

BETWEEN SECTARIANISM AND ETHNICITY.
POLITICAL LEGALISM OF IBĀDĪ BERBERS
IN CONTEMPORARY NORTH AFRICA

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*Political stability and minority question
in post-revolutionary North Africa*

The second decade of the twenty-first century began with an unprecedented wave of civil insurrections in the Arabic North Africa. The scale of the protests and uncompromising disgruntled society surprised most analysts and researchers dealing with this region of the world¹. It can be considered that the North African revolutions forced a revolution within the social sciences, because these events cast doubt on the thesis of the persistence of authoritarian regimes on the southern coast of the Mediterranean². The initial euphoria caused by the advent of the highly anticipated “fourth wave of democratization” quickly turned into fear of the unknown³. In most of the countries affected by the Arab Spring (Arabic *ar-rabi’ al-‘arabi*), recent allies have become sworn enemies. This phenomenon is evident, especially in the informal civil war-stricken Libya, but also in post-revolutionary Egypt, where the street demonstrators overthrew in 2013 the first democratically elected president. Political situation is not better in Algeria and Morocco, the countries the least affected by social unrest. In both of them, state authorities must face social discontent of a large Berber commu-

nity. Although the Moroccan authorities have introduced changes in the constitution recognizing the Berber culture as a component of national identity, for some of the most radical Berber activists they are still insufficient⁴. Among the community of Algerian exiles in France, the Movement for the Autonomy of Kabylie (French: *Mouvement pour l'autonomie de la Kabylie*), founded by a Berber singer and political activist Ferhat Mehenni, is gaining-increasing support.

This movement demands from the authorities of Algeria recognition of the sovereignty of Kabylia as an autonomous region within the framework of the Algerian state. Additional factors that aggravate the negative image of North Africa as a region mired in the chaos is increasing-influence of the so-called Islamic State (Arabic: *ad-Dawlah al-Islāmiyah*, also known as the ISIS or Daesh) in this part of the Islamic world⁵.

Against the background of the turbulent North Africa, only Tunisia appears to be a relatively stable state. The specificity of Tunisia is a result of three factors. First, after Ben Ali's overthrow, the leaders of the protests moved their revolution from the streets to the Houses of Parliament⁶. Thus, the Tunisians did not allow the situation that took place in Egypt to happen. Secondly, Tunisia has been always regarded as a pioneer of change in the Arab world. In Tunisia, the first modern Arab constitution was written in 1861⁷. Thirdly, Tunisia has been always considered the country ethnically and religiously homogeneous, because the majority of the population are Sunni Arabs⁸. Analyzing the case of Tunisia, it can be concluded that the source of successful transformation in this country lies in deep legalism (understood here as attachment to order and the existing legal norms) of the society and the lack of significant ethnic minorities. It can be said that failure of the other North African transformation processes was caused by immaturity of the political society

(as for example in Libya) and significant ethnic divisions in other countries of the region (as in the case of Algeria and Morocco).

The main purpose of this article is to present the relationship within the Arab-Sunni majority, one of the ethno-religious minority groups in the contemporary North African states. The analysis will cover the Ibādī Berber communities in three countries: Libya, Tunisia and Algeria. The first two have been selected because of the changes brought about in these countries, namely the events of the Arab Spring. Algeria has been selected because of the impact of the Berber community on the political situation in this country. The article aims at answering the following research questions: “Can the political legalism of Ibādī Berbers be an alternative to today’s North African societies, plunged into apathy and dominated by political extremism and the internal weakness of new post-revolutionary governments? Can the previous attitude of this small community be the foundation for the shaping of new national communities and civil societies in the countries of the region?”

