overemphasis on economic capital, as conceptualised by Bourdieu (1986), appears to detract from the development of other key forms of capital, namely social and cultural, that are critical to the creation and sustainability of community organisations. While maintaining ties to the homeland remains a concern, the absence of grassroots collective structures among Kabyles in Scotland reflects a rupture in *tagmatt*, the traditional Kabyle ethos of unity and solidarity. As Lacroix (2013, 2016) demonstrates in his comparative study, Kabyle migrants in France show significantly weaker collective remittance and development mobilisation than other ethnic diasporas, such as Moroccan Chleuhs or Indian Punjabis in the UK. This limited mobilisation is exacerbated by the lack of support from the Algerian state, unlike the case of Mexico's *Tres por Uno* (3X1) programme, which actively incentivises diaspora engagement in local development (Iskander, 2010; Lacroix, 2016). Under the 3×1 programme, the Mexican government contributes three dollars for every dollar invested by migrants in projects benefiting their hometowns.

As far as the population of this study is concerned, these economic priorities and the lack of time led them to fail at creating a cultural organisation that can gather the Kabyle community and recreate a home-like environment. All of them expressed their awareness on the importance of such organisation and its potential benefits and yet it does not feature in their priorities. As Massyl critically expressed: "*They [Kabyles in the UK] are only interested in the pound [money] and that's it. They forget all about Kabyle language and identity."* This sentiment reflects a wider concern that the pursuit of economic goals in diaspora contexts may come at the expense of cultural continuity, echoing Vertovec's (2009) argument on the tensions between livelihood and identity maintenance in super-diverse societies.

The view that the 'pound', as an economic capital, blinds Kabyles and derives them from maintaining their identity and promoting their language is shared by most of the participants. For example, Mazigh told us during the group interview that "*Kabyles in this country are all scattered. Each one minds their own business. It's not as it used to be. Now, there is the factor of 'money'. It's all about earning and saving money ... One is worried, one minds their own business, one has no time, one is only after money, he follows the pound."* When I asked him later whether people's disinterest could lead to a possible loss of linguistic

and cultural identity, he replied "*Bread and money are their priorities. But there are those who are arraw n lassel, arraw n teqvaylit [the children of origin/ roots and Kabyle], so no it will not disappear."*

Furthermore, Mazigh's and Aylan's case narratives confirm Massyl's views above. Aylan told me that his daily routines consist of "*"axeddim axxam, axeddim axxam (work, home, work, home)."* These accounts echo Blunt and Dowling (*2*006) and Choluj (2019) views that social daily practices help immigrants reconstruct a feeling of home. Similarly, Aylan's case, as a business owner, demonstrates a limitation due to an overfocus on enhancing his financial situation. Likewise, Mazigh revealed a similar scenario. When I asked him whether there was an Algerian association he knew about and replied by "*I don't know*", Aksel heard him and said to him "*You are disconnected from this world … from work to home only [laughter]".* Mazigh then admitted that due to his workload and family engagements, he did not have time to connect with others. This confirms the idea that, similar to religion, economic capital hinders the development of social bonds. Additionally, the lack of time as a factor of absence of cultural activism can be confirmed with some of my participant's informal withdrawal from the study after confirmation of acceptance.

Moreover, the decline of *tagmatt*, the cultural value of communal solidarity and mutual aid, was a recurring theme in participant narratives. Historically, *tagmatt* (lit. brotherhood) has been embedded in village life through practices such as *Tiwizi* (voluntary communal labour), coordinated by local assemblies (*tajmaɛt*), which fostered a strong ethos of collective responsibility (Touati & Traxler, 2019). These voluntary initiatives traditionally brought villagers together while maintaining communal spaces and reinforcing collective responsibility.However, in diaspora settings where the village-based social fabric is absent, these forms of solidarity struggle to re-emerge. Massyl argued that Kabyles today lack this spirit of unity, while Ziri expressed concern that without internal agreement and mutual cooperation, "we're finished." Peter, a Kabyle man who has been living in the UK since childhood, went further to suggest that this fragmentation was the outcome of long-standing state strategies aimed at weakening Kabyle cohesion through Arabo-Islamic assimilation when he said ""*the Kabyles are not united and have been made very weak"*.

This perceived erosion of *tagmatt* has meant that Kabyles in Scotland have not mirrored the organisational patterns of their counterparts in London or Birmingham, where cultural associations have begun to take root (Belabbas, 2020; Hamani, 2021). In this sense,

the lack of a Kabyle cultural organisation in Scotland is not merely a statistical artefact of small population size, but also an indicator of internal ideological constraints. It also reflects Glick Schiller and Faist's (2010) view that intentions to engage in cultural reproduction are curtailed by the socio-economic pressures of everyday life in transnational contexts.

7.7 Overcoming Inherited Ideologies: A Potential Kabyle Organisation

I stated above that some of my participants created small groups and have been holding irregular meetings in a coffee shop or restaurant. One would question whether such groups can constitute voluntary associations (Moya, 2005). I would argue that while these have no official physical place, their objectives are similar to a typical immigrant organisation though on a smaller scale, recreating spaces of 'home', mutual aid and support, providing guidance and most importantly maintaining ethnic and cultural continuity. Marquez (2001) explained that organisations are created to fence off their members' ethnic or national identity from those of others (cited in Schover and Vermeulen, 2005). Considering the informal excluding characteristics of the 'ASIS' and 'INACE', my participants created such groups that are both "defensive- as a response to exclusion- [and] offensive - stemming from a choice ... to set themselves apart from others-" (Schover and Vermeulen, 2005, p. 824). In the Scottish context, these informal groups simultaneously compensate for institutional exclusion while allowing Kabyle identity to be expressed without negotiation.

Being aware of the myriad of its benefits, every person taking part in this study showed their disenchantment at the absence of a Kabyle association and their desire to create one. Aylan enthusiastically told me, "*Let's create one*" and Mazigh, Ziri and Massa all said that it is needed regardless of the small number of Kabyles in Scotland. Participants imagined a future Kabyle organisation as one that would provide first contact with familiarity to immigrants in a new space enhancing networking opportunities (Devine and McCarthy, 2018). It encourages social networks and links the country of residence to that of origin. It also offers "a space for [immigrants] ... to gather, chat, dance, play and reminisce" (Moya, 2005, p. 850). In other words, a safe place where the original self can resurface and where the minority status is not judged by the dominant group (O'Rourke, 2019). As the data shows, for the Kabyle community in Scotland, a desired cultural association could fulfill several functions. Although these informal networks cannot fully replace a formal cultural organisation, they nevertheless perform many of its everyday

functions by providing emotional support, practical assistance and opportunities to maintain Kabyle language and identity.

7.7.1 The Immigrants' Sufferings

A crucial rationale for the establishment of a Kabyle cultural organisation in Scotland lies in its potential to address the multiple vulnerabilities and psychosocial challenges faced by immigrants, particularly in the early stages of their migratory trajectories. As extensively documented in migration literature, the immigrant experience is often marked by phases of dislocation, nostalgia, and alienation (Sayad, 2004; Silverstein, 2004). These affective responses are frequently compounded by structural difficulties such as legal precarity, language barriers, unemployment, and limited access to institutional resources, factors that can be particularly acute for recent arrivals and undocumented migrants (Boccagni & Schrooten, 2018; Carling & Erdal, 2014).

Participants in this study expressed the critical need for a formal ethnic organisation that could function as a nexus of material and emotional support. Such institutions have historically played a vital role in immigrant communities by facilitating integration, enhancing resilience, and offering culturally specific resources (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006; Levitt, 2001). In line with Nelson and Tienda's (1989 cited in Owusu, 2000) findings, ethnic networks can act as buffers against experiences of discrimination and marginalisation, fostering a sense of solidarity and agency among their members. The support an association can bring is not only emotional but can also be financial, judicial, cultural or even educational.

