Berbers Law

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**Introduction**

The world is full of diversity, having people from different backgrounds and ethnicities. The following paper is a research report of one of the communities in the world, known as the Berbers. The paper will discuss their history, location, culture, religion, legal system, marriage and also their language. The paper will finalize with a conclusion based on the findings from the different articles which were viewed for this research.

**History of the Berbers**

Berbers are the descendants of the people who settled in the Northern part of Africa prior to the arrival of the Arab inhabitants. They lived while sparsely populated in North African countries including Morocco, Tunisia, Libya, Algeria, Egypt, Mauretania, Mali, and Niger. As per the statistics provided in the 21st century, Berbers are mainly found in Morocco and Algeria with their small numbers inhabiting the rest of the North African Countries.

The history of the Berbers can be traced back to 2000 BCE, where their languages spread westward from Nile valley across the Northern section of Sahara Desert. As per the first millennium, it is recorded that Berbers were the original inhabitants of the large region that were encountered by the Greeks, Romans, and Carthaginians. Under the influence of the Romans and the Carthaginians, some of the Berber people gave rise to Berber Kingdoms. Some of these kingdoms including Mauretania and Numidia were under the large Roman Empire by late 2nd century. Other kingdoms stood by themselves, but later were integrated into the Roman Empire, following the Vandal Invasion that took place in 429 CE. These kingdoms were, however, overpowered by the Arabs in conquests that took place between the 7th and the 8th centuries CE.

It was during this time when the Arabs began their colonization of the Berber people. They, for instance, recruited Berber warriors in the Spain conquest but later failed to recognize these warriors. They were rather turned into Barbar, which was a name that was used to refer to the people who descended from Noah. As a way of unifying all the Berbers together, the Arabs began their quest of Islamization (the spread of Islam to Non-Muslims). In order to gain the attention of the local people, Islam was meant to provide a philosophical or conceptual stimulus for the rise of new Berber reign. This new reign was indeed very true and its colors were seen between the 11th and the 13th century which was the greatest of all the dynasties. The Almoravids and Almohads captured the Muslim Spain and North Africa. Berbers successors in the different North African countries continued to rule strongly up to the 16th century.

At this same time of the Berbers strong dynasty, Berber nomads and merchants had begun the trans-Saharan trade. It mainly involved the trade of gold and slaves who settled in the lands of Sudan and the entire Islamic World. These were great achievements by the Berber people and were even celebrated by Arab historian Ibn Khaldun, way back in the 14th century. It was, however, very unfortunate that the Berbers realized that they were in retreat. It was during this period that they realized that they had been subjected to more of ‘Arabization', thus forgetting who they were before. This was dominated in two major ways; one was by the dominance of written Arabic that resulted into an end of writing in Berbers language. The language of the Berbers was thus restricted to folk languages as it was eliminated from the old Libyan as well as the new Arabic scripts. The second way in which Arabization began to affect the Berbers was due to the vast influx of warrior Arab nomads from the east. From the 11th century onwards, most of the Berbers found themselves being pushed off the plains; most of them had been driven into the mountains to give room for the nomads Arab warriors. These factors led Berber speakers becoming Arab speakers with a loss of their original identity. All these issues went on and they were accelerated by the absence of the Berbers reign which came to an end after the Arabs officially overpowered them. The Arabs took power and claimed they descended from the Prophet.

The 19th century became a rescue for the Berbers when the French began to conquer and colonize countries in the Northern part of Africa. Algeria was for instance conquered in the 19th century while Morocco was conquered in the 20th century. During this period, the French were keen and were able to make distinctions between the Arabs who by then were the majority and the minority Berbers group. Having identified them as two separate groups, Berbers once again began to have an identity. This was also the time they became classified as ‘Berbers', which is their modern day name identity. To make these distinctions, several studies were conducted. These studies mainly included anthropological study and geographical isolation. From these, the French were able to note that these were people the Christian and pagan past among the Berbers and also understood how they came to be in Islam.