*From heretical extremists to puritan democrats
– the origins of Ibadism*

Ibādī, Ibadism or *Ibādiyya* is a moderate faction of Kharijism (Arabic: *al-Khawārij*), one of the first socio-political groups in Islam. At the same time Ibādīs currently remain the last heirs of the heritage of the Kharijites, who played a significant role in the early centuries of Islam. Regardless of the opinion of Western and Middle Eastern historians, representatives of this sect rejected any strong affinity with classical Kharijism⁹. The causes of this situation should be traced back to the negative image of the Khawarij movement. In medieval Islamic historiography, they are portrayed as fanatical and uncompromising her-

etics who rebelled against legitimate authority¹⁰. In other words, this group was presented as threatening the unity and stability of the Islamic community. In the mid-twentieth century, the image of Kharijism has evolved thanks to the ideologies of the Arab nationalism. For the left-wing nationalist the heritage of medieval revolutionaries, who appealed to the democratic roots of Islam, was an interesting alternative to foreign cultural works of Marx, Engels and Lenin¹¹. At the end of the twentieth century, there was again a shift towards demonization of this branch of Islam, caused by some Muslim intellectuals. Nowadays, especially since the creation of the ISIS, many authors have been trying to prove that there exists a link between criminal activities of this terrorist organization and the tradition of the classical Kharijism¹². Comparisons of this type can lead to false interpretations. The Kharijites represented a very radical movement, which did not avoid violence, but the scale of terror will never come close to contemporary Sunni (sic!) extremists from Daesh. In this sense, the term “Khawarij” is treated as a heretical idea of rebellion against lawful authority, and not as a reference to the historical fraction in early Islam¹³.

Who were therefore the first Kharijites that are now regarded as ancestors of the Ibādīs? The main difference between these two religious movements can be described as follows: Kharijism is one of the three branches of Islam (in addition to Sunnism and Shiism), while Ibadism should be regarded as a Muslim sect (Arabic: *tafrīq*) that has evolved from the classical Kharijism. The origins of the Kharijites date back to the times of the first Fitna – a conflict within early Islam between the rightful caliph Ali and the Mu’awiya – the Governor of Syria. After the inconclusive battle of Siffin, the warring parties decided to apply the arbitration procedure, which some followers of Ali objected to. For these people, granting consent to ar-

bitration between Ali and Mu'awiya meant betrayal of the principle of Islam. They are considered representatives of the Muslim legalists, who called for strict adherence to the law of God. Some scholars called them Muhakkima – those who said *lā hukma illā lillāh* (“judgement belongs to God alone”)⁴. In their opinion, both Ali and his opponent Mu'awiya had sinned in agreeing to arbitration, and were therefore no longer believers. In the absence of obedience among other followers for the rightful ruler, they decided to leave Ali. The Islamic historiography called these people Khawarij – those who came out. The origin of this faction of Islam clearly shows the main assumptions of the Kharijites. They were the first of all legalists who advocated a strict adherence to the letter of God's law. The Kharijites believed that Caliph should be the one chosen by the Muslim community and strictly adhering to the principles of Islam. In addition, the Kharijites believed that the authority may be exercised by any Muslim, regardless of their ethnic origin. This issue was quite differently perceived by the followers of Ali, for whom the power was supposed to lie in the hands of the person who descended from the Prophet's family. On the other hand, the followers of Mu'awiya thought that the priority in the succession of the power belonged only and exclusively to the Arabs of the Hijaz. At the level of doctrinal beliefs of the Kharijites, they were firmly in conflict with the two strongest factions in early Islam, which in the long term led to marginalization of this branch of Islam. Nevertheless, the Kharijites were the only one of the warring parties who retained the original, egalitarian doctrine of Islam. That is why, they are sometimes called the Islamic democrats, although the term is more suitable for the Ibādī faction of this third branch of Islam⁵.

