

# Digital Technologies and Endogenous Cultures in Niger: Between Preservation and Transformation

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## ABSTRACT

This article critically examines the complex intersection between endogenous cultural preservation and the rapid penetration of digital technologies, including artificial intelligence (AI), in the Republic of Niger. Situated within the broader context of digital globalization and the country's significant infrastructural and policy limitations, the study aims to provide a nuanced assessment of both the transformative opportunities and the existential threats that technological integration poses to cultural continuity. Employing a qualitative, document-based analytical approach grounded in Canclini's seminal theory of cultural hybridization and Castells' influential network society model, the research explores the multifaceted ways in which information and communication technologies (ICTs) influence the safeguarding, transformation, and dissemination of Nigerien languages, rituals, and artistic expressions. The findings indicate a dualistic impact: digital technologies actively foster the revitalization of cultural heritage through innovative digitization projects, online educational tools, and social media diffusion, while simultaneously heightening the risks of cultural homogenization, decontextualization, and a deepening dependency on foreign digital ecosystems and platforms. The study concludes that sustainable and sovereign cultural preservation in the digital age necessitates a multi-pronged strategy involving equitable technological access, robust digital literacy initiatives, participatory and community-led archiving practices, and reinforced legal and ethical protection of cultural rights. Overall, the article constitutes a significant contribution to the academic discourse on digital globalization by elucidating the specific mechanisms through which African societies—with Niger as a poignant case study—can navigate the delicate balance between embracing technological innovation and protecting their invaluable cultural diversity and sovereignty.

**Keywords:** Artificial intelligence, Cultural hybridization, Cultural preservation, Digitization, Endogenous cultures, ICTs, Niger, Social networks.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The contemporary world is shaped by a persistent tension between the local and the global, a tension that defines much of modern social and cultural life (Vryzas & Tsitouridou, 2011). Nowhere is this dynamic more palpable than in Africa, where long-standing traditions are no longer lived within watertight partitions that keep them in an immutable state of "originality," as might be desired by purist "guardians of the temple." On the contrary, these traditions are subject to continuous influences and profound metamorphosis, not only under the abstract effect of globalization but also and most powerfully under the unstoppable and tangible effect of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). Through what can be termed Information and Communication Sociotechnical Systems (ICSS), the endogenous cultural content of African countries is rendered instantly accessible across the world, a process that inevitably impacts, modifies, and often destabilizes their established practices, their symbolic references, and their very identities. As in other countries on the continent, the rapid adoption of digital technologies, fueled by the ongoing expansion of the internet and the increasing accessibility of connected devices, is strongly and irrevocably affecting cultural production and consumption patterns in Niger, a nation endowed with an exceptionally rich and diverse cultural heritage.

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This study aims to provide a comprehensive and critical overview of existing researches related to the way technologies can help preserve Niger's endogenous cultural heritage, or, conversely, exert a negative and potentially corrosive impact on it. Both theoretical and empirical in its orientation, our approach seeks to understand the complex role of technologies, including the emerging field of artificial intelligence (AI), in the cultural development of Niger, a process unfolding within a particularly volatile context of socio-political crisis related to the reclaiming of national sovereignty. The central objective is to rigorously assess the multifaceted impact of technologies on endogenous cultures, systematically analyzing the tangible benefits and the potential risks in a balanced manner. This study adopts a qualitative methodological approach based primarily on the critical analysis of a wide range of literature, including academic publications, government reports, and NGO studies, on the themes directly related to the subject addressed.

Our analytical framework is guided by two pivotal theoretical paradigms. The first is [García Canclini \(2001\)](#) theory of cultural hybridization, which moves beyond simplistic notions of cultural mixture to describe the active recomposition of cultural practices, meanings, and uses within social contexts traversed by modernity and globalization. The second is [Castells \(1998\)](#) model of the network society, which highlights the transformative role of digital technologies in creating new social structures based on flexibility, decentralization, and global interconnection. These lenses allow us to interpret the Nigerien case not as a simple story of loss or gain, but as a dynamic process of negotiation and re-creation.

