

Ethnic Identity and Racial Conflict: A Case Study of Libyan Amazighs

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Abstracts: This study aims at recognizing the patterns of the multiculturalism in the Libyan society and the consequences of this multiculturalism in the emergence of the racial conflict issue between Arabs and Amazighs as two distinct ethnicities with each having its own cultural identity that they strive to affirm in order to ensure the element of social existence. It also aims at determining the features of this ethnic conflict in light of the objective and structural conditions of this society which in turn distinguishes it from its neighbors of the western Arab societies concerning this issue, in an attempt to reach a solution for this conflict and achieve the co-existence between the two ethnicities as a result of the availability of the common factors between them.

In order to achieve these objectives, the study has utilized the anthropological approach through the tools of participation observation and resorting to the informants and focused interviews with individual and group types. The study also utilized the theory of Antony D. Smith on the Ethnic Symbolism for analyzing the variables of the study in light of its predicaments.

The study has come up with a number of findings that associate with the liability of the social and structural nature of the Libyan society as represented in the tribal and political ideology in these ethnic conflicts. In addition, the forms or patterns of this conflict are defined in the linguistic conflict processes and the rights of social and cultural representation. Further, these conflicts take the hidden form, not the visible one, due to the strictness of the Libyan regime in dealing with these problems as a defensive procedure in order to maintain unity and stability.

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Introduction:

The Arab society is characterized by the unity of homogeneity which reflects in the unity of its Arabic and Islamic cultural heritage which derives its elements from the elements of religion, language, history, and fate. However, the characteristic of homogeneity does not negate the characteristic of diversification which shows through the division of this society into groups that are classified ethnically, denominationally, and doctrinally. Further, these classifications, views, and directions associated with these characteristics has led to considerable problems so that their effects reflect on the Arab countries.

Among the ethnic groups that are included in the Arab society and are culturally different, are the Amazighs (Berbers), who spread in North Africa and represent the original inhabitants of the West African countries starting from Libya and ending with Morocco. This ethnic group has its special characteristics whether physical, social, or cultural.

Although Globalism seeks to go past the national and local cultures, causing the emergence of resistance on the part of these regional cultures and their cultural pockets, however the claims of human rights and democracy have had a direct reflection accompanying Globalism, which still permeates racial conflict within the West African nations. These political claims linked to human rights and their social dimensions opened the domain in front of the ethnic conflict between the different ethnicities on one side and the governments on the other side. Among the forms of this ethnic conflict is the conflict of the Amazighi ethnicity with the Arab ethnicity which first revealed itself in Morocco and Algeria in a principal form. However, the Amazighs are common in several of the North African countries and a number of other African countries, such as Niger and Mali. Although the problems of Amazighs dominated the political arena in countries such as Morocco and Algeria, however, it could not achieve political dominance in Libya as it did in the two cases of Algeria and Morocco of bringing up their case to the social arena, or at least getting the margin of what the Amazighs' human rights in Morocco and Algeria have achieved.

The problem of the current study is determined in the analysis of the relation between the ethnic identity and the ethnic conflict inside the Libyan society, which is characterized by an ideological specialty and structural nature resulting in the distinguished conflicting form between Arabs and Amazighs, which differs in its subject from similar cases in the neighboring African countries.

The academic importance of the study is apparent as being an academic analytical study that seeks to test the theoretical assumptions in the field of ethnic conflicts which materialize the interaction between the theoretical ideological frame and the acting political domain.

The sociological importance is that it is the first empirical study, as far as the researcher knows, to be applied on the Libyan society, which imposes considerable restraints on such type of research in issues of any political feature of the society. Thus, the study aims at finding a common factor that unifies the social structure of the Libyan society in light of the objective conditions that may achieve harmony and compatibility among the citizens of this one country.

The study aims at achieving a group of objectives. They are:

- 1 - Analyzing the structure of the Libyan society and its reflections on the Amazighs.
- 2 - Monitoring the patterns of multiculturalism in the Libyan society and their relation with identity issues.
- 3 - Monitoring the features of the conflict between Arabs and Amazighs in Libya.
- 4 - Attempting to determine the most apparent reflections of the ethnic conflict on the identity of the Libyan society.
- 5 - Attempting to reach a solution of the ethnic conflict concern in light of the particularity of the Libyan society.

The above goals can be achieved through answering the following group of queries:

- 1 - What is the nature of the social structure of the country of Libya?
- 2 - What are the most apparent sub-cultures inside the Libyan society and their relations with the Libyan identity?
- 3 - What are the features of the ethnic conflict inside the Libyan society?

- 4 - What are the most apparent effects of the conflict on the identity of the Libyan society with its different ethnicities?
- 5 - What are the most apparent solutions of the problems of the ethnic conflict?

The current study takes off from a group of main concepts such as:

- **The ethnic identity:** It means the group of social and cultural features which distinguishes one of the ethnic groups in a specific geographical area.
- **The racial conflict:** It means the cases of the apparent or hidden conflict among neighboring ethnic groups.
- **Amazighs (Berbers):** We mean by Berbers in this study the inhabitants of the mountainous regions in West Libya (the inhabitants of the Naffusa Mountain) who form a distinguished ethnicity that represents the original inhabitants of Libya.

The current study depends on the **theory of Antony D. Smith** (the ethnic symbolism) that concentrates in its general form **on** the importance of the ethnic links, stories, memories, values, and traditions. The theory correlates between the structural conditions and the features of modernity through the concepts of nation and socialism in an ideological frame (Malesevic, 2004: 577). Smith has determined a group of standards on its basis in which he classified the ethnicities. Among them are:

- 1 - The focusing on the structural reasons of socialism in face of socialisms as cultural political ideologies.
- 2 - History of nations in modern and pre-modern worlds.
- 3 - The focusing on identity and its human correlations and social and historical phenomena.

The researcher sought, in light of the strategies of this theory, to study the Amazighs through focusing on their structural position inside the Libyan society and the effects of this structural position on the conflict between the Amazighs (Berbers) and the Arabs in light of the ideological orientations of the regime which tries to negate the historical features that emphasizes that the Amazighs are the original inhabitants of the land, and the exiling of the cultural symbols of this ethnicity through the actions of cultural effacement and the surpassing of the Amazighi identity. However, this has lead to more solidarity among the fellows of this ethnicity and their striving to confirm their social and cultural identity.