The contrasting experiences of Massa and Idir, both newcomers in Scotland, illustrate the unequal vulnerabilities faced by Kabyle immigrants based on their legal, linguistic, and socio-economic statuses. Idir, who overstayed a tourist visa and arrived without prior contacts, language skills, or educational qualifications, exemplifies the precariousness of undocumented migration. Massa, by contrast, entered with a skilled worker visa, fluent English, and spousal support. Although both expressed a sense of isolation, the presence of social capital in Massa's case mitigated some of the hardships. Had an association been in place, it could have provided immigration guidance, linguistic assistance, and community anchorage—essential mechanisms for softening the impact of structural exclusion (Putnam, 2000; Ryan, 2011).

Yanni's experience further highlights the power of social ties in facilitating smoother transitions. Despite his short academic stay in Scotland, the presence of Ziri and Massa as contacts allowed him to navigate his temporary migration experience with relative ease. Yanni's case confirms that social networking and small groups compensate for the absence of an official organisation that encourage building social capital, the "connections among individuals" (Putnam, 2000, p. 19) that improve social functions. In the absence of institutional infrastructure, these micro-social relations perform the informal roles of guidance, orientation, and solidarity.

Furthermore, an association that brings people together is a stream of multi-purpose support; social, economic and emotional. Personal harsh circumstances are part of life and immigrants are not immune to such events in addition to the difficulties related to the immigration process. Covid-19 social isolation, loss and grief as well as the distress caused by the destructive wildfires in Kabylia in 2021 are some of the critical events lived by my participants. These were not merely distant events but emotionally proximate crises that reaffirmed the enduring ties to homeland and the pain of diasporic disconnection (Al-Ali, Black & Koser, 2001; Collyer, 2008).

Several participants described vivid emotional responses to these crises. For example, most of them reported to me the intense feelings of fear and worry when they saw the wildfires on social media. Because the fire events happened during the peak of the pandemic, flying to the home country was not a possibility due to closed borders. Consequently, because no formal associations were visible, they came together as small groups and relied on social media to search for comfort from family and kinship in Kabylia and elsewhere. Aylan told me that he was constantly making and receiving calls from other Kabyles during what Kabyle now refer to as a Black Summer. Ziri forwarded to me multiple videos of the blaze and showed his sorrow, pain and discontentment. Zayen, an undocumented resident to whom the fires are of criminal source of the '*zéro Kabyle'* operation, reached out to me during the events and confessed "*I cry when I see my Kabylia burning*". His call was a call for comfort from shared sorrow, a call to connect. A connection that lacks due to the absence of an association but that is visible from his use of the possessive pronoun "my Kabylia".

Ziri's act of forwarding videos of the blaze reflected both a need to share and a political lament, while Zayen's emotional appeal was a performative expression of diasporic

grief and collective mourning. His use of the possessive pronoun "my Kabylia" illustrates the intimate and embodied nature of diasporic belonging, echoing Brubaker's (2005) notion of "groupness" as a form of affective and situational identification. Collyer (2008) explains that "Periodic mobilizations around natural disasters or political events activate latent feelings of belonging and challenge notions of deterritorialized Identities" (p. 687).

7.7.2 *Tiwizi* and Remittances

In Kabylia, *Tiwizi* is a longstanding tradition of collective voluntary work where members of a village collaborate on communal tasks such as cleaning cemeteries, maintaining water systems, or renovating the village assembly space (Touati & Traxler, 2019). These regular acts of cooperation foster strong social cohesion, build trust, and reinforce community belonging. In diasporic contexts, however, where physical contributions are constrained, the notion of *Tiwizi* has evolved. It increasingly encompasses practices such as collective fundraising and the sending of remittances to support development initiatives or respond to crises in the homeland (Lacroix, 2013; 2016). This reconfiguration illustrates how cultural traditions are transposed and adapted transnationally, maintaining their symbolic function even in altered forms.

During the Covid-19 pandemic and the 2021 wildfires in Kabylia, several Kabyle cultural associations in France mobilised financial and material aid, including medical supplies and oxygen equipment (Le Parisien, 2021). These initiatives illustrate how diasporic associations institutionalise Tiwizi through collective humanitarian action. Many village-based associations also continue to contribute annually to the village '*caisse commune'* while supporting newcomers (Lounici, 2019).

All of the people taking part in this study have had experiences in associative work whether in Kabylia or in the Diaspora. Ziri and Mazigh are members of their respective village associations in France and reported to me that a yearly remittance is sent to the village to which they contribute. Aylan narrated to me that the Algerian Society in Scotland launched a fundraising campaign as a support to the victims of the wildfires and sent it to Algeria. He then added while showing me a small green box on the counter of his shop "*Up till now, I do fundraise and take it to Tamurt ... I often get around 360 000.00 DA or 500 000.00* [between 2500 and 3000 Pound Sterling] *and then send it and distribute it ... starting with my own village.*" His initiative, though personal and informal, parallels the functions of a structured cultural association and embodies a form of decentralised *Tiwizi*.. Cohen

(2011) argues that remittance practices, as voluntary altruistic actions (Rapoport and Docquier, 2006; Lacroix, 2010), link the migrants and their peers staying in the country of origin. While the term remittances is usually understood in terms of unidirectional money transfer, these can take the form of material objects. When I was in his shop, Aylan showed me a bag full of clothes and told me that he will take them to his village and distribute them particularly to disabled people.

Remittances can also take the shape of investments in projects in the sending country. For example, Ziri and Mayas, an academic and a shop manager, shared with me their plans of investments back home. One of Ziri's plans is to financially contribute to the village treasury in order to revive an old tradition in his village. He wants the village to rebuild the "axxam n taddart" (lit. the house of the village) guest house that every village used to have. This is a house that is kept empty where travellers passing by can spend time before resuming their travel. Ziri's plans show that remittances are not always necessarily sent to the migrant's household of origin but extends to support the community. This also shows the attachment Ziri maintains towards his place of origin. Therefore, remittances maintain immigrants' connections to home. Through both individual and informal collective action, Kabyle migrants in Scotland maintain material, emotional, and symbolic connections to their homeland fulfilling functions often associated with formal cultural organisations despite the latter's absence.

7.7.3 Celebrations and Culture Promotion

Cultural associations bring people together in the diaspora through cultural festivals and celebrations. In addition to political activism, Kabyle associations in France promote their culture by organising events such as the commemoration of the Berber Spring (*Tafsut*) or the celebration of the Amazigh Year 'Yennayer' (Silverstein, 2003). These two events are central to the history of Kabylia and appear in the narratives of all the participants. Participants consistently viewed a future Kabyle association as a vehicle for promoting their culture in Scotland while transmitting Kabyle language, history, and traditions to younger generations. A sense of community, that increases among people that are away from home (Sonn, 2002 cited in Navarette and Huerta, 2006a), generates a sense of belonging (Crow and Allan, 1994, p. 6 cited in Bonnerjee et al, 2012, p. 26).

Yennayer and Tafsut are two central commemorative events in Amazigh collective memory that reinforce cultural continuity and diasporic belonging (Silverstein, 2003; Harris,

2018; Belabbas, 2020). My participants confirmed that *Yennayer* is "*all about family reunion*" (Lydie) and togetherness. While they do not have the opportunity to come together as a community, they celebrate these events individually. Lydie said : "*every year, I celebrate Yennayer*" and Tafat said: "*I take time to cook traditional dishes for celebrations whether it is Mouloud or Yennayer and other traditions … and send pictures to my family*." Yennayer is therefore a tradition that reminds them who they are away from home. Moreover, it is a yearly opportunity to promote their culture in the host society and keep a virtual connection with family and friends back in Algeria. Ziri said "*I celebrate it otherwise like inviting colleagues over and cook a couscous for them. They learn about our culture. You tell them a bit about it*". Not only *Yennayer* is a yearly event Kabyles celebrate, but it also allows them to show uniqueness and separate the self from the dominant other. Belabbas (2020) reported the narrative of a participant that told her that Kabyles do not need Christmas to gather, they have *Yennayer*. Similarly, one participant narrated to Harris (2018) that celebrating *Yennayer* means that the Kabyle people have a history and that they are distinct. These personal celebrations function as acts of cultural maintenance (Anthias, 2006) and offer diasporic subjects a sense of rootedness despite physical displacement.