Sources of legalistic tendencies in Ibādī Islam

From the beginning, Kharijism appeared significantly divided. Orientalists distinguish four major factions within this branch of Islam: the radical groups (like Azariqa and Najdat) and the moderate ones (like Ibādī and Sufri). The origins of Ibadism remain obscure. In a traditional historiography of the Ibādīs, it is indicated that the sect emerged around A.D. 683, as a result of a conflict within the early Kharijite movement¹⁶. The main reason for the split was criticism of radical Azariqa, who believed that all Muslims who are not Kharijites are unbelievers (Arabic: *mušrik*). The radicalism of this group can be proved by the fact that it introduced a doctrine of the concept of *isti'rād* (English: killing for religious reasons)¹⁷, which permitted the killing of all other non-Khawarij Muslims, including women and children. In this sense, Ibadism may seem a moderate movement, or simply a kind of Muslim pacifists. It should be noted, however, that the Ibādī was also not free from divisions of both political and theological nature¹⁸.

The creation of this sect is attributed to 'Abd Allāh Ibn Ibād, who comes from the Arabic tribe of Banu Tahim. During his stay in Iraq's Basra, the Kharijites believed that Muslims cannot live among idolaters (Arabic: *kuffār*), that is those who did not support their demands. The classical Kharijism was not as radical as the Azariqa faction, but a further movement remained uncompromising towards other Muslims. In its original form Kharijism ordered his followers to abandon their existing environment to emigrate away from the habitat of evil *kuffār*. In contrast, Ibn Ibād regarded non-Khawarij Muslims as *kuffār ni'ma*, which can be translated as the negators of God's bounty¹⁹. This small change had its far-reaching consequences for the theological and religious discourse of Ibadism. Most of all the founder of the sect did not re-

quire the followers to emigrate, but to remain among the other Muslims. Moreover, Ibn Ibād advocated the use of so-called “dissociation” (Arabic: *bara’a*) practice towards the other Muslims. This “dissociation,” is, however, usually understood as an internal attitude of withholding “friendship” (Arabic: *wilaya*) rather than outright hostility. Nonetheless, non-Ibādīs who call themselves Muslims and pray facing the direction of the Ka‘ba are *ahl al-qibla*, not idolaters. They may be *kuffār*, but not in the sense of idolatry, only in the sense of *kuffār ni‘ma* outlined above. The practice of *bara’a* does not imply enmity²⁰. This small modification resulted in major consequences for the Ibadism as only the fraction of Kharijites has survived up to our times. Despite the rejection of the original radicalism of Kharijism, the followers of Ibādī sect had to flee from persecution in Iraq, mainly to the periphery of the Islamic world.

With the spread of Ibādīs there have been changes in the political doctrine of the movement. For the political scientist, the most interesting seems to be the Ibādī concept of Imamate (Arabic: *imāmah*). The righteous Imamate is a topic of great importance in Ibādī legal literature²¹. The Imam should be chosen for his knowledge and piety, without any regard to race or lineage. He should be chosen by the elders of the community, who are also obligated to depose of him if he acts unjustly²². As indicated by Virgine Prevost, although there are very small differences between Ibadism in the Maghreb and the Arabian Peninsula, it is only in the area of North Africa that the Ibādīs succeeded for a short time having put into practice the idea of universal Imamate²³. In the Arab east, Oman was the only place where they were able to create a permanent concept of the Imamate, which resulted from strong relationships between the local religious doctrine and the concept of constitutionalism²⁴. The sources of Ibādī legalism should be seen in the strict observance of

Qur'anic principles: enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong (Arabic: *l'amr bi-l ma'rūf wa-n nahy 'an al munkar*). This sentence orders the believers to exercise faithful activities in the public sphere. Everyone does everything according to his social position. What probably best distinguishes Ibadism from Shi'ism and Sunnism is the difference in the attitude to authority. For the Ibādīs religion entails the duty of obedience to authority. For the Ibādīs, Islam is the submission to the will of God, but also to his representatives on earth²⁵.