Methodology:

First, **the human dimension:** This is defined in the study sample by the inhabitants of the “Yefrin” city from the Amazighs.

Second, **the geographical dimension:** This is defined in the mountainous city of “Yefrin”, located in the region of the Western Mountain in Libya, about 130 km to the south of the capital city Tripoli, which is one of the famous Amazighi cities (Gharyan, Gado, Nalut, Ghadamis). It surpasses these cities by the co-existence of the Arab and Amazighs ethnicities, unlike Arabist Gharyan and other cities that are closed to the Amazighs, the thing that marked “Yefrin” as being a region of security tension for the likelihood of the break-out of the ethnic conflict in a continuous manner.

Third, **the time dimension:** This is defined as the duration of the field study which took about 11 months starting with month 9/2007 until month 7/2008.

The study was based on the **anthropological approach** through the researcher living in the area to study the environment, which came as a result of his work at the Faculty of Arts in “Yefrin” and his stay in the city during the field study. The researcher adopted the following tools in collecting his field material: observation by joining, focal interviews, and individual and group interviews.

The utilizing of the anthropological approach by the researcher has been imposed due to a group of factors:

- 1 - The researcher’s work and stay in the city during the field study.
- 2 - The unavailability of any written resources on the Amazighs with the exception of works that negate this ethnicity.
- 3 - The orientations of the Libyan regime and the imposed limitations on talks about (Arab-Berbers) issue.

Therefore, the researcher sought to collect his field material through his mixing inside the Amazigh society and living with people of the city of “Yefrin” in order to get information and observe the forms of ethnic conflict.

The current study revolves in the orbit of a group of dimensions. They are:

- 1 - Theoretical and methodical settings/frameworks to study ethnicities.
- 2 - Defining the Amazighs (Berbers).
- 3 - Determinants of the ethnicity identity.

- 4 - Multiculturalism or ethnic conflict.
- 5 - Remedial views for the ethnic conflict problem.
- 6 - The study results and recommendations.

First: Theoretical and Methodical Settings/Frameworks to Study Ethnicities:

Most efforts that were dedicated to study nationalities and ethnicities issues have presented diverse groups of thoughts that associate with religious and linguistic aspects and their association to the objective conditions and ignoring factors with respect to the individuals from a historical point of view (Lecours, 2000:153).

The examining of the majority of sociological works on the issue of ethnicities reveals that they focus on the special aspects of the demographic minority and the economic factors aside from inequality factors that lead to violence, and this was what Block has emphasized in his theory on the economic deprivation and the view of the majority towards minorities as a source of being threatening (Mecall, and Parker, 2005:273-274).

Therefore, the theorists of sociology emphasize that the perception of the threat that the dominating social groups get from the minorities is the main motive to fortify their strength by means of power and fortifying the forcible domination without regard to the risks of social division (Stephanie and David, 2004:346-347). Thus, it can be said that the treatment of Sociology to the issues of ethnicity did not associate with manner orientations as it does with the perspectives of human rights in light of the commitment to the rights, duties, and the performance process in the social system (Sioberg, Gedeon et al., 2001:16).

Also, despite what Huntington claims have stirred, with respect to interpreting the ethnic conflicts as a product of the original identities of nations and the clash of civilizations (Lee, 2003:113), the analyses of sociology come among several prospectives that include the concepts of similarities and differences in the national, ethnic, and social classifications, the contextual concepts and the differentiation of experience and social positions, cultural classifications that are reflected in the contemporary concepts of identity, self-effacing, internal life, social performance, popular understanding, and the psychological concepts that reflect the consciousness of mind forming (Bendle, Mervyn. 2002:5).

Therefore, the supporters of the theory of common identity or national identity hold the view of the possibility of the unity and co-living of the ethnic minorities by reducing the relative conflict situation among them, through mechanisms such as religion, with the purpose of giving precedence to the concept of nation and loyalty, in order to achieve their goals and obtain benefits (Koroste, 2004:227). This agrees with the theoretical Islamic basis of the ethnicity issue that rests on the principle of equality despite the ethnic, cultural, and linguistic differences, as all people represent the religious, social, and political entity, which in turn sums up under the concept of the Islamic nation (Ataman, 2003:9).

As for the anthropological approach to studying ethnicities, it seems that the cultural anthropologists abandoned the special remarks of the evolution theory and switched towards emphasizing the importance of the multiculturalism view in face of the clashing orientations of Huntington (Chiot, 2001:341-342). With the coming of the seventies, the anthropological concepts pertaining to the tribe have switched and considered them a kind of ethnic division similar to what is common now in the West, while the idea that was existing on the basis of differentiating between civilized and uncivilized, which was dominating the anthropological prospective, had been demolished. Therefore, the cultural anthropological approach, in its analysis to the ethnic groups, nations, and nationalities, sets from the special culture of these ethnicities which form a drive of the special self-consciousness of feelings for every ethnic group (Kaufmann, 2000:1089).

Hence, it can be said that that there are two main theoretical approaches to studying and handling the issue of ethnicities, and although different from each other, yet they stem from one basis which is to contrast life experiences, which produces the thoughts associated in the culture of each ethnic group. The first approach is the approach of the clash of civilization which belongs to Huntington, while the second approach is that of Gomilif and depends on environmental divisions that are closely related to each other in the social and cultural classified sequence, which is the main component of the classification of all ethnic groups (Goudakov, 2007:116-118).

It is noticed that the theoretical settings, in general, which examine the issue of ethnicities and nationalities contain shortcoming aspects associated with presenting queries without producing convincing answers

for them. Thus, Weberism and the theoretical settings of historical feature look at the concepts of ethnicities and nationalities as world phenomena despite their specialty in their origin and progress, and the common features of region or country. Consequently, it is possible to seek the differences in the ethnic tree of nations (Tishkov, 626: 2000).

Further, the focus of sociologists in their study on ethnic relations was made in light of four world wars. They are the First and Second World Wars, while the third is the Cold War between America and the Soviet Union, and the fourth is the war of America against terrorism, or the targeted groups who are resisting ethnic relations, utilizing the tool of terrorism under religious and political claims (Rex, 2004: 161-162).