Rooted in Amazigh agrarian traditions, Yennayer symbolises renewal and abundance and is commonly marked through communal meals centred on couscous. It creates community during its celebration as people gather during the day and share their foods. In the Diaspora, it recreates a home-like environment as I observed during the celebration I attended in Birmingham in 2022. The guests came from all over the UK and gathered to form a community wearing traditional clothes, Kabyle dress for women and burnous for me, while sharing food and enjoying live music. Considering the importance of *Yennayer* to Amazigh identity, in the Diaspora, "it is a chance to bring the community together and renew social ties, to rehearse … and to promote Berber culture to wider society" (Harris, 2018, p. 91) with the active role of organisations organising community activities such as concerts and art exhibitions. Together, participants' accounts and my own observations demonstrate that cultural celebrations do more than commemorate the past; they actively produce home in diaspora by renewing social ties, transmitting collective memory, and publicly affirming Kabyle identity.

7.7.4 A Secular Breathing Space

A community's association in the diaspora soothes immigration sufferings, enhances the sense of belonging, contributes to promoting and transmitting the culture of origin and creates a safe space where identities break from dividing social ideologies. My participants' profiles are extremely heterogeneous religion-wise and because a number of them considered the religious and linguistic dominations as limiting and dividing factors, they demonstrated their hope of a secular and open space free of fears and accusations. A Kabyle cultural organisation would carve a 'breathing space' (Fishman, 1991, p. 59), a domain where their minority identities do not need to compete (O'Rourke, 2019) with Arabic and Islam.

In the 'couscous festival' I attended in Edinburgh in 2023, I observed the visibility of the Arabo-Islamic dominance over other ethnic minorities. Although the event, organised by INACE, was meant to gather the North African community in the city and beyond, Arabic was the main language the guests used and of the music played. Whereas in the '*Yennayer*' event in 2022, Kabyle and English were more present notwithstanding the fact that both *Yennayer* and Couscous are common to the North African identity. In the second event, Kabyle guests outnumbered Arab or English attendees. As I demonstrated in Chapter Five, the 'Association Kabyle Uk' recreated a village atmosphere during Yennayer allowing guests to mostly speak Kabyle or Tamazight. Within Amazigh political discourse, speaking Tamazight has frequently been associated with secular cultural activism (Errihani, 2007 cited in Almasude, 2014) to my participants. Almasude writes that for Matoub, a politically engaged Kabyle singer, secularism is "an ideology that can be used as a tool to overthrow Arab-Islamic hegemony in North Africa and restore Amazigh cultural and linguistic pride" (2014, p.143). These contrasting linguistic environments demonstrate that cultural events are not neutral spaces but sites where particular identities become legitimate while others remain peripheral.

In the Diaspora, cultural organisations can provide a secular space that overcomes ideologies of the country of origin and therefore giving freedom of identity expression as secularism requires a certain neutrality in multicultural communities (Taylor, 2010). I reported above my participants' narratives of their experiences with the INACE and ASIS organisation showing me their desire of more inclusive spaces to feel accepted and to not be abide to rules of the other. As Taylor (2010) argues, in multicultural democracies,

secularism should uphold *liberté* (freedom of belief), *égalité* (equal treatment across religious lines), and *fraternité* (mutual respect and social cohesion). Therefore, my participants' accounts echo France's approach to secularism banning religious affiliations from authority organisations and the public sphere.

Thus, cultural organisations in the diaspora are not only sites of cultural preservation and transmission but also act as socio-political arenas where inherited ideologies from the homeland can be re-evaluated, contested, or transcended. The Kabyle participants' collective longing for an inclusive, secular association reflects broader themes in diaspora studies regarding identity negotiation, belonging, and the role of voluntary organisations in shaping post-migration subjectivities (Anthias, 2002; Vertovec, 2009). These spaces, when detached from hegemonic narratives, have the potential to become sites of liberation, community healing, and reimagined futures.

7.8 'Amazigh Community in Scotland'

In March 2025, Ziri forwarded a link to my WhatsApp and as I opened it, it led me to a Facebook page entitled 'Amazigh Community in Scotland'. The page had been created on March 20th with a cover picture depicting a Kabyle scenery including mountains and olive trees. The profile picture includes the word 'Amazigh' written in Tifinagh alphabet 'ⴰⵎⴰⵣⵖ' with a proportionally bigger letter 'ⵣ' representing the Amazigh identity. The first post writes (in Kabyle variety): "*Azul, Asebtar-a n Facebook iga iy imaziɣen yettidiren di tmurt n l'Ecosse. Ma yella tesɛam abarraḥ, tiɣri, neɣ asalli, cegɛet-i-yid izen. Tanmirt*." [Hello, this Facebook page is for Amazighs living in Scotland. If you have a call to make or news to share, message me. Thank you]. Clearly, this has been created to bring the community together through maintaining contact and sharing common news on Facebook. The page currently counts a hundred and thirty-five followers and keeps growing. This demonstrates the desire of the Kabyles in Scotland to strengthen their bonding social capital (2000). The posts are bilingual including both English and Algerian standard Tamazight using the Latin script developed by Mouloud Mammeri, who also set its Grammar.

The page's objective is to help raise awareness, celebrate culture, and build a sense of belonging among Kabyles in Scotland through sharing "Amazigh Cultural Spotlight Series", organising "Language and Heritage Workshops", celebrating traditions while also focusing on the "Amazigh History in Scotland", etc. I observed that some of the posts are about the Berber-Celtic connections such as the collaboration of the Kabyle singer Idir with the Scottish singer Karen Matheson or the history of an Amazigh governor, Quintus Lollius Urbicus, of Roman Britain between the years 138-142 (see Figure 14). Such posts, from different sources, confirm my claims in the previous Chapter that Kabyles view Scotland as close to them culturally, historically, politically and environmentally.

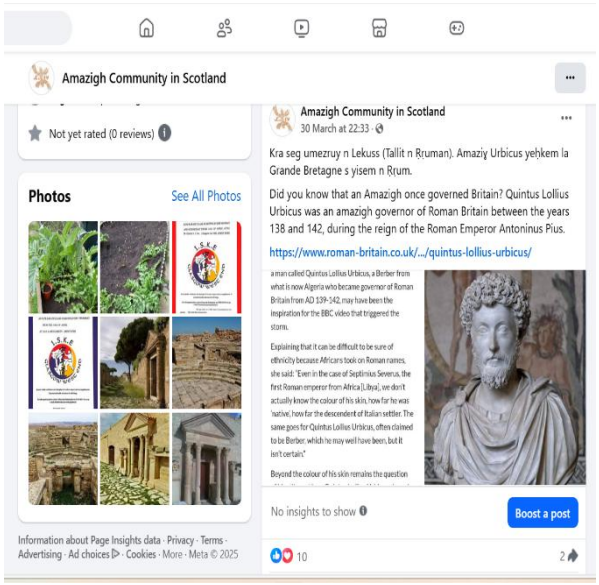


Figure 14: A post on Amazigh Community in Scotland Facebook page

The emergence of this digital space is significant in several ways. Firstly, it illustrates the increasing use of virtual platforms as tools for community-making and ethnic identity expression among dispersed groups (Brinkerhoff, 2009; Alonso & Oiarzabal, 2010), reinforcing the idea that immigrants create virtual transnational communities of Immigrants (Navarette and Huerta, 2006b). As a digitally mediated initiative, the Facebook page serves as both a symbolic and practical step toward fostering bonding social capital (Putnam, 2000) among Kabyles in Scotland, a digitally small community but with strong cultural cohesiveness. The bilingual content also affirms an active strategy of cultural preservation and modernisation, enhancing both intra-group communication and wider accessibility.