*Why did Kharijism (Ibadism)
spread among the North African Berbers?*

From time immemorial North Africa has been an area of expansion of various Mediterranean Empires, like the Phoenicians, the Romans, the Vandals, or the Byzantines. All of these empires attempted with more or less effect to subdue the native inhabitants of these lands – the Berbers (Berber languages: *Imazighen*, *Amazigh* in singular). There was no difference in case of the Arab conquest of North Africa which had begun in the seventh century. Unlike previous invaders, the Arabs succeeded among the relatively subordinate locals, the Amazigh population, using both sword and religion²⁶. In a certain sense, Arabs conquered the lands of the Berbers, while Islam conquered their souls. Although some attempts to evangelize the Imazighen had already been made in the Byzantine era, Christianization was either an unsuccessful or a short-term conversion. Unlike Christianity, Islam for Berbers seemed to be much more attractive. First of all, Islam was a simpler and more understandable religion that did not require any abstract thinking²⁷. Faith in the religion of Arabs was based on subordination to the will of God and observance of the five pillars of Islam: faith (*ṣahāda*), prayer (*salāh*), charity (*zakāt*), fasting

(*sawm*) and pilgrimage to Mecca (*hajj*). The simplicity of Islam stood in contrast to the abstractness of Christianity, which still occurred in new theological disputes (e.g. A dispute about the nature of Christ). The scale of the process in which the Berbers abandoned Christianity in favour of Islam can be illustrated by the fact that some modern Ibādī mosques have Byzantine origins²⁸.

The process of conversion to Islam by Berber people was accompanied by the spread of heretical movements resembling schismatic movements in the African Church²⁹. The Berbers were susceptible to various heretical movements, both Christian (Donatism) and Muslim (Kharijism) ones³⁰. The reason for conversion of Berbers to the Kharijites Islam should be discerned in the egalitarian nature of this branch of Islam. It should be remembered that although the Berbers converted to Islam en masse, they were treated by their Arab coreligionists as “the worse Muslims”, merely because they were not Arabs³¹. The Kharijites believed that the authorities may profess Muslim, regardless of their ethnic origin. That also explains why their ideas have proved so successful among non-Arabs especially among the Berbers. The Berbers Kharijism was based on moderate sects of this branch of Islam – Ibādī and Sufri. The Ibādīs were famous in the history of the Maghreb as creators of the Rustamid State, existing between the 8th and the 10th century in central Algeria³². The appearance of the Shiite Fatimid caliphate in the Maghreb was a turning point in the history of Ibadism in the region and, at the same time, the end of the existence of the Rustamid State. Up till now, the Ibādī community cultivates the memory of the fall, combining the idealization of the golden era of the Rustamid State and a sense of elitism of this sect³³.

*Political legalism of Ibādī Berbers
in contemporary North Africa*

Today, in the academic literature, it is accepted to talk about the existence of the “archipelago of Ibadism”, located on the “ocean of Sunnism”³⁴. Modern *Ibādiyya* is only a small minority within the Islamic world. Unfortunately, there are no reliable data on the population of Ibādīs in the modern world science. Most of the data are based on estimates of researchers. Determining the exact population of Ibādī Muslims is difficult because of their practice of *taqīyah* (prudence, fear, caution) and *kitmān* (action of covering, dissimulation in English). The first term refers to a precautionary dissimulation or denial of religious belief and practice in the face of persecution. The second one refers to a more specific meaning of dissimulation by silence or omission. Both practices were used by the Ibādī in order to avoid persecution, making it possible to preserve their traditions in the Sunni-dominated North Africa.

Ibādī by Country (in alphabetical order)

Country	Ibādī population	% of Ibādī population
Algeria	150,000	0,5%
Libya	65,000	1,1%
Oman	2,4000,000	71%
Tunisia	10,000	<0.1%
United Arab Emirates	140,000	3,0%
Total:	2,760,000	0,6%

Source: <http://looklex.com/e.o/ibadi.htm>.