In face of these theoretical discussions, it is clear that the issue of ethnicities is an ideological issue in the first place, as it is limited within the frame of the co-living ideology or the ideology of the ethnic clash. It also associates with the special self-identity for each ethnic group in an attempt to emphasize its social-cultural property in face of the identity of modern countries which try to negate the internal identities to emphasize the general identity of the country to achieve unity and the elements of sovereignty.

Second: The Amazighs:

The ethnicity of the Amazighs is common in the countries of North Africa and materializes the original population of these areas according to the publications of most writings and historical research. However, Arabs, subsequent to the Islamic and Arab opening to these regions, imposed their authority and the ancient cultures were demolished as a result of the incorporation with the Arabian culture. The Amazighs tried to maintain their social and cultural heritage by enclosing themselves and trying to revive their heritage in the countries of North Africa in light of what the dominating regimes may allow. However, The Amazighs of Libya have their distinguished status, which has resulted from the structural nature of this society.

The term “Amazighs” means the free men, which is characteristic of their society, meaning the love for freedom in the way they regard authority, which may be a reason for their not making a state but petty states that adopted the cultures of the dominating nations to whose rule they submitted (Abu Zayed, 2004:221). The Amazighs are called Berbers which is a derived word from the Latin word Barbarus, the term the

Romans, and the Greek before them, on the peoples that are less in civilization than the Greeks and Romans were at that time (Al-Saady, 1998: 86).

The Amazighs in Libya prefer calling themselves the mountainous people as they are the inhabitants of the western mountain in the state of Libya. The inhabitants of mountains are characterized by strength and patience in resisting the harsh mountainous nature, which is clear from the patterns of their old houses which they call (al-Damous), i.e. mountainous caves. They also do not take as an offense to naming them Berbers as it implies the meanings of pride for their forceful resistance against the Greek and Roman conquerors and a proof of brevity and strength.



A Picture shows the shape of al-Damous (Cave) that the old Amazighs lived in. They are a proof of the extent of strength of toleration of this ethnicity to live in harsh natural conditions which was reflected in their social, psychological, and physical formation

Searching for the origins of this ethnic group is associated with the nature of ideological orientations, which is determined by three main orientations:

- 1 - The European origin: This is the concept of the Europeans, particularly the French

- 2 - The Arabic origin: This is the concept of the Libyan regime and Arab nationalists
- 3 - The concept of the original inhabitants: This is among the contemporary concepts on which the Amazighs themselves count in the claim of their rights.

As for the idea of the European origin of the Amazighs, it is adopted by “Rinn” and other scholars by counting on some verbal linguistic comparisons with the purpose of establishing a feeling of loyalty to Europe, France in particular, and terminating the feeling of an independent personality, and as such there would be no reason to resist the European imperialism (Alsoyey, 1999:108). However, the American historian William Lango had disproved the idea of the Berbers’ migration from Europe, i.e. coming from North going to the South, and had admitted, along with the society of the historians of the human’s migrations, that the migrations in the basin of the Mediterranean sea were from the south towards the north, as Europe was a lifeless mass of ice at the time north Africa was populated with humans (Alsaady: 63).

The researcher sees that the idea of the European origin is associated with the physical shape of the Amazighs through their features, wherein they have a white complexion and maroon hair, which dominates, making them look more like Europeans. They themselves justify this, according to the perspective of Ibn Khaldun, an Arab explorer, as their countries in the past used to enjoy plenty of rain, plants, and trees, which led to the reflection of these climatic conditions on the nature of their physical shape. They emphasized this through accompanying the researcher to observe the ancient springs which has dried, such as the famous Romiah Spring, an area full of palms and trees.



**A picture shows the famous Romiah spring near Yefrin. It is full of palms and trees.
However, due to negligence, the water stream has dried**

Further, the physical features are not a proof of the Amazighs belonging to the European origin, as it could be a product of the marriage of the Berbers with the Phoenicians who came from the Syrian coast and merged with the people of North African north to ally with them against the Romans. This view agrees with the Khalduni view, which considers that the Berbers are the remnants of the ancient tribes which inhabited Palestine (Alsaady, 1998: 62)

As for the Arabic origin of the Amazighs, it is the concept that the Libyan regime and the supporters of the Arab nationalism adopted to emphasize that the origin of the Amazighs goes back to the human migrations from Yemen and the Arabian Peninsula to North Africa. The researcher listened to the official orientations of the regime through the media as a means of tracing the origin of the word Berber to the migrations made by sea, and other migrations made by transporting by land. Therefore, the second type is called Berber, meaning the Arab tribes that migrated from land to land, which emphasized the Arab identity of these human groups.

What supports the previous view is the entrance of Islam to the countries of the West along with the Arab opening, the vast response to the Islamic message, and the acceptance of the Arabian culture, as it took the

western from the eastern borders of Libya to the Andalusia coasts only fifty years to speak and write in Arabic. The historians trace this back to the Semitic origin (ancient Arabic) of Berbers. The source of evidence of this may be the Islamic message, which is being enjoyed in the fair and just content which is lovable to the people of this tribal formation.

The researcher believes that the acceptance of Islam under the Arab opening is associated with the cultural similarity between the two ethnicities, and this is what led the Amazighs, who are known as being powerful and forceful in facing conquerors, to accept the Islamic message of the Arabs. In support of this, they named this mountainous area “Naffousa Mountain” as a proof of their embracing Islam by their own will and being driven by being convinced of the Islamic message, and not by being afraid from the Arab conqueror.

The concept of the original inhabitants manifests in the political level in order to gain legitimacy through the international laws and the organizations of the civil society. The political scholar, Fred Riggs, determines his methodology in defining the original population by counting on four main standards. They are:

- 1 - The cultural level according to the state.
- 2 - The historical result (who came first and who came after them)
- 3 - The political situation (which power is dominating?)
- 4 - The geographical region (place)

The sociology scholar, Frank Wilmer, determines that the most apparent characters of the original population were:

- 1 - Descending from the origins of their forefathers who lived in certain geographical areas and continue to control it.
- 2 - Desiring to live in unity to maintain their identity and cultural traditions
- 3 - Not having the political right of self-determination and suffering from cultural disharmony with other ethnic groups (Cortnassel, 2003: 77-81).