The virtual space, Facebook, provided my participants an opportunity to make themselves visible and to distinguish themselves as distinct rather than being seen as part of a larger group as Aïtel (2014) explains. When I asked Ziri who created the page, he replied that he did not know, and he had been asked by his wife to forward it to people he knows. After following the page, I decided to enquire and contacted one of its members inviting them for a short interview. The same day, Massa called me and said that she wanted to talk

to me about the 'Amazigh Community in Scotland'. She revealed that she created it because she thought that others were "dormant" and "hesitant". This has been motivated by her experience in her previous place of residence where she was an active member of a Kabyle organisation. Her decision to use the term *Amazigh* rather than *Kabyle* in the page's name reflects a deliberate attempt to foster inclusivity across Berber-speaking groups, while remaining rooted in a shared ethno-linguistic identity.

The creation of this Facebook page was also motivated by participants' disappointment with ASIS (Algerian Society in Scotland), which they perceived as culturally and linguistically exclusionary. They criticised the organisation's strong emphasis on Arabic and religion, as well as its Facebook posts, primarily in Arabic, focusing on topics such as Palestine and religious figures. For them, ASIS does not reflect the diversity of the community as it does not bring all the community together and cultural events such as *Yennayer* do not get celebrated. Massa's hope is to have a secular and apolitical space to promote culture and ethnic identity. She revealed to me their plan to celebrate *Yennayer* in January 2025 after agreeing with Ferhat, who has been living in Scotland for years. The plan did not get realised but she and her husband invited over people they knew and celebrated it with them proving that *Yennayer* is the bridge connecting people in the Diaspora and to their homeland. Therefore, an association in the Diaspora is a piece of home in a different space sustaining ties and creating transnational social spaces. This act of micro-communal festivity reinforces the idea that diasporic cultural events act as '*rituals of belonging'* (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004), where symbolic reconnections with the homeland are forged and sustained through food, language, and tradition

Lacroix (2010) confirms that not only diaspora associations recreate a home-like atmosphere but also aim to maintain cross-border bonds through several practices including disseminating lates information such as weddings, elections and economic downturns as well as ensuring the delivery of remittances. Piacentini (2018), in his Chapter in Devine and McCarthy (2018), found that immigrants associations provide eight main functions including emotional support, formal and informal services, networking opportunities, cultural productions and activism. Drawing from this list and my observations, I argue that an association is a mobile replication and continuity of home-ness and village-ness. A reconnection between the pre-immigration identities.

In sum, the '*Amazigh Community in Scotland*' Facebook page illustrates the Kabyle community's desire to create webs of connections while reinforcing the sense of home and belonging in Scotland and reconnecting to the homeland. It also exemplifies the community's self-positioning as a distinct ethnic minority in a new field while asserting the agency of the actors in shaping their sociocultural landscape.

7.9 Conclusion

This Chapter demonstrated the type of connections Kabyles in Scotland maintain with other in-group members or with other wider communities focusing on the role of cultural organisations. Drawing on participants' narratives, I demonstrated that while Kabyles actively seek connection with one another and the broader North African diaspora, they do so selectively. Many of them reported feeling marginalised within existing organisations, such as ASIS and INACE, which were perceived as culturally Arab-centric, ideologically driven, or religiously biased. As a result, participants often chose to form smaller, more intimate networks that reflect shared secular values, cultural priorities, and a desire for inclusivity. These findings reinforce Putnam's (2000) theory of bonding social capital, where trust and solidarity are fostered within homogenous sub-groups, particularly when bridging ties with other communities prove inadequate or exclusionary.

The Chapter began by showing how participants created bonds with co-ethnics through everyday practices, such as informal gatherings, celebrations of Amazigh events, and the circulation of news and artefacts through WhatsApp and Facebook. These practices function as strategies for identity maintenance and emotional well-being, and they represent alternative modes of community-making beyond institutional frameworks. I then examined the actual and potential roles of cultural organisations in diaspora settings, highlighting how these associations can offer critical support to newcomers, help sustain cultural transmission, and preserve links with the homeland through the creation of home-like environments (Lacroix, 2010; Piacentini, 2018). However, my data showed that this potential is often undermined by internal fragmentation, ideological disagreements, and the importation of homeland politics.

In this context, the notion of *breathing space* (Fishman, 1991) emerged as a central concept to explain the participants' yearning for secular and apolitical arenas where Amazigh identities could be expressed freely. Cultural and linguistic diversity among the participants, coupled with differing religious orientations or degrees of secularism,

rendered many existing organisations unsuitable. As Taylor (2010) argues, secularism in multicultural societies must be understood as a framework for neutrality and mutual respect rather than the exclusion of religion per se. Participants' frustrations with organisations revealed the ways in which diaspora spaces become contested terrains where identities are not merely preserved but actively negotiated and reconfigured (Anthias, 2009).

Further, the recent emergence of the Facebook group *Amazigh Community in Scotland* illustrates how virtual platforms are being used to create new forms of diasporic belonging and visibility. This initiative, while modest in scale, symbolises a push towards more inclusive, culturally specific, and politically neutral forms of organising, where Amazigh identity is foregrounded without marginalising other Berber subgroups. Such initiative allows for *closeness* and the development of affective ties based on commonalities including a shared collective memory. Ultimately, this chapter has shown that home in diaspora is not simply remembered or imagined but actively produced through everyday social relations, informal networks, and emerging cultural infrastructures. While the absence of a formal Kabyle organisation reflects the enduring influence of homeland politics and socio-economic constraints, the emergence of new initiatives such as the *Amazigh Community in Scotland* demonstrates that these inherited boundaries are neither fixed nor immutable.

Chapter Eight:

Conclusion

8.1 Introduction

This concluding Chapter brings together the main threads of this thesis, which has explored Kabyles' immigration experiences in Scotland, their practices of home remaking and the building of a sense of community through maintaining transnational ties with the homeland. Through a multi-method approach combining reflexive ethnographic fieldwork, interviews and observations of the digital space with the latest reflexive narrative analysis, the research set out to investigate the Kabyle transnational space in the UK with a specific focus on Scotland. More precisely, the study looked at how this community recreates a home-like environment in the Diaspora and how this affects their integration and acculturation to the host society's culture. Beyond documenting these experiences, the thesis has demonstrated that home-making is a multidimensional process shaped by language, environmental attachment, cultural practices, and social relationships, thereby contributing to broader debates in migration studies, human geography and sociolinguistics. Interestingly, the findings also reveal that home-making extended beyond social and cultural practices to include participants' emotional relationships with the Scottish landscape, suggesting that environmental familiarity formed an important yet often overlooked dimension of diasporic belonging. This chapter synthesises the principal findings of the thesis before considering their theoretical and empirical contributions. It reflects on how the study advances debates on immigrant home-making, migrant identity construction, self-repositioning and diaspora community formation. The Chapter then considers the limitations of the study; the solutions brought and suggests directions for future research. It concludes with a final reflection on the significance of studying the Kabyle immigrant community in the United Kingdom and in other places where they have settled in smaller numbers. However, it is important to restate the research question that drive this research:

1. How do Kabyles in Scotland (re)construct their identity away from home?

   This question sought to explore the immigration experiences of the Kabyle community within the Scottish context with particular attention to their immigration motives, their mobility trajectories and the acculturation challenges encountered in the host country. Furthermore, this thesis explored the evolving nature of self-perception and identity as shaped by temporal and spatial dynamics, with a focus

on how individuals negotiate and reposition their sense of self within a new sociocultural environment.