According to the presented table, Ibādī represent less than 1% of all Muslims, the majority (over 70%) living in Oman on the Arabian Peninsula. Although Ibādī Berbers from North Africa represent a small fraction inside the modern Ibadism, their political role is incomparably greater than the demographic data indicate. It should be emphasized that the data presented in case of Tunisia and Libya are significantly understated. Most likely, the number of Ibādī Imazighen in both countries is several times greater (around 1% in Tunisia and up to 10% in Libya). The last faction of the Kharijites in contemporary North Africa stands today in the face of great ethnic (Arab-Amazigh conflict) and religious (Islamic fundamentalism) conflicts, whose frequency has increased significantly after the Arab Spring.

I. Ibādī Berbers in homogeneously postcolonial Tunisia

Of all the modern North African countries Tunisia is seen as the most homogeneous³⁵. According to official figures, the overwhelming majority of inhabitants are Arabs adhering to Sunni Islam. In this homogeneous society there is, however, a small Berber minority professing the Ibādī Islam (especially in the island of Djerba). Along with the independence of Tunisia, state authorities began to develop a nation-building process. A similar process occurred in the neighbouring countries, but in the country ruled by Habib Bourguiba the process looked considerably different than in other countries of the region. First of all, Bourguiba was against the politicization of Islam, which undoubtedly helped the Ibādī community to keep their religion. Moreover, Bourguiba and Ben Ali later promoted an ancient heritage of Tunisia, which was an important component of Tunisian Amazigh heritage³⁶. For the Tunisian authorities the Berber minority was not a political problem, it was even advantageous from the point of view of tourism.

In Tunisia, as a result of the Jasmine Revolution, the longtime president of this country Zine El Abidine Ben Ali was overthrown. With the end of the dictatorship there started the activities of the previously marginalized minorities: Jews, Imazighen and the Negroid population³⁷. The democratization of public space opened up for these groups an opportunity to participate in the creation of post-revolutionary order. It is difficult to look for evidence of a significant share of the Ibādī Berbers during protests defined as the Jasmine Revolution. The only mention of this issue is Tom Chessgyre's book entitled "Tourist in the Arab Spring". The author presents the following words uttered by an inhabitant of the island: "Djerba is an island of peace. We didn't even realize there was a revolution: no fighting, no incident, no nothing! Our revolution was without blood"³⁸. The real activity of the Amazigh community was only over a period of a few months after the overthrow of the dictator, during the creation of a new constitution. Berber activists called for constitutional guarantees to protect Amazigh heritage, yet without any reference to recognition of the *Tamazigh* (Berber language) as an official or national language³⁹. Despite the unprecedented activation of the Berber population in Tunisia, the parliament finally passed a draft constitution, which does not refer to the Berber heritage. Although Imazighen activists were defeated, they did not reject the whole draft Constitution. The omission in constitutional provisions of the pre-Islamic heritage of Tunisia provoked the opposition Amazigh environments, which rejected, however, the possibility of gaining separatism. For Tunisian Ibādī authority, the Ibādīs are part of the Tunisian people, regardless of their political considerations⁴⁰. It was recognized that the struggle for the rights of Berbers can take place within the current democratic system with the support of the international environment. In an interview the leader of the Ibādī

community from the island of Djerba, Sheikh Farhat Ben Ali al-Djabiri pointed out that a post-revolutionary Tunisia requires an active involvement of minorities in the creation of a new order⁴¹. At the same time, Sheikh flatly rejected the possibility of politicization of minorities, which would bring neither short- nor long-term benefits.