In the researcher's belief is, in light of the previous methodology, it can be said that the Amazighs form a distinguished ethnic group evidenced by the names of the regions they inhabit, which are not traced back to the Arabic language. The Arabs from the Libyans to other countries have emphasized the Amazighi origins of such names when asked about the

significance of these names of cities such as Gharyan, Yefrin, Nalut, Gado, Gadamis, and so on. Moreover, in spite of the existence of an orientation towards Arabization of the Amazighi words and the attempt of showing the similarity between this culture and some Arabic terms, these names are purely Amazighi in origin.

History, as well, emphasizes the ancientness of this ethnic group in Libya as the Amazighs. For the first time in the modern Libyan history during the period of the field study of the research, they celebrated the Amazighi New Year, of the year 2957. However, the official celebration was under the name of celebrating the commemoration of the ascension of the Libyan leader “Shashank” to the throne of Egypt, uniting the lands of Nuba, Libya, and Egypt. There was no indication to the Amazighi origin of this Libyan king whose statue was set in the Green Plaza, which is the main square in the capital city of Tripoli, and it was moved from its location. Therefore, the Amazighs try always to emphasize the deep-reaching in its history and origin and that the Arabic conquest is the cultural newcomer upon them. They emphasized this historic deepness through their repeated pointing out to the magnitude of the Amazighs in pharaohic Egypt during the 23rd and 24th dynasties. They persist in this by emphasizing the historic precedence of the Amazighs to the pharaohs, and verify the presence of the Amazighs in the “Sewa” Oasis area which uses the Amazighi language. This was particularly of interest and verified by the researcher due to his Egyptian nationality.

As for the issue of geographic area and the group settlement, the Amazighs people of “Yefrin” emphasized their unwillingness to move and settle in the more civilized areas, considering that these mountainous areas, despite its harsh topographic relief and tough climate, is the land of their fathers and predecessors. Perhaps this orientation is associated with the desire towards secluding themselves in order to maintain the social and cultural identity of the Amazighs under the lack of recognition of the heritage by the official regime as an independent ethnic group.

Third: The Determinants of Identity:

The concept of identity spread in the fifties and sixties, following the writings of Goffman and Erikson on the crisis of identity. It also became common in the literature of sociology after it had been limited to the psychological studies, and the focus was on the social identities instead of

the individual ones. The identity studies do not take place in isolation of the new structure of the state and the ideas and thoughts that relate to nations and nationalism, in addition to the issues of loyalties and belonging and minority rights over the course of history, which refers to the unstructured nature of the concept of nation (Ataman, 2001: 89), a concept that "Shils" has defended and considered a principal condition for the human existence and one of the factors of solidarity, unity, and sovereignty that, together, make up the factors of the subsistence of the society (Leoussi, 2000: 251).

However, the ethnic groups are in greatest need to define their identities in their interaction with the outer world. This identity emerges through the association with the society, religion, or gender, etc. So, the identity is attributed to the groups with the feeling of specialty and it develops their self abilities (Riffer, 2003: 218).

The most apparent determinants of identity can be observed in the elements of language, religion, and cultural heritage being the elements that formed through the interaction between time and place with the human groups, and, in their total reflection on the aspects of conflict among the different ethnicities. The starting point of the Amazighs to strive to survive is with the emphasis of their identity and their social existence, which takes off through the struggle towards acknowledging their Amazighi language.

1 - Language:

The process of functional analysis of language, from the sociological prospective, takes off through the interactive communication function of language through its transmitting of the knowledgeable, intellectual, and cultural heritage of developing the human experience, and this is what links the language, as a social phenomenon with other phenomena other than language in the society. This was what led Livi Shetrans and the supporters of the general aggregate or macro approach to establish the integration between the linguistic phenomenon and the social cultural context, where the structural anthropologist pays attention to the empirical facts that the observation data provides about culture and language that is made available (Sheta, 1999: 34-35). Thus, individuals do not use language merely to indicate the sensible cases only. Rather, they

use it to formulate each others minds, establish directions, and future expectations, and transmit experiences (Korbalis, 2006: 15-16).

The researcher has noticed that there was a unanimous agreement among the study population on the necessity of teaching their children the Amazighi language as it is considered to be their original language which they deal with inside their homes and among themselves. They also emphasized there was no duplicate language problem with their children, most especially they do not reject the Arabic language given its association with the Islamic religion and the Quran. However, their complaint was determined in the oppression of the current regime in its practices in preventing the circulation of the Amazighi language and that this prevention threatens their identity significantly.

This was what Florian Kolmas expressed by the four levels that reveal the deterioration of the language and correlates with the linguistics community, communication fields, the speaker, the language system, and the numerical decrease of the linguistic community. Thus, the retreat in the principal field of social communication usually means the death of heritage (Kolmas, 2000: 233).

As a result of this, the concept of Speech Community or Linguistics Community, that Lyons used to indicate the community of people who use a specific language or dialect, came to surface. These communities may overlap until there is bi-linguistics inside them (Hudson, D. 1987: 52-53), and this was what the researcher has noticed in the study population, "Yefrin". Thus, although the Amazighi race is the one that is dominating in terms of quantity and amount within the population of the study, however the Arabic language is the street and governmental offices language due to the regime's pressures which yielded, in light of the researcher's field observations, the mix of speech between Amazighi and Arabic languages. Whereupon the researcher noticed during his participation to offer condolences at one of the fundamental Amazighi tribes (Al-Bashosheyen) gatherings that the elders mix some Arabic words in their Amazighi speech. They justified this as being due to the lack of the verbal indication of the expressed words in the Amazighi language, and as such they used the Arabic language. This conforms with the Amazighi language as being among the ancient languages that lacked someone who would adopt its revival through establishing special linguistic centers, similar to the Barbaric Academy in Marseille, which

strives to revive this language under the prevention policy that the regime approaches.