2. What are Kabyles' transnational home remaking practices in Scotland?

   Drawing on the idea that home is a process in the making, this section discussed the different strategies the Kabyle community relies on to reconstruct a feeling of home and sense of belonging in the Diaspora while maintaining their cultural identity. In more details, I explored the role that perceived similarities and sentimental attachments with Scotland play in shaping the assimilation experiences of Kabyle immigrants in a multicultural and multiethnic context.

3. How do they forge and maintain connections between themselves and with other Kabyles in the Diaspora and Homeland?

   The types of ties immigrants keep with other in-group members are varied particularly in the current digitalised era. In this part, I explored the variety of connections Kabyle diasporans in Scotland maintain with others locally and across borders. Focusing on the role of cultural organisations and social media platforms, I demonstrated how creating bonds contributes to better immigration and acculturation experiences.

8.2 Key Findings' Discussion and Research Implications

This thesis explored the lived experiences of the Kabyle immigrant community in Scotland, focusing on their migration trajectories, integration and acculturation processes, transnational connections with the homeland, and practices of home making in the diaspora. Drawing on rich qualitative ethnographic data, the study offers a nuanced understanding of how this Amazigh-speaking minority navigates identity, belonging, and continuity in a Scottish context.

8.2.1 Immigration, Identity (Re)Construction and Self (Re)Positioning

In Chapter Five, I introduced my participants' biographies and analysed their narratives regarding their immigration motives and trajectories before settling in Scotland. Their motivations and pathways of their migration are diverse. While some of them migrated to pursue educational degrees and/ or to join potential professional roles, others mentioned

the political and cultural marginalisations as key drivers. These findings corroborate with the findings of Hamani (2021) in her ethnographic study of Kabyles who emigrated to the United Kingdom fleeing the ethnopolitical crisis as a result of the Berber Spring and the Black Decade. Moreover, according to the data, some my participants had left their country of origin due to safety reasons and asylum seeking, personal and professional development or simply by pure luck with no prior plans to settle in Scotland. However, as I observed, economic reasons and better lifestyles remain the shared themes among my participants' narratives. Their immigration is a result of both push and pull factors in that what pulled them to the UK is the opposite of what pushed them to leave their homeland

Moving from a country to another one entails moving from familiar cultural norms into new alien rules that require adaptation and integration. The findings show that these Kabyles do their best to open up and accept the host culture to feel accepted but also demonstrated efforts to maintaining their minority ethnic identity positioning themselves in a multicultural context. The unanimity of the informants showed their desire to maintain their *Kabylité* and to pass it down to the second generation while embracing the Scottish way of life and culture to which they developed attachments leading them to develop transnational hybrid identities. The study found that the participants generally expressed positive experiences with positive integration to the Scottish cultural values regardless of their immigration trajectories. In other words, whether they had been living in Scotland for over three decades or just over one year, for education or political asylum, my participants thrive in their new home. Rather than representing a linear process of assimilation, these findings demonstrate that identity reconstruction is relational, situated and continually negotiated across social, spatial, and temporal contexts. Participants did not replace their Kabyle identities with Scottish ones, nor did they remain fixed within an immutable ethnic identity. Instead, they selectively incorporated aspects of Scottish society while preserving meaningful elements of Kabyle identity, illustrating that identity is simultaneously continuous and adaptive. This finding contributes to migration scholarship by showing that identity preservation and identity transformation are not contradictory processes but complementary dimensions of diasporic belonging.

8.2.2 Acculturation and Home Remaking Practices

The study revealed innovative home-remaking practices in Scotland. Through their stories, the participants described "home" not simply as a physical space but as an evolving sense

of rootedness that blends Kabyle traditions with elements of Scottish life. This includes decorating homes with Amazigh symbols, wearing traditional Kabyle clothes and jewellery, preparing certain types of traditional foods and celebrating both Kabyle and Scottish holidays among friends. These practices reflect an active effort to reconstitute identity and belonging in a new context, rather than passively adapting to it. Moreover, the findings suggest that home is most importantly an emotional and mental state such as feeling comfortable and safe.

The findings revealed something interesting about my participants; they drew comparisons both between themselves and the Scottish population, and between Kabylia and Scotland, which they described as home. On different levels, the Kabyles demonstrated affinities to the Scottish people including ethnolinguistic, social, political and cultural aspects such as the minority status of both Kabyle and Gaelic in Scotland. All these aspects of resemblance provoke memories of Kabylia. Additionally, analogies between Scotland and Kabylia had been made on the physical environmental level particularly the mountains that is the natural habitat of the Kabyles and to which they maintain endeared attachments.

The findings revealed that participants did not construct home solely through social relationships or cultural practices but also through environmental familiarity. Mountains, hills, greenery and rural landscapes repeatedly evoked memories of Kabylia and contributed to feelings of comfort, attachment, and belonging in Scotland. Rather than functioning as a passive backdrop, the natural environment became an active resource in the process of home-making. This finding extends existing discussions of immigrant home-making by demonstrating that environmental similarities can facilitate emotional settlement and identity continuity. It also resonates with emerging research highlighting the importance of migrants' environmental values and ecological attachments (Head et al., 2018), while showing how landscapes themselves become culturally meaningful through memory and experience.

Overall, this thesis demonstrates that home is neither fixed nor entirely detached from place. Rather, it is reconstructed through the interaction of emotional attachments, social relationships, linguistic practices, cultural continuity, and environmental familiarity. Home therefore emerges as both rooted in memories of origin and continually rerouted through new places and experiences.

8.2.3 Connections and Community Building

This research revealed that Kabyles in Scotland forge hybrid types of connections among themselves and with their homeland. The absence of official Kabyle organisations and the covid-19 global pandemic caused the participants to not adhere to bigger organisations. The fact that Kabyle community in Scotland is scattered all over the big cities contributed to less contact between themselves. However, this did not prevent the participants from building bonds particularly starting on the digital space such as Facebook. Most of them created the habit of coming together in small groups either in public places or in their respective homes particularly during important events such as the celebration of the Amazigh New Year 'Yennayer'. These places act as breathing spaces where the ethnic and cultural identity manifests and where the language can be used freely without any fears or judgements from non-Kabyle individuals. This study extends Fishman's notion of breathing spaces beyond minority language revitalisation by showing that such spaces simultaneously facilitate language use, emotional support, identity affirmation, and the reconstruction of home. In the Scottish context, cafés, private homes, restaurants, WhatsApp groups, and Facebook communities function not merely as places of communication but as transnational social infrastructures where Kabyle identities can be safely enacted. These findings corroborate with O'Rourke, 2019 and O'Rourke and Dayan-Fernandez, 2024 who identified certain public places such as cafés as breathing spaces for speaking and using Galician (a minority language spoken in the bilingual community of Galicia in north-west Spain) promoting its revitalisation and transmission. The data shows that connections help in dealing with the immigration sufferings that no single individual is immune to including grief, homesickness and nostalgia. The data also demonstrates that the participants' bonding social capital and bridging social capital are equal in that while they seek to connect and create bonds with other Kabyles, other Algerians, other Muslims or other people sharing certain social or cultural characteristics, they also build ties with the local people and interact with them on regular bases whether as colleagues, neighbours, friends or spouses.