II. *The Ibādī Berbers and the Arab-Berber conflict in Algeria*

Of all the cases analyzed, the situation of the Ibādī Berbers in Algeria is the most complicated. According to various estimates, the number of Imazighen in this country oscillates between 20 and 25% of the total population⁴². The Amazigh community in this country is sizeable, though divided. The largest group are the Kabyle people, but they profess Sunni Islam like their Arab neighbours. Today, the Kabyles are not only dominated by secularist tendencies, but they are also the most radical non-Arab group in Algeria. Another group of Berber – the Chaoui people is to a large extent subjected to Arabization. The Algerian Tuaregs were completely marginalized by the power of the state and do not constitute such a force as their compatriots from Mali or Niger. In this mosaic of indigenous people of Algeria, the most distinguished community are the Ibādī Berbers in the Mzab Valley (Berber: *Ighzer Awaghlan*). This region of Algeria is located 600 km south of Algiers in the northern Sahara Desert, in the Ghardaïa Province.

The first signs of legalistic tendencies among the Ibādī Berbers in Algeria can be found in the first half of the twentieth century. In colonial Algeria, the Mozabites (local Berber dialect: *Aït Emzab or Tumzabt*), such as the Sunni Arabs, began a debate on the sources of colonial enslavement and weaknesses of Islam⁴³. These debates have contributed to the formation of a kind of alliance between the two communities, whose aim was to prevent

the total marginalization of Muslims in Algeria. For comparison, at the same time, the Kabyle people demanded secularization of the Algerian national movement which caused tension between Arabs and Imazighen. On the ideological plane, Ibādī thinkers from Mzab emphasize the unity of Algerian Muslims against a colonial rule, despite ethnic and religious differences⁴⁴. During the war of independence in Algeria, many Ibādī Berbers stood on the side of the National Liberation Front (French: *Front de Libération Nationale* – FLN), for example Moufdi Zakaria, the founder of the Algerian national anthem – Kassaman.

In independent Algeria, the conflict between the Arabs and the Berbers grew. The conflict was a result of both the cultural (opposition to the imposed obligation of Arabic language learning) and political factors (the removal of a number of activists from Kabylia from top management of the FLN)⁴⁵. In Kabylia, mass demonstrations against the government policy took place several times (the largest ones in 1980 and 2001) and now the voice of the people has begun to assert adherence to the Kabylia autonomy. Serious social unrest also took place in the region of Mzab, although there are some fundamental differences between Kabylia and this region. First of all, this region has never been ethnically homogeneous – since time immemorial there lived there, side by side, the Ibādī Berbers and Sunni Arabs called the Chaamba (Arabic: *Sha'ānba*). Paradoxically, for decades these two communities could live together, irrespective of political changes that occurred in Algeria⁴⁶. Conflicts between the two communities began to grow along with the discovery of oil in the fifties of the twentieth century as well as the following socio-economic changes⁴⁷. Since the eighties, this region has been experiencing unrest caused by conflicts between the Arab and Amazigh neighbours. During the 2015 clashes alone, 22 people were killed and hundreds were injured⁴⁸. Despite recurring tensions between

the two communities, the situation in Mzab is completely different than in Kabylia.

Ibādī Imazighen reject the temptation of separatism and extremism, which is unique in the history of the Arab-Berber conflict in Algeria. Radicalism of the Kabyle people corresponds with legalism of the Mozabites, who have never openly revolted against the state institution, despite facing similar problems as the Kabylia inhabitants (Arabisation, unemployment, racism, police brutality). For example, Mozabi youth firmly reject the intransigence of their Kabyle peers. In the mid-nineties, the Kabyle people massively boycotted the national education system as an expression of opposition to the regime's policy. This approach was totally incomprehensible to the Ibādī Berbers, because education for Mozabis is a form of positivist work at the grassroots, which is a better antidote to the crisis of the state than revolution⁴⁹.

III. *Ibādī Berbers in the Arab Jamahiriya and post-revolutionary Libya*

Amazigh community in Libya is the most homogeneous. These are mostly Ibādī living in the north-western part of the country, in Jabal Nafusa (Berber: *Adrar n Infusen*) and Zuwarah (Berber: *At Willul*). Just like in Algeria, also in Libya the Imazighen are involved in the nationwide movement for independence. Cooperation between the two communities resulted in the Republic of Tripolitania (Arabic: *al-Jumhūriyya al-Tarābulusiyya*), which was the first republic in the "Arab world" declared in consequence of a joint venture between Arabs and the Ibādī Berbers⁵⁰.