Consequently, the response to the crisis of the linguistic diversification emerged, which the researchers adopted during the nineties of the twentieth century and at the beginnings of the twenty first century. These trends took two responses:

- 1 - Documenting the languages and maintaining their records of grammar, dictionaries, and textures
- 2 - Supporting and fortifying the linguistic diversification as an essential element for life diversification (Maffi, 2002: 149).

However, the Libyan Amazighi community does not fall under any of these two approaches, as there is an official rejection to the idea of linguistic diversification to the extent that it uses all compulsory means to emphasize this rejection. Therefore, the Libyan Amazighs look at their brethren in Morocco and Algeria, who fulfilled significant stages in order to emphasize their identity through supporting the Amazighi language and representing it in these communities in a relative manner.

Perhaps, this official rejection of bilingualism in the Libyan cultural structure takes off from the view of defending the Arabic identity of Libya with the objective of maintaining unity and political stability of the country, especially that the French orientalist, Jack Perk, emphasized the error of some recognizing the Amazighi language as a formal language on the part of the countries of the Arabic west, thereby promoting the illegitimacy of this demand as it leads to the division of loyalty (Alsaady, 1998: 51-52).

2 - Religion:

Many researchers in the field of ethnicities and nationalities, such as Hobsbawm, Ernest Bendict Anderson, and Eric Gellner, did not rely much on the environmental association between religion and nationalism, as they focused on the economic conditions and overlooked the direct or indirect role of religion (Rieffer, 2003: 216).

Libya, as a country whose religion is Islam, is assumed to deal with the issue of ethnicity based on the Quran and Prophetic Tradition: (No superiority for an Arab to a non-Arab except by pity and righteousness). Therefore, the Islamic identity is the main determinant of the nation. However, the tribal identity of the Libyan society focuses on the priority

of belonging to Arabism and then Islam. So, the tribal belonging represents the source of security to the individual especially in the issue of tribal conflicts (Ataman, 2003: 89-95).

The importance of religion seems in the population of the study (Yefrin) in shaping the patterns of the relationship between the two ethnicities: The Arabic and the Amazighi, and in determining the shape of the social and cultural identity. Thus, the Amazighs of the Western Mountain in Libya belong to the “Ibadhiyah” doctrine, one of the Islamic doctrines that lack acceptance by the mainstream Arabs in Libya, who regard it as false, astray, and contradictory to religion, although the researcher did not notice while participating with the population of the study in their religious rites inside the “Yefrin” Mosque, except some insignificant and formal differences in the practices and movements of the Prayers from the “Maliki” doctrine as the official doctrine of the state.

By asking an individual of the community about the extent of his following of the “Ibadhiyah” doctrine in light of his practices of the Prayers and which conform with the practices of the Amazighs, his response was sharp and quick emphasizing the refutation of this doctrine from him and that he was following the official doctrine of the state. Also, many of the Amazighs, during one of the sessions with them, denounced calling the western countries as the Arabic West, and emphasized that its name is the States of the Large West or the Islamic West, and that Arabs try always to link Islam to Arabism, and that was one of the main problems between the Arabs and Amazighs, as the spread of Islam in the western states and Europe was made by the hands of the Berber leader Tariq bin Zeyad.

3 - Heritage:

Heritage represents an outcome and an expression of culture and society during their long history. It is a tool of interconnection and linkage between past and present, and it is this which reveals the historic deepness and helps to visualize the society as a cultural continuity (Abu Zayed, Ahmed. Ibid: 39).

The ownership of the cultural heritage belongs to humanity as a whole. The state is the owner and custodian of the cultural heritage. Thereupon, its duty is to protect and maintain it, and to defend it if necessary. As such, the occupied nations regard their strength through

holding to their own cultural heritage; hence, the conflict emerged against the identity of the invader who tries always to wipe out the cultural identity of the defeated (Elyan, 2005: 177).

The official trend of the state is manifested through adopting the tent as a dominating symbol, which is the symbol of Arabs in general in face of “al-Damus”, or the mountains caves, which forms the symbol of the Amazighs. The Amazighs emphasize through these cultural symbols that Arabs are nomads and Bedouins; in contrast with them as being people of a settled society, in an implied indication they are the original inhabitants. They regard Arabs in the same logic of Ibn Khaldun, who emphasized that Arabs are people of attack and retreat, and that they are settlers and not natives.

The attempts of the cultural effacement of the Amazighi identity are clear in the lack of care of the ancient Amazighi monuments and in renovating them. In addition to the conflict of preservation, they want to put the symbol of the Olive Mill (the Amazighs symbol) in one of the main squares in “Yefrin”.



vA picture of the Olive Mill as a symbol of the Amazighs, which witnessed a conflict in order to be settled in this main square in “Yefrin”



Pictures of “Ibn Tiran” Palace in “Yefrin”
It is among the Amazighi monuments which are subjected to negligence and effacement

Multiculturalism or ethnic conflict?:

The trends of Globalization are to achieve more opportunities of harmony, similarity, and cultural standardization. The patterns of behavior and thinking were themselves the reason of rehabilitation of the local and national cultures and identities, be it ethnic, religious, or linguistic. They are defiant in defending the foundations and the national sociological beings, or even to the separation from the larger political entity which does not recognize the cultural, social, and political rights (Thabet, 2004: 94).

The issue of multiculturalism from an institutional point of view should be reformulated in light of the relations of power in relation to the national state, and associating it with the issues of citizenship and legal rights (Jan Nederveen, 2001:395). Hence, some tend to associate between globalization and the issues of ethnic conflict despite the form that indicates ethnic resistance. However, this is conditional upon other factors such as democracy, the domination of regimes, the issue of cultural differences, and resistance which lead to the conflict (Ishiyama, et al., 2004: 20).

With the beginnings of the World Declaration of the Human Rights, issued by the United Nation, the international efforts to develop the full rights of human beings and human existence have emerged. The focus was in particular on the civil and political rights which interacted with the social, economic, and cultural development programs and the special struggle of the original rights of ethnic groups (Pearce, 2001: 48).

These rights which T.H. Marshall has expressed as the three dimensions of citizenship, which is the social, political, and civil dimension (Rogers, 1998: 62). These dimensions are associated with the issues of 'Inclusion' and 'exclusion', reaching authority, privileges accompanying the inclusion, and penalties accompanying exclusion in very divided communities. Hence, the ethnic identity determines the clear guidelines as to who is included or excluded (Horoitz, 1997: 143).