The beginning of the 20th century saw the entire Berber nation having reduced on enclaves of different sizes. They were also located in different regions of the Northern part of Africa. All of them lived around mountains since they were driven off from their original Plains by the Arabs. For instance, in southern Tunisia, they settled around the hills of Nafusah Plateau. In eastern Algeria, they settled mountain Aures and Kabylie. In Morocco, they settled around three ranges, namely the Rif, Middle and High Atlas. In southern and central Sahara, the Berbers settled in the large area of Ahaggar Mountains. During this time, the Berbers began different economic activities. Other than nomadism which was the main economic activity, there was subsistence agriculture, weaving, pottery, metalwork as well as leatherwork practiced by the Berbers (Godard & Bendaoud, 2014).

Survival of the Berber Society can be accredited to the French who came to their rescue from being absorbed entirely by the Arabs. The Berbers for this long period of time were able to keep some the features of their community, such that not all was lost. Even though some features survived, they have been widely affected by pressures from economic and political systems. Opportunities that also presented themselves from the 20th century also modified the features associated with the Berbers. Search for employment has, for instance, resulted into Berbers settling in permanent housing rather than being nomads. The struggle for recognition as a distinct ethnic group among the North African countries also began in the mid-20th century. There were growing demands of recognition by the Berbers to the governments of countries in North Africa. Some of these have been successful; for instance, in Algeria language spoken by the Berbers has been recognized as a national language but not official. Berber culture has also been a major tourist attraction thus forcing governments to incorporate it among other ethnic groups. In Libya also, the recent overthrow of Muammar Gaddafi led to the Berbers demanding recognition in the new order. Currently, Berbers have begun to be fully recognized in the North African countries. Their history in indeed very interesting moving from original inhabitants of North Africa to being driven off by Arabs, finding a new strength under the colonial leadership of the French up to currently when they are being reinstated back to these nations as part of the original inhabitants (Hoffman, 2010).

**Location of the Berbers**

The Berber culture is mostly located in the North section of Africa, including the Mediterranean region. The influence of this culture has, however, been observed to spread as far as the Canary Islands to the west and Egypt to the east. Berber influence has majorly been felt in Algeria, Libya, Niger, Mali, and Morocco. Morocco is also the country in North Africa where most Berbers are found, followed by Algeria with small numbers in Tunisia, Mediterranean shores and other countries in North Africa. Berbers also live in desert regions and Sahara desert region has been home to some. Others also settle around mountains with the Atlas Mountains in Morocco being one of the areas the Berbers settle. It is important to note that the majority of people in the North African countries belong to the Berber race, with most of them choosing to identify themselves as Arabs. It is, however, difficult to tell whether one is a Berber or an Arab.

The total population of Berbers is believed to be 36 million with a large percentage of these people concentrated in Algeria and Morocco as stated previously. In addition to the 36 million, there are about 4 more millions of Berbers in the rest of the world. These are mainly located in Europe and specifically France. Morocco and Algeria have populations whose majority are Berbers; Tunisia and Libya on the other hand boast of half population being the Berbers. Arabization during the Arab dominance in North Africa has led to Berber identity being swept away thus many identify themselves as Arabs. Genetic evidence performed in these regions have, however, disagreed and found out that most North Africa people are of Berber origin. In the west, Berbers have been stereotyped as being nomads and practicing pastoralism. Initially, they were farmers as they lived around hills and mountains which are close to the coast of Mediterranean Sea. They also dwelt around oases found in the desert so that they would practice farming. Berbers who were initially nomads such as the Tuareg, settled in deserts, in plains, mountain ranges and also along rivers.