This research also revealed the role of cultural organisations in helping immigrants forge connections between other in-group members and in reconstructing a home-like environment and a first point of contact to them, particularly the newcomers. Furthermore, according to the data, cultural association are essential for maintaining a sense of belonging

and community, transmitting and preserving cultural values of the country of origin as well as improving the community's experiences in the new home. This study also investigated the reasons why there exist no cultural organisation that seeks to gather Kabyles as it is the case of hundreds in France and Canada. According to the findings, several reasons lie behind this including the fear of exclusion due to different political views or religious opinions. The most striking reason is the recreation of the Arab-Kabyle distinction as a colonial legacy that labels the two groups as opponents fired with social disagreements. As observed at the final stage of this research, some of my participants launched a virtual organization on Facebook platforms that aims to meet their needs and wants as immigrants; that is, a secular and apolitical space that welcomes everyone and that works to the promotion of their culture and identity and to facilitate transnational ties. These findings illustrate the adaptive nature of diasporic community-building and demonstrate how belonging is continually negotiated across both physical and virtual spaces. Moreover, beyond the maintenance of Kabyle, the findings reveal dynamic multilingual practices in which Tamazight, French, English, and Arabic each fulfilled distinct symbolic and interactional functions. Rather than representing competing linguistic systems, these languages became resources through which participants negotiated belonging across multiple social worlds. Arabic, French and English mainly functioned as complementary linguistic tools in conversations in addition to Kabyle. French, as an inherited linguistic asset and mostly used by highly educated individuals, frequently functioned as a language of cultural continuity despite having no institutional role in Scotland, illustrating how colonial languages may acquire new meanings within diasporic settings. English increasingly became the language of everyday integration, while Arabic remained associated with broader Algerian and religious identities. These findings contribute to sociolinguistic understandings of transnational multilingualism by demonstrating that language choice reflects changing relationships to identity, home, and belonging rather than simply communicative necessity.

8.3 Research Implications

Although, this study is focused on a small number of Kabyle immigrants in Scotland and that generalisation is not feasible, the findings carry several important implications for both academic scholarship and practical policy concerning migration, integration, and diasporic identity. First, this research contributes to a more nuanced understanding of immigrant experience and integration by emphasizing the importance of cultural specificity. The

Kabyle community, as an Amazigh minority, represents a distinct case that is often overlooked in the French and Canadian contexts. No existing scholarly publications have focused on the Kabyles who settled in Scotland. Their experiences challenge homogenizing narratives and demonstrate that ethnic, linguistic, political and historical backgrounds deeply shape patterns of settlement, belonging, and cultural negotiation. This study contributes to the developing literature around Kabyle Diaspora in the United Kingdom and pioneers in the study of the Scottish space. Therefore, the heterogeneity within migrant groups needs to be taken into serious consideration and basing studies on individual case narratives. Moreover, the study highlights the resilience of minority identities in diaspora, showing how language, traditions, and collective memory are actively preserved and reimagined in new contexts in addition to developing hybrid identities affected by the immigration experiences and the attitudes towards the culture of the new place.

Second, the findings contribute to theoretical discussions on transnationalism and home making by demonstrating that home is not simply a return point or a fixed location, but a process of continual construction shaped by emotional, material, and symbolic practices. The concept of "dual belonging" expressed by participants suggests that diasporic individuals can feel at home in multiple contexts without fully assimilating or abandoning their heritage. This has implications for how researchers and practitioners conceptualize identity and citizenship in an increasingly mobile and interconnected world. Additionally, the findings confirm the multidimensional characteristic of the concept of home and its mobility and further its definition beyond the physical aspects such a dwelling and a household.

Third, the study underscores the importance of transnational connections, both virtual and physical, in sustaining diasporic identity and community cohesion. Participants maintain strong ties with relatives, cultural networks, and activist circles across Algeria, France, and other parts of the Kabyle diaspora through frequent visits, remittances, and digital communication platforms such as WhatsApp and Facebook. Cultural organisations, both formal and informal, play a central role in fostering these connections by organizing events, preserving language and traditions, and cultivating a shared sense of identity. Supporting such organisations can be vital for maintaining social cohesion and enabling meaningful engagement across borders. Moreover, these connections, transnational or within the diasporic community, improve the immigrants' experiences through providing

support in dealing with the sufferings as a result of resettlement and strengthen their sense of belonging and community and the process of integration.

Finally, the study offers methodological insights for qualitative migration research. The use of narrative interviews and ethnographic engagement proved particularly effective in capturing the depth and complexity of Kabyle diasporic life. Future researchers working with underrepresented or minority migrant communities may benefit from similarly participatory, trust-based approaches. This thesis demonstrates the value of combining reflexive ethnography, semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and digital ethnography to study small, dispersed migrant communities. This multi-method approach captured not only participants' narratives of home-making but also its everyday enactment across physical and virtual spaces, illustrating the importance of studying belonging as a lived (living) and evolving process rather than solely as a retrospective account.

8.4 Limitations and Further Recommendations

While this study provides important insights into the experiences of the Kabyle immigrant community in Scotland, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the study is limited in scope by its relatively small sample size. Although qualitative methods allow for deep, nuanced exploration, the number of participants may not be representative of the entire Kabyle diaspora in Scotland or other parts of the UK. As such, the findings should not be generalized without caution. However, the results can still be applied to other cases of ethnic minorities in Scotland or to the Kabyle community in other countries where they are understudied.

Second, this research was conducted during a period influenced by the Covid-19 pandemic, which affected participants' mobility, community activities, and access to social and cultural spaces. This may have shaped their responses, particularly regarding integration, home-making, and transnational engagement. Third, the study population is male dominated. As a male researcher, it was difficult to approach the female relatives of some of the participants due to honour towards which Kabyles show obsession as it was the case with Mazigh or even simply approaching individual female individuals. Furthermore, it had been difficult for me to directly approach because of religious and cultural backgrounds as it was the case with Dalil's mother and Aylan's female friend as well as the different people I messaged on social media.

As it is the case in most types of research, changing a single variable can lead to different perspectives and findings. Based on the limitations encountered, future research could expand the focus on other locations, whether in the UK or other parts of the world where Kabyles represent a minority particularly place where languages other than French and English are spoken such as Norway and Spain. Future research could also investigate how migrants reconstruct home in contexts where co-ethnic communities are absent or remain weakly institutionalised. Comparative studies between dispersed and highly concentrated diasporas would help determine how community size influences identity maintenance, language practices, and belonging. Given the predominance of male participants in this study, future research could explore how gender intersects with economic, social, cultural, and symbolic capital in shaping migration trajectories and home-making practices among Kabyle women. Other possibilities could further investigate the relationship between environmental attachment and migrant home-making. Comparative studies examining how landscapes, climate, biodiversity, and ecological familiarity shape migrants' emotional attachment to place would contribute to the growing literature on migration and environmental values. Alternatively, future research could concentrate on the second generation of Kabyle in Scotland and their double belonging versus possible double absence as in Nelya's or Aylan's son cases. Last but not least, one can explore the Kabyle immigrants' memory of the Black Decade through Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis focusing on the individual stories and how that shapes views and attitudes towards the country of origine

In tracing the migration journeys, integration pathways and home-making practices of the Kabyle community in Scotland, this study has shed light on the complex ways in which identity, memory, and belonging are sustained and reshaped across borders. It has shown that home is not simply a place of origin or settlement, but a lived and evolving process, negotiated through language, culture, community, and everyday acts of resistance and care. In a world increasingly marked by displacement, mobility, and contested notions of identity, the Kabyle experience invites us to rethink what it means to belong, not just somewhere, but in manywheres. As diasporas continue to grow and assert their voices in the global landscape, perhaps the more pressing question is no longer "Where is home?", but rather how can we make space for many homes to coexist, without demanding that any be left behind? Home is not where we are from or where we arrive, but what we create in the spaces between. I conclude stating that home is stretched across time and space living in

memories, language, experiences and everyday rituals. Home is where one imagines and reimagines the real self.