Therefore, the concept of cultural hybrid, which implies problems that relate to pure and original elements along other elements in one entity, has spread among anthropologists. The history of humanity,

which consisted of ancient migration activities that encountered no obstacle or barrier, can not rule out this blending and mixture (Constant, 2006: 253).

Gobineau, the author of 'A Study on the Disparity of the Human Ethnicities', has adopted the notion that people are not equivalent, as some are more advanced than others, and that the self characteristics of the lower people obstruct their advancement, and that apartheid plays a major role in the national and international entities. Ibn Khaldun attributed this differentiation to the cultural factors and the firmness of habits and traditions (Alsaaty, 1981: 107).

In the framework of this disparity of the human differences, and despite the classification of Ibn Khaldun of Arabs and Berbers as untamed people, there is a scorn tendency from the Amazighs towards Arabs, as they have a tendency to describe them with ignorance and Bedouinistic features of uncivilized behavior. This is what the researcher noticed, through his co-living with the population of the study, of the relative civilization of the Yefrin Amazighs compared to Arabs settling in the same area. This is evidenced by the professional classification and the practicing of the common economic activity. The Yefrin market area is dominated by the process of specialization according to ethnicity, as restaurants and butcher stores are owned and practiced by Arabs, in contrast to Amazighs who usually own the computer and mobile stores. In addition, the students from among the Amazighs surpass their Arab counterparts in their tendency to learn and gain knowledge in general.

The raised question in this regard is about the multiculturalism in the Libyan society, and which correlates with the limits of co-existence between the two ethnicities?

The answer to this question is associated with the idea of cultural co-existence as a result of the cultural similarity between the two ethnicities. So, the conservative feature dominates the two cultures despite the relative liberation of the Amazighs. However, the reasoning of this similarity takes off from the Islamic religion being the source of many of the habits and traditions pertaining to both of them. This similarity seems through the habits and traditions is associated with marriage, funeral ceremonies, the new born 7th day festivals, and the use of same utensils in handling and preparing foods and drinks. Hence, the

researcher emphasized the similarity in the routine of the daily life and the non-existence of extreme differences between the way of life of each of the Amazighs people and the Arab of Libya.

The Amazighs also enjoy the citizenship rights as Arabs do. This shows in getting loans from banks, study missions, and employment. However, enjoying the rights of citizenship is conditioned by not indicating or raising talks about the existence of the Amazighi race. So, the regime regards everyone as Arabs, as this became clear to the researcher upon the postponing of the end-of-year exams, previously set for 17/5/2007, for three days in order to hold a conference in the city of Gado, which lie in-between the cities of the Amazighs, as a result of existing of individual problems concerning ethnic disagreements, and this conference was a strongly-worded warning to the stirrers of the Amazighi case in Libya.

Despite this similarity and co-living between the two ethnicities and enjoying the rights of citizenship by the Amazighs, however this does not mean the non-existence of the elements of social oppression, which is revealed by the nature of the social structure in the society. Thus, oppression is not a goal by itself and does not correlate with the decline of the individual abilities as much as it's being the outcome of the visions and social structure that govern it. It is also an indicator to the extent of the performance of this structure to its functions. This oppression correlates with the several generations of humans who belong to ethnic minorities and live in neighborhoods are closely tight-knit, and are restrained from communicating with the majority of the society due to considering them a danger to the society (Hills et al., 1997: 26).

So, the oppression of the minority group under the autocratic ideological military regimes opposes the process of social equity, and supports the element of deprivation that the ethnic groups may feel more than the other sectors in the society (Ibrahim, 1998: 116). The suggested solution in front of the leaders becomes the defining of the model of getting rid of the effects of cultural division through a National-Islamic project (Bromberg, 1997: 7).

According to the above, it can be said that, as per the structural givens of the Libyan society which is governed by the principles of tribalism and the ideology of military autocracy, which are governed by

the principles of Arab nationalism, the model of multiculturalism and differential ethnical co-inhabitation emerges through:

- 1 - The existence of some Amazighi regions which have become Arabist such as Gharyan, Taghma, Um-Algerssan in Yefrin.
- 2 - The existence of limited models of marriage between the two ethnicities, however these models emerge in an exceptional manner and not as a general rule.
- 3 - The enjoyment of the Berbers with the rights of citizenship with the condition of not announcing their ethnic belonging.

However, the elements of ethnic conflict are dominating and have taken the latent and hidden form and have not been apparent due to being governed by the previously mentioned structural determinants, that is until recently. They are also governed by the division of the Amazighs themselves into three main directions. They are:

- 1 - The hard-liners: These are from the tribes' areas which include Al-bashosheyen, Al-kiradeyen, Al-meaneyen, Al-shaqarena, and Al-bakhabekha, in addition to the regions of Qalaah and Tazmerite who openly express their identity through drawing the Amazighs symbol on the front of their homes and the front of the mobiles and other forms of expression of identity. They are closed to themselves as they refuse to deal with Arabs whether through marriage, housing, or economic activity. They never speak Arabic among themselves.
- 2 - The moderates: The majority of them are from among the learned and educated. They are those who call for the cultural co-existence among the differentiated ethnicities and always call for their rights of social and cultural representation and the freedom of expression of their case in defense of their Amazighi identity and their social existence.
- 3 - The careless: They are a small percentage of careless youth or beneficiaries of the regime. The Amazighs call them the green Amazighs, meaning those who have been politicized by the regime.