**Language**

Berber is the primary language spoken by the Berber people. These languages are mainly spoken by the people in the North African countries where the Berbers are located. The Berber language has different names; for instance, Europeans know this language to be known as Berber while the Arabs refer to it as Shilha. The Berber people on the other hand call their language Amazigh or Tamazight. This language is believed to be a division of the Afro-Asiatic linguistic family. As it has been observed from the location section, the Berber people are widely spread in the entire North Africa, within the specified countries named above. In addition to this, Berbers also settle in different areas within the countries they are in. Due to this, there has been a development of more than 300 different dialects among the Berbers. Many tribes and especially the big ones such as the Rif, Tuareg, and Kabyle, have their own dialects (Leone, 2007).

The modern Berbers have made an effort in establishing a common written Berber language among all these dialects. Despite the existence of Berber alphabets for many years, the widespread of their use have not been enjoyed at all. Some of the common dialects include Kabyle (Algeria), Central Atlas Tamazight, Riffi and Tachelhit in Morocco. Written language among the Berbers has mainly been disrupted by invaders. For example, the Arab invasion led to the Berbers forgetting a lot of their culture as they were easily absorbed by the Arabs. Colonization by the French also had significant impacts on the development of Berber written language. The different conquests in which the Berbers were subjected to also contributed to the low and slow spread of Berber written language. Tuareg is accredited for the first written Berber language which is believed to have been written way back in 200 BC. Between 1000 and 1500 AD Berbers living in Morocco are believed to have written the Berber language but in Arab alphabets. The beginning of the 20th century also saw the Berbers from Algeria, commonly known as Kabyle writing Berber language but using Latin alphabets. The Berber language has passed through various tests but it is currently being accepted in Morocco and Algeria even after it was suppressed immediately after most North African countries obtained their independence. Through protests, the Berbers have successfully seen their language used in schools as from 2007. Tamazight has been officially taught in the primary schools since the year 2007 especially within the Berber provinces (Maddy-Weitzman, 2006).

**Culture of the Berbers**

Culture is all about the way of life among people. There is so much that can be discussed about way of life among the Berbers. This section is aimed at discussing the vivid details about the culture of the Berbers.

In terms of gender roles, it was the role of the men to take care of the livestock. They were responsible for providing food and water for the livestock. From the fact that they practiced transhumance, men had the knowledge of seasonal migratory patterns which were key in helping them carry out their role effectively. They followed these patterns while grazing and also seeking water for their animals which were key to their survival. Having a deep understanding of these patterns ensured they were always in abundance of cotton, wool as well as plants they used in dyeing. Women, on the other hand, had the role of looking after the family. This involved ensuring there was food for the entire family. They were also partly concerned with the health of the family as they took care of family members whenever they were sick. Other than taking care of the family, the women also engaged in the making of handicrafts. These were made both for personal use as well as for commercial use, where they sold to other local people. Women were also responsible for the survival of language spoken by the Berbers. It was their role to teach the children on the language so as to continuously maintain the cultural identity. It was also the role of mothers to disseminate traditional stories to the children and all these were also meant to ensure the survival of cultural identity of the Berbers. Traditionally the Berbers have been known to be weave kilims. Weaving, other than being an economic practice, it is associated with other deeper meanings. For instance, it was used in maintaining the traditional appearance and distinct differences of the origin of each tribe.

With regards to social structure, the tribe was the main factor in consideration. Among the different tribes, one leader was chosen in order to act as the spokesperson for the entire people he or she leads. One striking factor was the idea that women in this community were also given leadership position, unlike other traditional communities where women were only to spend their time cooking and taking care of the families. A good example of people led by a woman were those who settled around Aures Mountains after being driven off by the Arabs, from the plains they occupied before. In addition to this, it was a Berber woman who led the fight against the French people so that they would once again rule themselves. Even so, men dominated the leadership positions which is the current situation.