This article is structured as follows. In the first part, we will examine the socio-cultural and technological context of Niger, with a specific focus on the nexus between Nigerien cultures and the emergence of digital technologies and AI. In the second part, we will delve deeper into the theoretical framework that underpins our analysis. Parts three and four will respectively analyze the impact of technologies on cultural preservation and the processes of cultural hybridization, and finally, the last part will focus on the prospects and recommendations for a sustainable future.

## 2. SOCIO-CULTURAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

### 2.1. *The Rich Tapestry of Endogenous Cultures in Niger*

Niger is a West African nation where the traditions of its diverse communities —including the Tuaregs, Zarma, Tamasheq, Songhai, Fulani, Kanuri, Toubou, and others— are deeply rooted in the daily lives of its citizens ([Issoufou, 2025](#)). These cultures are characterized by an impressive diversity of oral traditions, religious practices, social customs, and traditional knowledge systems related to agriculture, medicine, and conflict resolution. National languages, of which there are over twenty, are of paramount importance in the intergenerational transmission of this knowledge, often channeled through vibrant forms of orature such as tales, proverbs, songs, and panegyrics. These oral modes of communication do more than convey information; they strengthen cultural identity and reinforce the social and moral links between generations. For example, the Zarma language plays an indispensable role in the social cohesion of rural communities in the country, where it serves as the primary vehicle for the transmission of values and social norms ([Stagos et al., 2018](#)). In the same way, cultural practices, such as the energetic traditional dances of the Hausa, the intricate camel saddles of the Tuareg, the elaborate wedding ceremonies of the Kanuri, and the communal funeral rites observed across ethnic groups, play a central and animating role in the social life of the people.

However, this immense cultural richness faces formidable challenges related to the forces of globalization and external influences, which are increasingly mediated by technology and the Internet. “The term globalization of culture refers to the circulation of cultural products on a global scale. This process leads, for some, to a democratic planet unified by a universal culture and for others to an inevitable loss of identity” ([Vryzas & Tsitouridou, 2011](#)). This tension frames a critical question for Niger: are these ancient practices in danger of gradual extinction, or, on the contrary, can they be revitalized and given new life through the strategic application of digital technologies?

### 2.2. *Culture and the Emergence of Technologies and the Internet in Niger*

The emergence of ICTs and the Internet in Niger was a gradual process, but it accelerated dramatically with the popularization of mobile phones and internet services in the 2000s. According to data from the Regulatory Authority for Electronic Communications and Posts of Niger (ARCEP), the Internet penetration rate has increased significantly in recent years, driven by the high adoption of smartphones in both urban and, to a lesser extent, rural areas. In 2022, about 21% of the Nigerien population had access to the Internet, a rate which, although rising, remains

substantially below the global average and underscores the significant digital divide that persists ([Autorité de Régulation des Communications Électroniques et de la Poste \(ARCEP\), 2023](#)). This partial democratization of Internet access has nevertheless opened up new and unprecedented perspectives for citizens, particularly in terms of communication, informal education, and cultural sharing. Young Nigerians are at the forefront of this change, adeptly using social platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and more recently TikTok, to interact, exchange ideas, and share cultural content. Each of them, "[...] through their daily online activity feeds their identity, the representation they have of themselves and the representation they wish to present to others" ([El-Mehdi & Dar Assi, 2020](#)).

However, this adoption of technologies is not without its profound challenges. Deeply unequal access to the Internet, notoriously slow and unreliable connections in many rural areas, and the relatively high costs of Internet access relative to average income constitute significant obstacles to the spread of digital culture in large parts of the country. In addition, according to [Moulay, Léchappé, Bernauau, and Plestan \(2021\)](#) digital training and literacy remain a major challenge for the vast majority of the Nigerien population, which does not yet fully master digital tools, a gap that limits their ability to leverage technology for positive ends.

### *2.3. The Pervasive Influence of Technology in Nigerien Society*

Digital technologies are having a profound and observable impact on young Nigeriens, transforming the way they live, consume information, and express themselves culturally. One of the most notable examples is the use of digital platforms for music. Local artists are increasingly using social media to spread their musical creations, which often feature modernized traditional rhythms. For example, artists like Sani Sidi have managed to promote Fulani music internationally thanks to the Internet, illustrating how technologies can be harnessed to preserve and promote endogenous cultures on a global stage. These platforms "[...] create a structure in which human cultures express themselves" ([Vryzas & Tsitouridou, 2011](#)) providing a new stage for Nigerien artistry.