The situation of this community in Libya seems to be the most dramatic, both during the reign of Gaddafi and today. The doctrine of the Libyan Jamahiriya and the discourse of its creator – Muammar Gaddafi against the Berber question were unambiguous. All official state doc-

uments emphasized the fact that Libya is an Arab country, called the Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya. The colonel has made no secret of his contempt for non-Arabs and non-Muslims, which had to include the Ibādī Berbers. His intention was that Arabism and Sunni Islam were to be Libyan determinants of national identity, which in itself was a divisive factor between the regime and the Imazighen⁵¹. Many Libyan Amazigh activists had to pay the highest price for creating and cultivating the culture of autochthones. Despite persecution, Berbers from the western part of the country do not rebel against the reigning order, realizing that this could bring even greater persecution from the authorities.

With the start of the revolution in Libya in 2011, the Ibādīs declared themselves on the side of the rebels. Involvement of the Amazigh troops in the west of the country accelerated the fall of the hated dictator. After the expulsion of the allies, the regime introduced bilingualism in all offices, while the command centre in the city of Ifran waved two flags – the flag of the Libyan revolution and the flag of the Pan-Berber movement⁵². After 2011, the Ibādī Imazighen remained loyal to the Libyan state, which should be considered an exception in the war-torn home country. After the overthrow of Colonel Gaddafi, Libya has become a failed state. Former revolutionaries began to create in their regions, new centres of power, most of which are independent of the central government. Many of these communities benefit from the weakness of the state. Their common denominator is, therefore, to prevent or significantly impede the administration of reconstruction at the central level⁵³. In this sense loyalism of Ibādīs from Jabal Nafusa and Zuwarah was a clear alternative to the actions of other regions in the central government.

A potential reason for the Berbers to have taken part in the revolution was the question of recognition by

the new authorities of the Amazigh culture as an integral substrate identity of the country⁵⁴. Just as it was the case in Tunisia, also in Libya, support for the new democratic regime was dependent on the resolution of this important question for indigenous people. Many Berber activists were involved in the creation of a new constitution, which was to form basis for the construction of a new, more democratic Libya. Unfortunately, with the beginning of the work the Ibādī Berbers had to deal with hostile attitudes of the Arab majority. There was unhappiness at the absence of any reference to the Amazigh culture in the constitutional declaration of August 2011, which despite guaranteeing cultural rights and national language for “all the components of the Libyan society”, specifically affirmed Arabic as Libya’s official language⁵⁵.

*Summary – what is the future
for political legalism of the Ibādī Berbers*

In contemporary North Africa the spirit of legalism is needed for post-revolutionary Muslim societies. Legalistic attitude is needed immediately, after the Arab Spring, when it is necessary to redefine the concept of the state, the law and the nation. Political practice of the Ibādīs in North Africa in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries shows that legalism cannot be a thoughtless loyalism to authority or unscrupulous conformism. In the analyzed case studies, *Amazigh* activists in these three countries accepted the legalistic doctrine which is expressed as being subordinate to the existing political and legal order. It is a paradox because they are Imazighen (who are generally against Arabs e.g. the Kabyle and Tuaregs) and the Ibādī Muslims (Islamic minority which is regarded as a heretical movement relative to Sunnism.). Trying to define legalism of the Ibādī Berbers, it can be concluded that it combines such features as: rational conformism

and limited loyalism. In contemporary post-revolutionary North Africa, legalism of this minority can be a model for the emerging democratic society in the analyzed countries. Legalism of the Ibādīs, however, has its limits, which was evident during the revolution in Libya. This should be a serious warning to the new democratic governments in Tunisia and Libya claiming, despite the initial support of Berbers, that they rejected their demands.

NOTES

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