Despite the domination of the aspects of the hidden conflict between the two ethnicities, however this does not mean to nullify the visible conflict which seems clear during the period of escalation, i.e. election. This conflict sharpens to look sometimes in its armed form on the contrary of the forms of hidden conflict, which are determined in:



The symbol of the Amazighs which they draw on the frontages of their homes and in the roads as an attempt to confirm the existence and defend the identity

- 1 - Refusing marriage with Arabs
- 2 - Refusing mutual economic dealings
- 3 - Tending to live in areas isolated from Arabs in distinction of their status and as a result of their indication that all Arab houses are given to them by the state
- 4 - The exchanged hatred between the two ethnicities and throwing of exchanged accusations, as Arabs regard the Amazighs to be agents of imperialism, Israel, and France in particular. They establish this by claiming that the origin of Al-shaqarena tribe goes back to Jewish origins, evidenced by the existence of the Jewish temple in Al-

shaqarena till the time being and that the history of the Amazighs is known for assisting the Italian occupation against resistance. One of the informers from the population of the study indicated that there were no wars or resistance against the occupation in the area of Yefrin, and he commended the Italians. However, this does not mean there was no resistance on the part of the Amazighs to the Italian conquest at all. Further, Arabs emphasize that the Amazighs form a danger on the society, however the regime ambushes them by geographically and culturally shackling them from full integration.

So, the city of Yefrin is surrounded by the Arab tribes that are supported by the regime, such as Al-zentan, Al-rayana, Al-mashasheyen, Al-ghanayma, and Beer Al-Ghanam, all of which form a security siege on this Amazighi city. What is noticeable is that the Amazighs denounce the attempt to attribute the Jewish feature to them and comment that it is Arabs who pursue to the same Jewish pattern in settling down through occupying the lands of the Berbers and conveying them to Arabs and the attempt to refute their identity.

It is in the mind and intellect of the researcher that the feelings of hatred are specified in the Libyan Arabic element in particular and not in general, which is evidenced by the inclusion of the Amazighi areas to the alien Arabs who reside in Libya for the purpose of work. The reference of this hatred is determined in the look at the Libyan Arabs as being exactors of the lands of the Amazighs who are the original owners of the land. Despite these feelings, the idea of independence, however, is rejected in their minds. Thus, they emphasize that Libya is their land and country and that they do not seek separation or forming another state and giving away their original country.

It is possible to link between these negative feelings and the compulsory policy that the regime adopts against them. It is determined by these policies:

- 1 - Prevention the circulation of, or the demand to, spreading the Amazighyah language
- 2 - The attempt, but later backing away, to change the name “Yefrin” to “Al-Urouba”.

- 3 - Prevention of the circulation and recognition of the Amazighi names.
- 4 - The wiping out and eradication of all elements of the Amazighi identity by means of imprisonment and torturing the Amazighi activists.
- 5 - The continual conflict between “Yefrin” and “Al-Zentan” which is supported by the regime.
- 6 - The attempt to incapacitate the city of “Yefrin” and eradicate its identity by use of means of strategic evacuation such as trying to move the governmental authorities and organizations such as the Faculty of “Yefrin” to “Al-Zentan”.
- 7 - The attempt to attribute the accusation of assisting the Italian imperialism against the Amazighi resistance.
- 8 - Denying any Amazighi role in resisting the Italian occupation despite the active role of Soliman Al-Barony, one of the Amazighi leaders who bore the burden of the resistance. The regime, however, sought to undermine his political role and contentedness to designate his name on one of the side streets in the capital



A picture shows the atrocious intrusions of the regime against the Amazighi activists and their families. It is possible to watch the special video of these intrusions on the YouTube and “Tawalt” sites

As a result of these compulsory means, the Amazighs sought to switch their struggle to the hidden pattern by using means such as:

- 1 - The circulation, secretly, of the songs and tapes of the Amazighi singer (Idir), and considering him a popular hero who imposed his language on the world and called the attention to the Amazighi existence

- 2 - Continually, communicating the outer world via the “Tawalt site”: www.tawalt.com for abreacting the oppression which the Amazighism is subject to. It is worth mentioning that the founder of this site belongs to “Yefrin” city
- 3 - Drawing the symbol of the Amazighism on the frontages of the houses or the public areas in contrast to the slogan of the Libyan Arabs (Arab lives, Arab dies, Arab shouts in the loudest voice).

All these means aim at achieving their most distinct demands which are defined in:

- 1 - The right of social and cultural representation
- 2 - The desire to circulate and learn in their language
- 3 - The desire to have Amazighi newspapers and media that seek to revive the Amazighi heritage
- 4 - More attention to the infrastructure and preservation of their areas

Solution Perspectives of the Ethnic Conflict Problem:

The issue of the social acceptance of the other group is the key of the treatment of the ethnicity crisis and its clash with the identity. The multiplicity of ethnicities inside the one society does not cancel the public identity with condition of making a kind of cultural exchange to allow the fortification of the multiple components of the general culture of the society.

Therefore, one of the concentration areas under the administration of the social changes (a program affiliated with UNESCO aims at the encouragement of the Comparative International Social Science Research) on the nature of the change in the multi-culture and multi-ethnicity societies, where the issues of education, culture, religion, identity, human needs, democratic rule, conflict, and inseparableness interact in complex patterns (Fertofik, 1998: 46).

Honneth has pointed out that the redistribution of the special policy of justice is associated in principal with the requirements of dignity and mutual respect because they materialize the basis of trust, and in this meaning it is possible to understand the magnitude of pain resulting from the non-existence of this admission.

As such, Gabriel bin Dour defines a group of mechanisms to contain this conflict. Among them are:

- 1 - Removing the intentional politicization from the issues that can take an ethnic controversial brink

- 2 - Providing for institutional or constitutional arrangements to put the controversial issues away from the main agenda of the central government
- 3 - Having an agreement among the numerous ethnic leaderships to remain in the coalition governments
- 4 - The availability of the right of mutual criticism of the threatening policies to the ethnic groups
- 5 - The relative representation, rational self-containing, and political incorporation inside the large regime (bin Dour, Gabriel. 1997: 250)

The “Valencia” conference has approved the work plan of the dialogue between cultures, which included 5 principles to govern this dialogue, which are based upon an Egyptian perspective. They are:

- 1 - The respect of the cultural multiplicity, differentiation, and cultural particulars.
- 2 - Equality and mutual respect.
- 3 - To avoid bias and stereotyped views.
- 4 - That dialogue does not require a better understanding of the other. Rather, to reach out to the pressing problems and solutions.
- 5 - That the ultimate goal of the dialogue is not to be changing the other, but the peaceful co-existence of the ethnic groups.