Nevertheless, technologies also exert a powerful influence on the social behaviors and cultural choices of the younger generations. The effects of global cultures, disseminated via social media and including Western fashion trends, dietary practices, and linguistic borrowings, on young people are significant and growing. As a result, some traditional values could be altered or relegated to the background in favor of new, globally-informed identities. In addition, digital technologies promote the networking of cultural communities through online forums, blogs, and websites dedicated to Nigerien traditions and culture. These virtual spaces allow Nigeriens living abroad to maintain a vital connection with their culture of origin, but they also provide unique opportunities for younger generations living in Niger to learn, reinterpret, and redefine their cultural identity in an increasingly connected and complex world.

## **3. FRAMEWORKS FOR ANALYZING THE IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGIES ON CULTURES**

### *3.1. The Theory of Cultural Hybridization*

Néstor García Canclini's work provides an essential tool for moving beyond binary understandings of cultural change. In his seminal book *Hybrid Cultures: Strategies for Entering and Exiting Modernity*, he argues that "*Hybridization is not only a mixture, but a recomposition of cultural practices, meanings and uses in social contexts traversed by modernity, postmodernity and globalization*" ([García Canclini, 2001](#)). He compellingly notes that cultures are never pure or static but are always in a state of transformation, especially through processes of globalization. This perspective helps us see that individuals often belong simultaneously to their own local culture and participate in a broader, universalizing culture. "*In an increasingly interdependent global system, there are no autonomous cultures*" ([Vryzas & Tsitouridou, 2011](#)).

The introduction of technology and the Internet into local societies like Niger's is a powerful engine for such hybridization processes, where traditional cultural elements are dynamically mixed with global influences. In the Nigerien context, hybridization manifests itself vividly in the fusion of local musical genres with international styles. For instance, the traditional Tuareg genre "Amanar" or the Hausa "Ganga" music are increasingly being mixed with international influences like hip-hop, R&B, and electronic music, and these new hybrid forms are disseminated globally via platforms such as YouTube or Facebook. This phenomenon is further illustrated by the way young Nigeriens appropriate globalized cultural forms, from clothing styles to slang, and creatively reinterpret them within

their local contexts, a process that involves both adapting to global flows and actively seeking to preserve a distinct cultural identity.

### **3.2. The Model of the Network Society and Digital Globalization**

Manuel Castells, in his monumental theory of the network society, provides a macro-level understanding of the structural changes underpinning cultural hybridization. For this sociologist, "*The networked society is a social structure made up of networks activated by digital communication technologies and based on flexibility, decentralization and interconnection on a global scale*" (García Canclini, 2001). Digital globalization, a direct result of the rapid diffusion of these technologies, is therefore transforming cultures by relentlessly exposing them to global influences, while simultaneously offering them new and previously unimaginable opportunities to participate in the worldwide circulation of knowledge, images, and practices.

In the case of Niger, Castells' theory helps us to understand how the spread of the Internet and mobile networks allows for a constant and intimate meeting between global values (especially those of the Western world) and local cultural practices. For example, the widespread adoption of smartphones and instant messaging apps like WhatsApp is fostering greater interconnection with the outside world, which in turn is changing the nature of social interactions, lifestyles, and even cultural consumption patterns of young Nigeriens. The network society creates a new spatial logic, the space of flows, which exists alongside the traditional space of places, and Nigerien culture is increasingly being produced and consumed within this new, deterritorialized realm.

## **4. THE IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGIES ON THE SAFEGUARDING OF ENDOGENOUS CULTURES**

### **4.1. Safeguarding Local Languages through Digital Means**

Local languages are a key and foundational element of Niger's endogenous cultures. The country is characterized by great linguistic diversity, with more than 20 languages spoken, including Hausa, Zarma, and Tamasheq. These languages are not only mere means of communication, but also vital vectors of identity and the primary channels for the transmission of traditional knowledge. The Internet and technology can play an important role in the preservation of these languages, many of which are vulnerable. Digital platforms allow, for example, for the creation of extensive language databases, online dictionaries, and interactive educational tools designed to teach local languages to younger generations who might otherwise prioritize French or English.