Just like other communities, Berbers also have a way of addressing interpersonal relations among the people in their communities. For instance, close relatives as usually addressed by their kin term such as an aunt, uncle, cousin, and grandparents, among others. In cases where the relative is so close, they are normally addressed by their names in addition to their kin term. This format of the address is also used for the elders within the community. Shaking hands is also a common practice among the Berbers. They do this during farewells and also normal greetings. It is also very common for close friends to shake hands, hug and even kiss on the cheeks if they are of the same sex. Religious men and women, on the other hand, avoid handshakes or any physical contact between opposite sexes. To those who are not religious, handshakes with opposite sex is not a big issue. The most common type of greetings used by the Berbers is the phrase, ‘Al-salamu alaykum', which is a term that means ‘may peace be with you'. In response, a person should say ‘Wa alaykum al-salam', which means peace be unto you as well. Being Muslims, socialization among the Berbers is mainly restricted at the family level. Guests are expected to be treated warmly and should be served with sweets and pastries. In social gatherings, men and women are put in different groups; boys and girls, on the other hand, are not allowed to interact. Dating is forbidden and so is premarital sex. Girls are mostly on the receiving end with respect to premarital sex as any girl who loses virginity brings shame to the reputation of the family.

With respect to cuisine, it is important to note that they differ from one region to another. Berbers in Morocco have different ways of food preparation and cooking in comparison to the Berbers in Algeria and others parts of North Africa. Even so, there are certain diets that have been observed to be so common among the Berbers. They include meat, honey, sheep's milk, corn, barley, butter, goat cheese and wild game. The principal food among the Berbers was known as couscous. It is regarded as the best and also the most common among the Berbers. According to certain historians, Berbers are accredited for the invention of this food. It has been known as of the key north African dishes ever since between the 11th and the 12th century. The food is primarily made from semolina flour. Couscous has been associated with other different names such as shekshu and sishtu, which are believed to be the local names used by the different tribes among the Berbers. In Algeria, the food is known as kisksu, which a local term used to refer to nourishment. This shows the importance of this food as the daily staple for the Berbers. In festivals and special feasts, couscous is food to be used alongside a common stew the Berbers refer to as tagine. Tagine is normally prepared from a single special pot, made from ceramic materials with a pointy dome-shaped cover. At the family level, couscous preparation and serving were a symbol of abundance and happiness. Other than tagine, couscous could as well be served with fish, vegetables, meat and also spices. A simple couscous meal was cooked and served with sour milk. In the modern day, however, this traditional food among the Berbers has been subject to different types of variations (Goodman, 2005).

Music was also a common cultural practice among the Berbers. The traditional music of North Africa people is the Berber music which has been associated with a number of regional styles. Some of these styles include the Moroccan music, Kabyle and Chawi music of Algeria, the popular Gabsa and also the Tuareg music of Niger, Mali, and Burkina Faso. Musical instruments were used when music was being played. The most common music instrument was the bendir, which was a large drum and a lute. Dances also accompanied the music to make it more pleasing and entertaining. Kabyle music of the Algerian Berbers was composed of vocalists supplemented by a rhythm section, which consisted of bendir and tambourine. The music also consisted of a melody section made of two instruments, ghaita (bagpipe) and a flute. As a result of the interaction between the French and these Berbers, Kabyle music became very common in France was played in many Cafes from the 1930s. With time, this music became more modern with the addition of Arab musical conventions as well as the string instruments. Not only did the music become common in France but also in other parts of Europe, as time went by. Berber people also had a variety of folk music. They were mainly categorized into three, namely, village music, ritual music and music that was performed by musicians who were professional in this sector. Berbers performed village music for dancing purposes which involved self-entertainment and also the entertainment of other people. The two most common dances were known as ahidus and ahouach. Drums and flutes were also the main instruments used for village music. Ritual music, on the other hand, was mainly performed in ceremonies such as the rites of passage. Just like other African communities, the Berbers had three main rites of passage which included birth, marriage, and death for all people with circumcision and first haircut being specifically for boys. Ritual music was thus performed at such events. In addition to that, ritual songs were also used for prayers of protection, especially against the evil spirits. Professional music among the Berbers involved four people who performed together. The group was always led by a poet, who performed a poem in front of the audience. The other person played the drum, while another one played a double clarinet. The fourth person performed the role of a clown for the entire group. Other professional music groups consisted of different music instruments such as rabaabs, lutes, and cymbal, with any number of vocalists. These professional musicians had developed a special way of performing their music, beginning from the instruments up to the poetic section of the music.