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Appendices

Appendix One: Participant Information sheet

Participant's Information Sheet

1. Study Title and Researcher Details

Project Title:

Transmission and Preservation of Oral Traditional Kabyle Culture and Language in the Village Level and beyond: An Ethnographic Study

Researcher: - Hamid Boudiaf (XXXXXXXX@student.gla.ac.uk)

Supervisors: - Prof Bernadette O'Rourke (Bernadette.ORourke@glasgow.ac.uk)

- Dr Tatiana Heise (Tatiana.Heise@glasgow.ac.uk)

Degree in preparation: PhD in Modern Languages and Cultures

2. Invitation Paragraph:

You are given this document as an invitation to take part in my research. Your **contribution** will be much appreciated. Before you decide, please take your time to read this information sheet as it contains details on the nature of the project, its objectives and why it is being done. Feel free to discuss it with others and ask us if you see anything as unclear or if you would like more information. Please, bear in mind that **participation** is totally **voluntary, confidential** and **withdrawal** is possible at any stage. If you confirm your participation, you will be given this document as well as a consent form to sign and keep. French and Arabic versions of this document may also be given to you if you wish. **Thank you**.

3. What is the purpose of the study?

The purpose of this study is to look at how and when transmission of the Kabyle oral traditional culture and language happens and what are the factors that encourage and discourage the intra and inter-generational transmission process. I also aim at investigating the different approaches the Kabyle people adopt to preserve their linguistic and cultural identities in Algeria and in transnational contexts. I focus on the Kabyle community in Scotland as it has never been researched before with an interest on how they keep connections with other Kabyle people in homeland and in other parts of the UK and the world.

4. Why have I been chosen?

This invitation is addressed to you because you fall into the category of participants that are most relevant to the project. You also show one or all the following characteristics:

- You identify yourself as a Kabyle person
- You speak the Kabyle language (optional)
- One or both of your parents are Kabyle
- You are living in the UK (Scotland in Particular)
- You have lived in Kabylia before (optional)
- You are a foreigner and are interested in the Kabyle culture

5. Do I have to participate?

Although your involvement would contribute to the completion of this research, it is your own choice to decide whether or not to take part. It is entirely **voluntary**. Your refusal of cooperation will not affect you in any way. Please, remember that you are **free to withdraw** from the study at any time without giving a reason.

6. What will happen to me if I take part?

This research is ethnographic. Engaging in it means that you accept to take some of your time to **meet** with the researcher, to be **interviewed**, and allow **immersion** of the researcher into your daily activities in relation to the Kabyle culture. The interviews may be one-on-one or focus group. More than one interview/ meeting may be organised with you. Due to the current covid-19 situation, some interviews may be conducted virtually. With your consent, the conversation may be **recorded**.

Whenever necessary and with your agreement, the researcher may wish to contact you via a social medium of your choice for the purpose of in-depth discussions and gathering additional data. You are not required to prepare anything, dress well, use another language or change behaviour. Ethnographic research looks at participants and their activities in their natural everyday settings.

7. Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

All information which is collected about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly **confidential.** You will be identified by an ID number and any information about you will have your name removed so that you cannot be recognised from it.

8. What will happen to the project data of the research?

Complying with the UK General Data Protection Regulations, the to be gathered materials will be retained in a secure repository by the University of Glasgow for a period of ten year after the completion of the research. The interviews' results will first be transcribed, and any identifying information will be removed before storage. Prior to thesis completion, all data will be kept in an encrypted device. Additionally, the anonymised results will only be used for academic purposes. An electronic copy of the completed thesis will be made publicly available on the Enlighten: Theses, the University of Glasgow e-thesis repository.

9. Who is organising and funding this research?

This project is funded by the Algerian Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research.

10. Who has reviewed the study?

This research is supervised by Prof. Bernadette O'Rourke and Dr Tatiana Heise. It has been reviewed and approved by members of the College of Arts Research Committee on the 31/01/2022 under the reference number 100210057

11. How can I access information relating to me or complaint if I suspect information has been used for other purposes other than I agreed to?

In an instance concern, please, contact me or my supervisors. If you are not comfortable doing so, or if you have tried and did not get a response, please contact the College of Arts Ethics Officer, currently **Dr James Simpson**, (email: arts-ethics@glasgow.ac.uk)

As part of the University's obligations under UK General Data Protection Regulation, you retain the right to access and objection with regard of the use of non-anonymised data for research purposes.

Access requests and objections can be submitted via the UofG proforma accessible at: https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/dpfoioffice/gdpr/gdprrequests/#. The University is legally required to respond and address concerns. To avoid any fraudulent approaches that might result in data breaches, you will need to provide a proof of identity.

You also have the right to lodge a complaint against the University regarding data protection issues with the Information Commissioner's Office: (https://ico.org.uk/concerns/)

12. Who to contact to ask for further information?

Please, feel free to contact the researcher or the supervisors for further information.

If you have any concerns regarding the conduct of the project, you can contact the College of Arts Ethics Officer (email: arts-ethics@glasgow.ac.uk)

Thank you for your time and consideration

Appendix Two: Consent Form

Consent to Participate

I understand that Mr Hamid Boudiaf is collecting data in the form of field notes and recorded interviews for use in an academic research project at the University of Glasgow.

I have read the information sheet outlining the project and its methods and I had the opportunity to ask questions that arise from it. The research is well explained to me.

I consent to participate in the interviews on the following terms:

1. I can leave any question unanswered.

2. The interview can be stopped at any point.

I agree to the processing of data for this project on the following terms:

1. Use and storage of research data in the University of Glasgow reflects the institution's educational/ research mission and its legal responsibilities in relation to both information security and scrutiny of researcher conduct.

a. I understand and accept that the 'lawful basis' for the processing of personal data is that the project constitutes 'a task in the public interest', and that any processing of special category data is 'necessary for archiving purposes in the public interest, or scientific and historical research'.

b. I understand that I have the right to **access** data relating to me or that I have provided and to **object** where I have reason to believe it has been misused or used for purposes other than those stated.

c. Project materials in both physical and electronic form will be treated as **confidential** and kept in secure storage (encrypted, password-protected devices and University user accounts) at all times.

2. Interviews will be transcribed, and all the recordings will be destroyed after the final submission of the thesis.

3. I will not be identified by my name in the study unless I decide otherwise. All other information that could identify me as an individual will be removed or redacted.

4. I have the right to leave any question unanswered.

5. **Named Participation:** If I choose to take part as a named participant, I may withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason and if that happens, all records of my answers will be deleted immediately.

6. **Pseudonymous Participation:** I understand that I can participate in this study and have my name replaced with a pseudonym of my choice.

6. **Anonymous Participation:** If I choose to take part anonymously, I understand that the anonymised data can be used for the purposes of the research without further reference back to me. However, I retain the right of access and objection if I have concern that I remain directly identifiable from the data or that it has been used for purposes other than those stated.

Appendix Three: Participant Information Sheet (French version)

Fiche d'information

1. Titre de l'étude et coordonnées du chercheur

Titre du projet:

Transmission et préservation de la langue et oralité Kabyle au-delà du contexte local: Une étude ethnographique

Chercheur : - Hamid Boudiaf (XXXXXXXX@student.gla.ac.uk)

Encadreurs : - Prof Bernadette O'Rourke (Bernadette.ORourke@glasgow.ac.uk)

- Dr Tatiana Heise (Tatiana.Heise@glasgow.ac.uk)

Diplôme en préparation : Doctorat en Langues et Cultures Modernes

2. Paragraphe d'invitation :

Ce document vous est donné en guise d'invitation á participer et contribuer á notre recherche. Il contient des informations ainsi que des détails sur la nature du projet, ses objectifs et justifie ses motivations. Prenez la liberté d'en parler autours de vous et n'hésitez pas á poser des questions pour plus d'information ou de clarification. Veuillez noter que votre participation est entièrement facultative, confidentielle et la rétractation est possible á tout moment. Si vous confirmez votre engagement, un formulaire de consentement vous sera donné afin de le signer. Nos remerciements.