Language digitization projects, such as those carried out by non-governmental organizations or cultural institutions, are crucial for enhancing the documentation of local languages in dynamic, multi-media forms such as texts, audio recordings, and videos. A notable example is the national languages digitization project led by the National Institute of Arts and Culture of Niger, which aims to safeguard and promote local languages through mobile applications, educational platforms, and online resources. The use of the Internet thus makes it possible to preserve these languages in the face of the very real threat of their gradual disappearance, while allowing a new generation to learn and speak their mother tongues while simultaneously integrating into the global digital world.

However, the digitization of local languages also poses significant challenges. The lack of quality, engaging digitized content, low digital literacy rates among speakers, and fundamental limitations in internet access in rural areas can severely hinder these well-intentioned initiatives. Furthermore, the dominance of major global languages on the very platforms used for preservation creates a linguistic environment that is inherently challenging for minority languages. Nevertheless, the strategic use of technology, although still in its early stages, represents a promising and increasingly necessary avenue for the preservation of Niger's linguistic heritage.

### **4.2. Preservation of Nigerien Traditional Cultural Practices**

In addition to languages, traditional cultural practices, such as ceremonies, dances, music, rituals, and artisan crafts, are an integral part of the cultural identity of Nigeriens. Modernization and globalization are putting these practices at risk, particularly because of the adoption of new forms of entertainment and leisure resulting from technology and the Internet, which compete for the time and attention of the youth. However, technologies can also be powerfully used to document and disseminate these very same cultural practices. For example, traditional music and dances can be professionally recorded and shared on platforms such as YouTube or SoundCloud, allowing for wide dissemination beyond local and national borders. These recordings can also serve as invaluable educational

archives for the transmission of knowledge to future generations, who may no longer be in direct, daily contact with the elders who are the traditional repositories of this knowledge.

In this regard, for Soltani, "New technologies would give rise [...] to a new, bottom-up mode of transmission, thus offering a space for dialogue between generations", and similarly, mark today's society by the "gradual disappearance of borders" (El-Mehdi & Dar Assi, 2020). Social media also plays a key logistical role in protecting cultural traditions. Groups on Facebook or WhatsApp, for example, are widely used to organize cultural events, festivals, and traditional ceremonies, coordinating participants across vast distances. In addition, digital platforms allow traditional artists and craftspeople to gain visibility, sell their works to a global market, or find funding for cultural projects through crowdfunding. This increased visibility and economic potential can contribute to the sustainability of certain cultural practices by adapting them to new economic and social requirements. A prominent example is the use of Facebook Live or YouTube to livestream traditional ceremonies or local festivals, such as Eid or Tabaski, which are seen by a large international audience, thus strengthening the link between Nigeriens in the diaspora and their culture of origin and fostering a sense of global community.

However, this digitalization of cultural practices can also present serious risks, particularly that of reducing these rich, complex traditions to decontextualized shows that can be easily consumed by a global audience, thereby distorting the deep spiritual and social meanings of certain cultural practices.

## 5. RISKS, OBSTACLES, AND THE PROCESS OF HYBRIDIZATION

### 5.1. The Risks of Cultural Degradation and Homogenization

While digital technologies offer undeniable opportunities to preserve local cultures, they also pose significant and potentially severe risks to the integrity of Niger's endogenous cultures. The overwhelming influence of global media and social networks can lead to a process of cultural homogenization that directly threatens the authenticity and uniqueness of local cultural practices. Younger generations, particularly teens and young adults, are highly susceptible to being influenced by foreign cultural patterns spread on visually driven platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook. These influences can lead to a gradual devaluation of local traditions in favor of modern, often Western, lifestyles, which are frequently perceived as "cooler" or more "trendy." The adoption of Western values, such as the consumption of foreign cultural products, specific clothing trends, or even changing perceptions of family and community, can gradually weaken adherence to traditional cultural practices. Some scholars argue that social networks, "as spaces where citizens can express themselves, contest, build, deconstruct, seem to weaken African culture in terms of communication (Somda, 2020). In addition, misinformation, rumors, and unregulated content circulating on the Internet can contribute to the dissemination of negative stereotypes about local cultures, which damages their image and respect both internally and externally. For example, young people may be confronted with content that idealizes foreign cultural practices while simultaneously devaluing local traditions, a juxtaposition that could lead to a profound crisis of cultural identity and self-worth.