The Berber has a unique traditional attire. It consisted of one-piece, floor-length dress and was locally known as the jellaba. This piece of clothing was worn by both genders, i.e. both men and women. This local attire was worn together with the western attire which was put on under the jellaba. During cold weather seasons, men would put on a cloth known as burnus in addition to jellaba. These clothes were simply cloaks that had hoods to ensure they were warm in times of cold weather. With time, women have begun to dress in long and colorful dresses, with their heads covered. Men also covered their heads with Turbans but this was mainly when they were going to the mosque, unlike women who covered their head all the time when in public. Covering of the head was a religious belief among the Berbers.

Formal education in the North African countries began after independence from the colonial powers which were between the 1950s and the 1960s. It was this period in which Arabic became the official language of most North African countries. Languages used by the colonialists such as Spanish and French were also dropped. At the same time, there was no mention of Berber in terms of it being recognized as a language in these countries. In Morocco, for instance, Berber had no room within the education system of that nation. This was the case in many primary and secondary schools that had been established by then. This led to many Berber children dropping from school as they entered schools and immediately got introduced to a language that proved to be so strange to them. It was so unfortunate that these challenges were also extended to official sectors making it difficult for the Berbers to obtain services. The high illiteracy rates among the Moroccans was due to the fact that most Berber children dropped out of school. With the Berber movement growing string in the 1990s, their language became integrated into the school curriculum by the year 2003 under the leadership of King Mohammed IV (McDougall, 2006).

Berber people practiced traditional sports which were played among the communities. These sports, however, faded away as a result of the colonialists who led to the introduction of modern sports, some of which have remained up to date. Football or soccer was one of the modern sports in which the French Colonialists introduced in North Africa. This sport spread so quickly among the Berbers such that they even had the opportunity to play against European teams abroad. Modern sports led to the introduction of national sports organizations which contributed towards national identity among the people of North Africa. Once the North African countries obtained their independence from the French, they established a modern education system which went ahead with accommodating modern sports while on the other hand discouraging the traditional sporting activities. Some of the reasons as to why these sports were discouraged were due to the fact that they were so primitive and were also seen as a hindrance to the development of a modern nation. Traditional games were also criticized as they were full of superstition and thus leading to the Berbers adopting to the new sporting activities rather than what they knew before.

Berbers had major holidays some of which were characterized as festivals. They had both religious festivals and the secular holidays. Being Muslims, they celebrated two major religious holidays or festivals each year; one was Eid al-Fitr while the other was Eid al-Adha. Eid al-Fitr is a Muslim religious 3-day celebration which normally takes places once the month of fasting called Ramadan is over. Eid al-Adha, on the other hand, is a celebration meant to commemorate Abraham's faithfulness to God's command on sacrificing his only son, Isaac. This festival normally requires every Muslim to slaughter a sheep and share it with other people. It normally takes place in the last month, based on the Islamic calendar. It also coincides with hajj, which is the pilgrimage to Mecca. These religious holidays were and are still celebrated in mosques after which they go back home share a meal with families and visiting friends and relatives. They also do gift exchange during such ceremonies. Two major secular holidays celebrated by the Berbers are the New Year Day (January, 1st of every year) and also the Labor Day celebrated on May 1st. Other than these two, the Berbers may also celebrate secular holidays based on their native countries. The culture of the Berbers is thus a very wide topic to discuss as their way of life is so unique despite having borrowed much from the Arab people.