It is noticeable that these tools include working through three scopes; youth, education, and the media (Thabet, Ahmed. Ibid: 80-81), and this is what Daniel Bromberg has expressed by “the strategies of full incorporation”, which means the incorporation with the society along with cultural self-independence (Bromberg, Daniel. Ibid: 31), in order to reach the concept of ethnic solidarity which refers to the societal membership of the ethnic groups so that they go beyond individuals and that the group correlations may appear on surface (Malesevic, Sinicia. 2004: 565).

Conclusion:

In light of the previous, it can be said that the study has reached a group of results which came in harmony with the objectives. The most important ones can be specified:

- As for the first objective that cares for the determination of the features of the Libyan social structure and its reflection on the Amazighs, it became clear that the Libyan society has its characteristics that are determined in the tribal nature in which partisanship

represents the main pillar that governs the patterns of the social relations among the descendants of the ethnicity. Therefore, the degree of the effect of this partisanship on another ethnicity is severe, as Amazighs are looked at as being a source of danger and threat despite their being a minority in the society. Hence, the regime tends to use the Arab tribe as tools for social shackling through seizing the Amazighs culture. In addition to partisanship or tribalism, there is also the tense centralization and the nature of the political system that depends on the pattern of the autocratic rule that is governed by the ideology of Arab nationalism along with all warnings talking about any other identities.

- As for the second objective pertaining to the multiculturalism in the Libyan society, the field observations indicated the co-inhabitation of the Arab and Amazighi ethnicities as a result of the similarity in the patterns of habits and traditions and the role of Islam as a determinant of the features of the two cultures. However, despite this co-inhabitation, the general trend tends to give precedence to the Arab culture with the idea of wiping out the Amazighi cultural features through the measures of social and cultural undermining, which lead the Amazighs to geographically concentrate and isolate themselves in order to maintain their identity through maintaining their Amazighi language and teaching it to their children as a means of daily communication.
- As for determining the forms of the ethnic conflict inside the Libyan society, it can be stated that the conflict is hidden and not visible. The reason for this has been the strength of the regime and its mechanisms in holding the reins of power so tight, so that the demanding claims of the Amazighs rights become one of the most important prohibitions in the society. The evidence of this is in the Amazighs in Libya not having their rights concerning their social and cultural identity like their brethren in the countries of Morocco and Algeria. Moreover, this conflict is being switched through the individual attempts by using the internet and using the symbol of the Amazighs as a symbol for the mobiles as means of abreaction due to the fear from the tyranny of the regime.
- As for the most apparent effects of this conflict on the identity of the Libyan society, they are determined through the elements of social

gravity that challenges this society through the excessive hatred between the two ethnicities, and the exchange of accusations with regard to belonging and loyalty. This, perhaps, is a justification of allying with the foreign organizations that call for human rights, despite realizing the hidden intentions behind these claims, although some may be genuine, others may not. However, their justification is that their demand to achieve their identity is a legitimate demand and that they are not callers of separation or independence, but their call is defined in the Arab recognition and respect of their Amazighi identity.

- As for the most apparent results concerning the suggested solution to solve the problems of this conflict, they come through the necessity of recognizing the other and making a kind of cultural mix between the elements of the two ethnicities, as it especially pours into the well being of the Libyan society as a whole. The Amazighs should be permitted to express their social and cultural identity, provided this would not be leading to the disunity of the overall Libyan structure. This should be through the recognition of the Libyan society as being a society of two cultural branches under the Islamic identity that governs these two branches. There should be full integration and inclusion of all ethnic groups.
- Therefore, the study recommends the following:
 - o Benefiting from the Amazighyah culture in enriching the cultural structure of the Libyan society through cultural exchanges.
 - o Including the Amazighs in the centers of decision-making and giving them the right of social representation and integration.
 - o Familiarizing the society of the elements of the Amazighyah language, along with maintaining the Arabic language as the only official language of the country, but not prohibiting dialects.
 - o Cautious dealing with the calls of human rights and the attempt of the regime to give these rights internally through inclusion instead of trying to seek them through foreign intervention.

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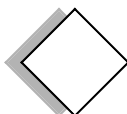
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الهوية الإنسانية والصراع العرقي دراسة حالة أمازيغ ليبيا

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ملخص: تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تعرف أنماط التعددية الثقافية في المجتمع الليبي ونواتج هذه التعددية في بروز مسألة الصراع العرقي بين العرب والأمازيغ كعريقتين متميزتين، لكل منهما هويته الثقافية، حيث يسعى كل منهما نحو تأكيدها لتحقيق عنصر الوجود الاجتماعي، كما تهدف الدراسة إلى تحديد ملامح الصراع العرقي في ضوء الظروف البنائية والموضوعية لهذا المجتمع، والتي ميزته عن جيرانه من مجتمعات المغرب العربي في هذه المسألة، كمحاولة للوصول إلى حل لهذا الصراع، وتحقيق التعايش بين العريقتين نتيجة توافر القواسم المشتركة بينهما.

ولتحقيق هذه الأهداف استخدمت الدراسة المنهج الأنثروبولوجي من خلال أدوات الملاحظة بالمعايشة والرجوع إلى الإخباريين والمقابلات بأنواعها: البؤرية والفردية والجماعية، كما استخدمت الدراسة نظرية "Antony D. Smith" عن الرمزية الإثنية "Ethnic Symbolism" لتحليل متغيرات الدراسة في ضوء مقولاتها. وقد توصلت الدراسة إلى مجموعة من النتائج التي ترتبط بمسؤولية الطبيعة البنائية الاجتماعية للمجتمع الليبي التي تتمثل في عوامل القبلية والأيدولوجيا السياسية في هذه الصراعات العرقية، وأن أشكال هذا الصراع تتحدد في عمليات الصراع اللغوي، وحقوق التمثيل الاجتماعي والثقافي، وأن هذه الصراعات تأخذ الشكل الكامن وليس الظاهر بفعل حزم النظام الليبي في التعامل مع هذه الإشكاليات كإجراء دفاعي للحفاظ على الوحدة والاستقرار.

المفاهيم الأساسية: الهوية، العرق، الصراع، التعددية الثقافية، الأمازيغ، البربر، يفرن.

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