### 5.2. The Influence of Social Networks on Cultural Practices in Niger

Social media has a huge and ever-evolving impact on how local cultures are experienced, performed, and perceived in Niger. These platforms allow for rapid, continuous, and multimodal interaction between individuals, but they also fundamentally transform the way traditions and cultural identities are shared and constructed. Young Nigeriens often use social media as a primary canvas for self-expression and for sharing their cultural ideas, whether it's a video of a traditional dance, a clip of original music, or a display of traditional fashion. Platforms like YouTube and Instagram have become creative laboratories where young people can actively revisit ancient traditions by introducing modern elements, thereby creating a visible and dynamic form of cultural hybridization. For example, videos of traditional dances set to modern electronic music or hip-hop beats can reach a global audience, demonstrating how technologies allow Nigerien culture to adapt and evolve while attempting to preserve its essential essence.

Nevertheless, this dissemination can also foster problematic cultural appropriation, where local cultural practices are exploited for commercial or tourist purposes without adequate respect for their cultural meanings and contexts (Tapsoba, 2021). For example, ritual practices, sacred traditional symbols, or local dances may be appropriated by international individuals, influencers, or companies without regard to their context or symbolic value, which can

reduce their authentic impact and significance within the source communities, turning them into exotic commodities.

### 5.3. The Digital Divide and Skills Gap

One of the major obstacles to the integration of technologies in the safeguarding of endogenous cultures is the stark lack of access, particularly in remote rural areas. Indeed, "*in Niger, these disparities are glaring. [...] of the country's 25 million people, 83% live in rural areas, and about 15% of Nigerien households have access to electricity*" (UNICEF, 2023). A significant proportion of the population, especially in these rural areas, is still faced with a complete lack of infrastructure for Internet access.

*"Poor network coverage in rural areas is probably the biggest barrier to the spread of mobile services. While urban areas have close to 100% coverage, rural areas are marginalized because of poor or no network coverage."* (Nigerinter, 2020).

Consequently, access to digital equipment, such as computers or smartphones, remains a pressing concern for a large part of the population. This creates a deep digital divide that prevents the wide dissemination and true appropriation of digital cultural resources. The younger generations, who are generally more inclined to adopt new technologies, are particularly affected by this situation, as they cannot fully invest in the preservation and dissemination of cultural traditions through technology.

Added to this are growing concerns about digital security: Many communities, especially in rural areas, face threats related to cybercrime and the vulnerability of their personal and cultural data. The protection of cultural information transmitted online is therefore an important issue, both in terms of the risks of misuse of cultural practices and the dangers associated with the disclosure of sensitive data.

Another major challenge is the pervasive lack of digital skills among the population. Although the Internet and technologies offer undeniable opportunities for the conservation of endogenous cultures, their effectiveness depends largely on the ability of individuals and communities to use them optimally. In Niger, a significant number of citizens, especially in rural areas and among older generations who are the primary custodians of tradition, lack the necessary skills to harness these technologies wisely. An article entitled *Toward hybridized and glocalized youth identities in Africa* observes.

*"African countries and African media are generally importers of cultural properties, propelled by the domestic desire and taste for Western entertainment and media products... African youth are not simply pawns of a globalized world ... they are involved in [...] transculturation – a negotiation between cultures and traditions to create a hybrid style, 'African fusion'"* (Uzuegbunam, 2020).

This reflects not only that young people's mastery of digital tools allows for the dissemination of cultural practices, but also that the ability to navigate a secure digital environment that respects cultural norms is crucial. Unfortunately, the lack of technological literacy often prevents certain segments of Nigeriens, particularly the elder knowledge-holders, from playing an active and leading role in the digitization of their own cultural heritage.

## 6. PROSPECTS FOR INTEGRATING TECHNOLOGIES IN THE PRESERVATION OF ENDOGENOUS CULTURES

### 6.1. Preserving Authenticity in the Face of Homogenization

The question of preserving the authenticity of local cultures through the use of technology is both topical and complex. Although these technologies allow for the rapid and widespread diffusion of cultural elements beyond local borders, they raise the critical issue of the distortion and dilution of cultural traditions. Cultural practices, once digitized and disseminated on global platforms such as YouTube, Instagram or TikTok, can be easily decontextualized and transformed into flat objects of consumption for a global audience. For example, traditional dances with specific spiritual functions or community rituals with deep social significance may be presented in a simplified form that does not respect their original symbolism, thus reducing their intrinsic value to the communities that practice and cherish them.

In addition, globalization and the use of technology risk promoting a powerful homogenization of cultural practices, to the detriment of local specificities. This homogenization appears to us as a form of digital-age cultural imperialism.

*"European cultural imperialism in Africa has profoundly marked African societies by imposing foreign norms and values. Diverse indigenous cultures were relegated to the background, resulting in cultural hybridity where local practices were altered under colonial influence or considered bad"* (Onuoha & Oyediya, 2024).

The current digital landscape could lead to a similar weakening of cultural traditions in the face of the dominance of globalized, often Western, cultural norms, especially those conveyed by more standardized and algorithmically promoted digital formats. This phenomenon highlights the persistent tension between traditional practices and modern cultural forms, a tension that is now exacerbated and accelerated by digital globalization.

## *6.2. Integrating Technologies Responsibly: A Multi-Level Approach*

### *6.2.1. Improving Access to Technology and Infrastructure*

The first and most fundamental lever for bridging the digital divide is to improve physical access to technology and the Internet, especially in rural and remote areas. This development requires the concerted implementation of more robust and resilient infrastructure to ensure more extensive and reliable network coverage, while simultaneously ensuring access to low-cost digital equipment. Initiatives to reduce Internet access fees and enhance the acquisition of digital equipment through subsidies or public-private partnerships can play a key role in expanding meaningful access to technology. In addition, public-private partnerships will have to be actively encouraged to finance these capital-intensive projects and holistically address access challenges. Innovative business models, such as community internet centers or low-cost data plans for educational and cultural content, must also be explored. Raising awareness and training local populations on cybersecurity and personal data protection will also be paramount to ensure the safe, ethical, and confident use of technologies.

### *6.2.2. Developing Contextual Digital Skills*

The development of targeted digital skills is another major focus for the genuine integration of technologies in the preservation of local cultures. Training programs adapted to the linguistic and cultural reality of Niger's diverse communities will have to be put in place, aimed at empowering the population to use digital tools to record, preserve, and disseminate their cultural heritage on their own terms. These trainings should target not only the younger generations, but also and especially local cultural actors (artists, craftsmen, musicians, griots, elders, etc.), to enable them to use digital technologies in a way that supports their traditional practices. Practical workshops on the digitization of traditional knowledge, the use of digital platforms for the dissemination of cultural content, and the basics of digital storytelling are essential to facilitate this transition from passive consumers to active creators and curators of their digital cultural heritage.

### *6.2.3. Digitization with a Participatory and Community-Led Approach*

To ensure that the digitization of cultural practices does not distort their essence, a deeply participatory and community-led approach is not just beneficial but essential. Local communities must be closely involved in every stage of the digitization process, from the initial decision of what to record, to data collection, and finally to the production, management, and dissemination of digital content. In this way, these communities would retain control over how their traditions are represented and shared with the world. Community-managed digital archives and repositories could be created, providing people with a sovereign space to manage, preserve, and control access to their digital cultural heritage. This would help ensure that cultural practices are preserved in their most faithful and contextualized form possible, while allowing them to be accessible to a wider audience for educational and appreciation purposes. Interactive formats and collaborative platforms could also play a fundamental role in this process, fostering dialogue and co-creation.