**Marriage and Family**

Marriage among the Berbers differed in certain aspects based on the tribe in which a person belonged. For instance, the Rif Berbers permitted marriage of parallel-cousin despite the fact it was not highly advocated for. In case a person would fall in love with a cousin, then there was no one who could question them if they decided to get married. Statistics carried out between 1953 and 1955 clearly shows that this type of marriage accounted for 12% of the total marriages recorded which stood at 1,625.

The most common type of marriage among the Berbers was the local lineage exogamy. This involved marrying or getting married to a person whom you not directly related to especially through blood but speak the same language. They were marriages within the same tribal lines. The percentage of these marriages stood at 54% of the entire marriages that were recorded from that survey. Marriages among spouses of different tribes were also encouraged but it was also low in number as they stood only at 12%.

Polygamy among the Berber was not also an issue. A man could marry the number of women he wished as long as he could provide for them and also keep them safe. Polygamous marriages stood 11 percent of the total marriages. Each of the co-wives was expected to have their own dwelling separate from the rest. Among the Berbers, this was done in order to reduce the probability of conflicts coming up among the co-wives. Secondary and successive marriages were also available especially in cases where a woman would become a widow. The wife would be subjected to secondary marriage and this category stood at 5%. High rates of widow inheritance were also observed among the Berbers and it stood at 5%. Sororate marriages which involved a man marrying the sister of his wife was also permitted. This was, however, so only if the wife was dead. Divorce was also practiced among the Berbers and even so, it was not encouraged but depended on the situations at which the marriage stood. Based on the survey, divorced marriages accounted for 3 percent of the entire marriages among the Berbers.

Bride-wealth was a common practice in the marriages. It was the responsibility of the man to provide the bride price to the parents of the woman as a way of showing appreciation and also purchase of the bride. Depending on the different tribes, bride-wealth price of value varied. For instance, among the Rif, bride-wealth was so heavy when compared to Berbers who spoke amazigh. Once a woman was married, it was only the man who could initiate a divorce process thus making women vulnerable to issues especially at the family level. Women could only initiate a divorce in the case where the man was impotent. Whenever there was a divorce, bride-wealth was expected to be returned to the man. If the couple already had children, these children remained to belong the fathers. Being barren among women was an immediate cause to call for a divorce (Coope, 2008).

In terms of family life, domestic unit was the most important and it constituted what the nuclear family of today constitutes of. This included the father, mother, and children who must not be married. A domestic unit shared meals together and divided daily roles based on gender. There are certain things men did and at the same time, there were certain things that were characterized as the role of women. In cases where a daughter was divorced by the husband, it was expected that she would return home to the care of their parents. Traditionally, men were the heads of the domestic units. This is currently changing as most men have sorted out to find better jobs and opportunities of employment, leaving the women to mainly lead the domestic unit. Within the households, the older children were expected to provide care services to the younger children. In cases where the parents were busy doing other things, it was the responsibility of the elder siblings to take care of the young ones.

Other than the domestic unit, there was also the extended family who also had a role to play in families. For instance, in some tribes, it was the role of grandparents to take an active role in rearing a child. It was also seen that grandparents together with their grandchildren developed a very strong bond as they shared much during the child rearing ages. Segregation of the boys and the girls began when they were age six and in many cases, they would be separated from their grandparents to be offered different roles in the family. When the kids reach puberty, they become separated from opposite sex, even more, to prevent them from involving in scenarios that can result in pre-marital sex which was a taboo. Marriage was thus very important in bringing up families. Families, on the other hand, were key in extending the generation by bringing up more children based on the culture of the Berbers.

**Religion**

As the case seen currently, most of the Berber people are Muslims. Prior to their mass conversion, Berber people practiced a polytheistic kind of religion. This involved the worship of many gods. In addition to this, they also practiced animistic religious practices which involved the worship and offering sacrifices to the animal gods. These indigenous beliefs of the Berbers were mainly influenced by the people who lived around them. For instance, Egyptians by that time used to practice the worship of many gods. They for instance had the god of rain, god of the sea (as shown in the picture), god of wisdom, among many other types of gods. Animal sculptures were also used in their worship which was also adopted by the Berbers. Other aspects of their indigenous religion were borrowed from Jews, Greeks, Phoenicians and the Romans.