3. Quel lest l'objectif de cette étude ?

Le but de cette recherche est d'examiner les différentes manières de transmission de la langue et la culture orale kabyle ainsi que de dévoiler les facteurs qui stimulent et les éléments qui obstruent la chaine de transmission inter et intra-générationnelle. Je m'intéresse aussi aux différentes approches que les kabyles adoptent pour préserver leur identité linguistique et culturelle dans le contexte transnational. Mon attention se focalise sur la communauté kabyle d'Ecosse. Ce projet explore également les différentes façons de cette communauté á garder des liens sociaux avec les kabyles de leur pays natal, du Royaume Uni, et du monde ainsi que l'importance de ces contacts dans la transmission et la préservation de la langue et l'identité.

4. Pourquoi j'ai été choisi ?

Cette invitation vous est adressée car vous avez une ou plusieurs de ces caractéristiques :

- Vous vous identifiez en tant que kabyle
- Vous parlez le kabyle
- Un de vos parents est kabyle
- Vous vivez au Royaume Uni (Ecosse en particulier)
- Vous avez déjà vécu en Kabylie
- Vous êtes étranger et vous vous intéressez á la culture kabyle

5. Dois-je participer ?

Bien que votre engagement contribuerait certainement á la finalisation de ce projet, la décision de participer ou non vous revient entièrement. Votre collaboration est totalement volontaire et

facultative. Vous avez le droit absolu de vous rétracter á tout moment sans justification préalable. Le fait de refuser l'invitation ou de vous retirer de l'étude ne vous affectera nullement. Veuillez retenir que la rétractation ne serait plus possible après le déposé de la thèse.

6. Que va-t-il m'arriver si je participe ?
Cette recherche est de nature ethnographique. Y prendre part c'est accepter de prendre de votre temps afin d'être interviewé et de permettre l'immersion du chercheur dans vos activités en relation á la culture kabyle. Les interviews peuvent être individuelles avec le chercheur ou en groupe. En raison de la crise sanitaire actuelle (covid-19), certaines interviews pourraient être virtuelles. Avec votre permission, les conversations pourront être enregistrées.
En cas de nécessité et avec votre accord, le chercheur voudrait vous contacter pour de plus ample discussions approfondies. Vous n'avez rien á préparer, pas besoin de vous habiller différemment, de parler une autre langue ou de changer de comportement. Les études ethnographiques observent les participants et leurs activités quotidiennes dans leur milieu naturel habituel.

7. Ma participation sera-t-elle confidentielle?
Toute information qui sera collectée sur vous sera gardée strictement confidentielle á moins que vous indiquez le contraire. Vous avez le choix d'y prendre part en tant que participant nommé, pseudonyme ou anonyme. Cependant, après le dépôt de la thèse, toutes les données récupérées seront anonymisées avant d'être conservées.

8. Qu'adviendra-t-il des informations récupérées ?
Conformément au Règlement général sur la protection des données du Royaume-Uni, les informations récupérées seront stockées dans le recueil sécurisé de l'université de Glasgow pour une période de dix ans après l'achèvement du projet. Cette période serait prolongée si les données seront consultées par un autre chercheur. Les interviews seront transcrits et anonymisés avant le stockage et les enregistrement seront détruits plus tard. Avant le stockage

définitif, tout information sera gardée dans le OneDrive de l'université ainsi que dans un appareil sécurisé par un mot de passe. Ces données ne seront utilisées qu'à des fins académiques. Enfin, une version électronique de la thèse finale sera publiquement accessible sur le Enlighten: Theses, le dépôt des e-thèses de l'université de Glasgow.

9. Qui organise et sponsorise cette recherche ?
Cette étude est sponsorisée par le ministère algérien de l'enseignement supérieur et de la recherche scientifique

10. Qui a examiné cette recherche ?
Ce projet est encadré par prof. Bernadette O'Rourke et Dr Tatiana Heise. Il a été examiné et approuvé par les membre du comité d'éthique de la faculté des sciences humaines le 31/01/2022 sous la référence 100210057

11. Comment avoir accès á mes information et comment me plaindre ?
En cas de problème, veuillez me contacter le chercheur ou les encadreurs. Vous pouvez aussi

contacter le responsable d'éthique, actuellement Dr James Simpson, (email: arts-ethics@glasgow.ac.uk)

En respect au RGPD du Royaume Uni, l'université de Glasgow conserve vos droits d'accès et d'objection concernant l'utilisation non-anonyme de vos informations.
Pour les demandes d'accès et d'objection, veuillez remplir le formulaire suivant : https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/dpfoioffice/gdpr/gdprrequests/#. L'université est légalement tenue de répondre et de traiter vos préoccupations. Vous devrez fournir une preuve d'identité afin d'éviter toute démarche frauduleuse.
Vous pouvez déposer une plainte contre l'université concernant la protection de vos données auprès du commissaire de l'information: (https://ico.org.uk/concerns/)

12. Qui contacter pour plus d'information ?
Pour plus d'information, veuillez contacter le chercheur ou les encadreurs.
Pour toute préoccupation et doute sur les bases éthiques de ce projet, veuillez contacter le

président du comité d'éthique de la faculté des sciences humaines (email: arts-ethics@glasgow.ac.uk)

Merci pour votre collaboration.

Appendix Four: Consent Form (French version)

Consentement á la participation

Je comprends que M. Hamid Boudiaf recueille des données sous forme de notes et d'interviews enregistrés pour une étude académique á l'université de Glasgow.

J'ai lu la fiche d'information qui inclue des informations sur le projet ainsi que ses méthodes, et j'ai eu l'opportunité de poser mes questions.

J'accepte de participer dans les interviews sous les conditions suivantes:

1. Je peux ne pas répondre à toutes les questions.

2. L'interview peut être arrêté à tout moment

J'accepte l'utilisation des données dans les conditions suivantes :

1. L'utilisation et le stockage des données á l'université de Glasgow reflète la mission d'éducation et de recherche de cette institution ainsi que ses responsabilités légales en ce qui concerne la sécurité de l'information et le bon comportement du chercheur.

a. Je comprends et accepte que la "base légale" du traitement des données personnelles est que le projet constitue "une tâche d'intérêt public" et aussi, tout traitement de données de catégorie spéciale est "nécessaire à des fins d'archivage dans l'intérêt public, ou de recherche scientifique et historique".

b. Je comprends que j'ai le droit d'**accès** aux données retenues sur moi et le droit d'**opposition** si je déduis qu'elles ont été mésusées ou utilisées à des fins autres que celle indiquées.

c. Toute donnée collectée, sous forme physique ou électronique, sera gardée confidentielle et stockée dans lieu sûr (OneDrive de l'université et appareil crypté avec mot de passe).

2. Les interviews seront transcrits et tout enregistrement sera détruit après l'achèvement de l'étude.

3. Mon nom sera remplacé par un pseudonyme sauf si j'en décide autrement. Tout autre identifiant sera retiré pour assurer ma confidentialité et respecter ma personne.

4. J'ai le droit de laisser n'importe quelle question sans réponse

5. **Participation nommée :** Si je choisis d'y prendre part avec mon nom, je pourrais me retirer de l'étude à tout moment sans donner de raison préalablement. Si cela arrive, tout enregistrement sera immédiatement supprimé.

6. **Participation pseudonyme :** je comprends que je peux participer á cette en ayant mon nom remplacé par un pseudonyme de mon choix.

7. **Participation anonyme :** si j'y prends part anonymement, je comprends que les données anonymisées peuvent être utilisées dans la recherche sans pour autant avoir ma permission.

Cependant, je garde mon droit d’accès et d’opposition si ma personne est facilement identifiable ou si mes données ont été utilisé pour d’autres objectifs autres que ceux mentionnés.