### *6.2.4. Reinforcement of Legal and Ethical Protection of Cultural Rights*

The protection of cultural rights must be a central pillar of any digital preservation initiative in Niger. Legal mechanisms should be developed and strengthened to regulate the use of digital cultural content and prevent misappropriation. This includes the explicit recognition of the collective intellectual property of communities over their traditional cultural expressions and the establishment of clear cultural data management protocols that respect the principles of ethics, prior informed consent, and respect for local traditions. International agreements and ethical standards, such as those proposed by UNESCO, should be domesticated and implemented to ensure that Niger's cultural practices are not exploited or distorted to satisfy a global consumer market. Local communities should have effective legal and technical means to control how their traditions are represented online and the ability to exercise sovereignty over digital content that concerns them.

### 6.3. Key Actors and Initiatives to Promote Technologies in Cultural Preservation

Public policies play a central role in facilitating the integration of technologies for the preservation of endogenous cultures. The Nigerien government, through its Ministry of Culture, Arts and Recreation, is responsible for implementing and funding national programs to safeguard the country's cultural heritage, and these programs must now explicitly include a digital component. These programs could accelerate the digitisation and dissemination of cultural practices while ensuring their legal protection. At the institutional level, the protection of Niger's cultural heritage is based on a comprehensive legal and operational framework. The [République du Niger \(2010\)](#) enshrines the role of the State in the promotion and defense of the national cultural heritage, emphasizing its function of personal fulfilment and social cohesion. This mission is specified by [République du Niger \(1997\)](#) which defines the national cultural heritage as all "*movable and immovable property of historical, artistic [or] ethnological interest*", requiring the State to take active conservation measures. The National Cultural Development Plan should prioritize digital strategy.

Also, the Nigerien Information Society Agency (ANSI), for example, could play a key role in expanding access to the Internet and other technologies, while implementing programs to raise awareness of the use of technology for cultural communities. "*Access to digital infrastructure and equipment is a sine qua non condition for bridging the digital divide and enabling equitable access to cultural resources in Africa* ([Bokari, 2018](#)). In this context, policies to encourage investment in the technology sector, particularly in the infrastructure needed for digitalization in Niger, would be important to build accessible and affordable platforms. Also, sub-regional partnerships (between countries of the Alliance of Sahel States) can also promote the adoption of technologies while supporting the concerted efforts to preserve the shared intangible cultural heritage of these three nations, creating a larger market and pool of resources for digital cultural projects.

## 7. CONCLUSION

The spread of digital technologies across the cultural landscape in Niger represents a defining 21<sup>st</sup>-century phenomenon that combines major opportunities with significant risks. As this analysis has demonstrated, ICTs offer unprecedented tools for the revitalization of endangered languages and cultural practices, fostering new, decentralized forms of transmission, creating vibrant connections with the global diaspora, and providing economic opportunities for traditional artists. However, these very same technologies simultaneously amplify the risks of cultural homogenization under Western norms, the decontextualization of sacred traditions into mere entertainment, and a new form of digital dependency on foreign platforms and ecosystems.

The theoretical frameworks of Canclini and Castells have provided invaluable lenses through which to view this process: Nigerien culture is not simply being erased in a passive manner but is actively, and often unequally, being hybridized—recomposed and renegotiated in the dynamic, contested, and global space of the network society. The ultimate outcome of this great transformation will not be determined by the impersonal force of technology itself, but by human agency, strategic policy choices, and the empowerment of local communities. A sustainable and sovereign future for Niger's endogenous cultures requires a deliberate, well-resourced, and inclusive strategy that prioritizes bridging the digital divide, building localized digital capacity, placing communities at the helm of preservation efforts, and reinforcing the legal protection of cultural rights. By taking such a proactive and sovereign approach, Niger can aspire to harness the power of digital globalization not as a force of cultural erosion, but as a tool for strengthening, reinterpreting, and celebrating its unique and invaluable cultural diversity in the digital age.

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The author confirms that the manuscript is an honest, accurate, and transparent account of the study; that no vital features of the study have been omitted; and that any discrepancies from the study as planned have been explained. This study followed all ethical practices during writing.

## COMPETING INTERESTS

The author declares that there are no competing interests

## AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Maman Sillimana is the sole author.

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