Currently, the number of Berbers who are religious are more in comparison to those who are non-religious. A large percentage of the Berbers are Muslims and this is accredited to the Arabization they were subjected to when the Arabs invaded them slowly and finally dominated them as years went by. Even so, there is a small number of Berbers who are Christians and mostly under the Roman Catholic Church. This can be attributed to the interactions Berbers had with Romans and the Greeks way before the Arabs invaded them. The conquests in countries such as Spain can also be traced as part of the roots why there is a small number of Berbers who are Christians. Some Berbers also practice the Jewish Religion. This is, however, a smaller number when compared to the Christian Berbers. The Jewish origins can also be attributed to having begun in the same way Christianity came to be part of the Berbers religion.

It is important to note that the Muslim beliefs of the Berbers were exactly the same as those of the Sunni Muslims. Their beliefs were strongly based upon blessings. They also believed that descendants of Muhammad could perform various miracles. They believed that there wasn't any intermediary between God and man. Despite that fact, each and every community had a teacher, who was known as fqih and their role was to help and trains boys as well as young men in reciting their Holy book (Quran). Each and every Friday, which was the day of worship, these teachers could be hired to lead prayers and also deliver sermons in the mosques. It was also the role of fqih to prepare charms which were worn by the Berbers. These charms were believed to eliminate any form of bad luck and also cure their diseases. Berbers, therefore, practiced most of the Muslims religious practices as a large percentage of them had been converted by the Arabs (Miller, 2010).

**Legal System of the Berbers**

The Berbers did not have a really defined way of punishing people who break rules and laws. A much of this responsibility was left on the religious section which guided the behavior of people. Religion also defined the way people should relate and thus, was key in ensuring people had a good relationship with each other in the community. Despite that, the Berbers had a simple customary legal system that was used in ensuring people in the communities are ruled by some laws and order.

The customary laws were based upon the different tribes among the Berbers. Generally, men were the heads of these tribes. A collection of these tribesmen therefore ruled, made laws and judged criminal activities among the Berbers. A good example were the tribesmen among the Kabyle of Algeria. These tribesmen had the right to criminal offenders to ensure there are peace and harmony among communities. Such actions also deterred people from engaging in any form of criminal activity. In some tribes among the Berbers, the king was the overall ruler. A good example was among the Tuareg where the King had the entire power to decide the fate of any individual. It was the role of the king to offer judgment to any criminal offender. In other tribes, there was a mixture of both Islamic laws and customary laws in making certain decisions associated with the people. To make such decisions, Islamic teachers of the law had to be involved alongside the community leaders such as kings or tribe leaders in certain communities (Scheele, 2008).

With the French people coming into the picture, there were changes which were made with respect to the establishment of justice among the Berbers. The French found a variety of ways in which the Berbers used to punish the law offenders and decided to come up with one standard way that could be used overall. Due to this, there was standardization of the customary law codes. They then used the new judicial bureaucracies in order to transform the indigenous laws of the Berbers (Hoffman, 2010).

In conclusion, the Berbers have undergone a number of tests in terms of the survival of their culture and customary practices. With the many invasions these people have seen, in many cases, cultures would end up collapsing. Something interesting about the Berbers was that anytime they were on the verge of collapsing and going extinct something would happen and they would get restored. The Arabs were almost doing away with the Berber culture but the French colonialists came and disrupted the process of Arabization, which was almost on its end. Once the North African countries obtained their independence from the French, it has also been a struggle to ensure the Berbers culture survive. It is only up to recent in which the culture has now been given more attention thus expected to continue for the coming generations (Halpern, 2015).

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