

NOTE ON transliteration

Two distinct types of Arabic transliteration are used throughout this book. Personal names of Mauritians, such as interviewees, are transcribed in the Latin alphabet according to the practice common in Mauritania and used in newspapers for example. Names of locations and towns are transcribed in the same way, taking whenever possible as a reference the transcriptions provided by the Michelin Map n° 953 “Africa North and West”. Expressions in ḥassāniyya Arabic dialect, as well as names of bīzān tribes and of a few historical figures are – with a few changes revealing consonants specific to ḥassāniyya dialect – transcribed according to the system of transliteration of Arabic as suggested by the 19th conference of Orientalists in Rome in 1935 (cf. Krahl/Reuschel 1980: 31). Transliteration is documented on p. 395. By this choice I hope the interested reader might be able to further investigate the etymology and meaning of ḥassāniyya Arabic dialect terms (comprising also a number of terms which are derived from the Berber language), while good readability is maintained by avoiding the overloading of the text with diacritics.

Map 1: Islamic Republic of Mauritania



Based on “Mauritania 1995”; Courtesy of The General Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin