

## SAHARAN "BORDERLINE"- STRATEGIES: TUAREG TRANSNATIONAL MOBILITY

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### Introduction

Mobility is nothing new, neither for Africa, nor for the Sahara. Mobility, as an umbrella term encompassing all types of movement ranging from nomadism, travel, and trade, to tourism, refugeism, and migration, is fundamental to understanding African social life (De Bruijn et. al. 2001: 1). At the same time, the Sahara is not a deserted land, but has been characterized by the movements of people, goods, and ideas throughout time, and there is a dynamic variety of historical and recent relations between Maghreb and Sahel (Marfaing & Wippel 2004). Similarly, transnational mobility is nothing new for Africa and the Sahara, respectively, considering that the whole area is the pasturing radius of nomadic societies. Nomads commonly do not respect national borders and political boundaries. The recent transnational mobility of Tuareg, however, is a relatively new phenomenon. It resulted not only from climatic, political, and economic crises, but is also a consequence of a certain ideology which encourages young people to break out of their nomadic surroundings in Mali and Niger, and head particularly to Algeria and Libya. The transnational mobility of the Tuareg is not a cyclical, "traditional" movement of nomads with their livestock, but refers to situational border crossings of (ex-) nomads who move within the Libyan-Algerian-Malien-Nigerian borderland without papers, passports, or identity cards. These actors operate beyond national loyalties, cross state borders illegally, and use certain strategies in order to pursue their activities of trading and smuggling, or just moving (see Kohl 2007a, 2007b, 2009).

In the following paragraphs<sup>1</sup> I will describe the recent transnational mobility of Tuareg, and I will identify several strategies they use in order to move freely in the borderland between Mali, Niger, Algeria, and Libya. The special group of Tuareg I am referring to is called *Ishumar*<sup>2</sup>. The term derives from the French "chômage", unemployment, and originally describes those Tuareg who gave up their nomadic life and went to the surrounding neighbouring states, particularly to Algeria and Libya, to look for a job. Today, the term has changed: *Ishumar* refers to a generation of "borderliners" whose living conditions have resulted in special strategies.

"The anthropological term borderliner designates something entirely different from the borderliner syndrome in psychiatry. The psychiatric technical term deals with certain pathological symptoms in individuals. The anthropological term, on the other hand, designates groups of people who live on state borders and who specialize in benefitting from crossing these borders on a regular basis" (Kohl 2009: 9).

### Saharan Transnational Mobility

The Tuareg, a pastoral society, at present are connected to five nation states which emerged from the decolonisation process in the 1960s: Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, Algeria, and Libya. The postcolonial arrangement was the beginning of a dramatic decrease in the nomadic way of life (Claudot-Hawad 2006: 655) and at the same time the origin of the *Ishumar* movement (Bourgeot 1995: 437; Hawad 1991: 126). Climatic and ecological crises in the Sahel together with political, military, social and economic marginalization in Mali and Niger threatened particularly the nomads. Surviving in the desert became unstable and risky, and many young men, later on also women, tried to find survival strategies in the neighbouring states Libya and Algeria. The *Ishumar* movement was born and the unique form of Tuareg mobility found its origin. In the meantime, those movements have become crucial to a form of Tuareg youth culture (see Kohl 2009) and constitute a certain initiation rite in the life of every

<sup>1</sup> The material for this article originates from the research-project P20790-G14, "Modern Nomads, Cosmopolitans, or Vagabonds? Mobility, Territoriality, Ideology and Belonging among *Ishumar* (Tuareg)", funded by the FWF, the Austrian Science Fund, which was conducted by Akidima Effad and me between August 2008 and July 2009.

<sup>2</sup> *Ishumar* (masculine plural), *Tishumar* (feminine plural), *Ashamur* (masculine singular), *Tashamurt* (feminine singular).

*Ashamur* and every *Tashamurt*. The distinct form of *Ishumar* mobility can be summarized as follows:

"It can go in all directions, is temporally variable and adapted to individual taste. If one assumes an *Ashamur* in Sebha (Libya), he emerges in Ghat (Libya). Here he remains for several weeks or month before he turns to Djanet (Algeria), returns somewhat later again, moves to Agadez (Niger) and works finally for a couple of month in Tripolis or Benghazi (Libya). His property fits in a small bag. Accommodation he gets with other *Ishumar* who live in families or house-similar structures. He is coming and leaving without lare announcement, one day here, the other there." (Kohl 2007b: 99)

Two characteristics are crucial for all different *Ishumar* movements: They are transnational and they are situational. Furthermore, they are not easily placed into categories in terms of types and definitions: Are *Ishumar* migrants, are they exiles, or even a diaspora community, dissidents, refugees, or just seasonal labourers? Some of them are better described as seasonal workers; others are political or economic refugees. The mobility of some of them can be described as voluntary movements; others are more or less forced by the political and economic circumstances. In the following, let us try to formulate a description and a classification of the(ir) Saharan transnational mobility.

### Forced migrants or traveling as culture?

Since "nomadism as a protective way of life can no longer be practised and has been replaced by a series of impoverished activities, which are considered by the Tuareg to be closer to vagrancy" (Claudot-Hawad 2006: 666), the *Ishumar* movement has developed different kinds of mobility. I consciously use the superordinate term mobility and avoid the notion of migration because of the following reasons. First of all, migration is mostly defined as a linear movement with a changing residence. But people who move irregularly between two, three, or more places, have no clearly identifiable place of residence (Van Dijk et al. 2001: 10). *Ishumar* move irregularly, partly seasonally, mostly just according to their individual "taste" between Mali, Niger, Algeria, and Libya and therefore have several places of residence. Consequently, mobility can be considered to be their way of life (ibid.). As a result, mobility is normal. It is necessary to provide economic advantage and to maintain ecological resources, and it creates and strengthens social and

symbolic ties (Claudot-Hawad 2006: 662). Stability and sedentarisation are the exception, whereas mobility is the rule (Klute & Hahn 2007: 10).

Secondly, migration is further defined in terms of nations and state boundaries, although this is less useful because it excludes certain categories of mobile people (Van Dijk 2001: 11). *Ishumar* cross state borders, but still they operate within their former tribal radius, which was only divided due to colonial boundaries. When an *Ashamur* from Mali is heading to Libya via Algeria, for example, he crosses two international borders, but still moves within his former territory. This is one reason why *Ishumar* do not use passports even if they possess one. In their perception crossing these borders clandestinely is not an illegal act, but an expression of their usual habits in traveling through the Sahara.

During the last years, a large number of *Ishumar* from Mali and Niger have settled in Algeria or Libya. With those settlements a new development among *Ishumar* is recognizable: A distinction between those *Ishumar* who still cross the borders between Niger, Mali, Algeria, and Libya irregularly, situationally, temporarily, and according to individual taste, and those *Ishumar* who settle in family structures in Libya or Algeria. The latter even refuse to be called *Ishumar* because the term refers to people acting beyond traditional norms and values, whereas their status of being a family corresponds to their original conception of respect, modesty and honour. It is difficult to distinguish between forced migrants and refugees among those settled *Ishumar*. If we define refugees according to the UNHCR convention<sup>3</sup> in terms of forced movements because of persecution, only few *Ishumar* would get refugee status. Although since the Tuareg rebellion of the 1990s and the recent rebellion which broke out in 2007, people are persecuted, the UNHCR conceptualises the term in a very narrow sense and checks every single case. Forced migration is a more general term that refers to the movements of refugees and internally displaced people as well as to people displaced by natural or environmental disasters, for example famine<sup>4</sup>. Most settled *Ishumar* have been forced to move due to economic and ecological factors since the huge droughts in the Sahel in the 1970s and 1980s, and the recent disastrous economic situation for nomads in the Sahel. Of course there are also young men just trying their luck on the job market in the northern towns of

<sup>3</sup> According to the UNHCR Convention of 1951 (2001: 6), a refugee is a person with a "well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion."

<sup>4</sup> The Forced Migration Learning Module has a good selection of definitions for key terms used in the field of humanitarian relief.

the Maghrebian states, who might better be described as labour migrants, and they are far from being refugees.

But regardless of whether we call *Ishumar* refugees or forced or voluntarily migrants, the main point is that still these settled *Ishumar* have not given up their characteristic movements! Women travel back to their places of origin, and visit their parents and relatives. Men pursue seasonal or permanent movements in order to earn their living. But in the end, their way of still being mobile contrasts with conventional migrants.

To summarize, I argue that neither the term refugee nor the definition migrant is really appropriate for the *Ishumar*. And I believe that it is not important into which concept we try to place them. I agree with Alessandra Giuffrida, that "the study of mobility through conceptually isolated categories (i.e. pastoralists, exiles, refugees and labour migrants) has not been conducive to understanding mobility as an overarching system in all its variations." Mobility itself gives us the clue and shows that "mobility among Tuareg is a system, or subsystem, as well as a strategy" (Giuffrida 2010). Alternatively, the *Ishumar* mobility incorporates all kinds of moving: Their mobility can be described as partly cyclical, partly situational, sometimes seasonal, sometimes permanent, but always irregular. That is why I would rather suggest calling them, following James Clifford's (1992) term, a "traveling culture" for whom moving is the rule. In the following part, let me give some examples of the *Ishumars'* mobility to illustrate their traveling culture and respective strategies.

### Permanently mobile

Silimane comes from a small nomad camp in Northern Niger. When his parents' camel and goat herds perished during the droughts in the Sahel in the 1980s, the family decided to move to Arlit. But the absent economic basis, the lacking support by the state, and his father's death resulted in Silimane's, his mother's, and his little sister's movement to Libya, where they arranged a makeshift accommodation in the abandoned and deteriorated old town of Ghat. During the first months they were only able to survive through the help of other *Ishumar*. In the meantime, Silimane has established himself in tourism due to his good command of French and English, which he had taught himself, and has worked his way up from cook to interpreter to local guide.

Aghali is trading in silver jewellery and handicrafts at sights which are of interest to tourists in Libya. For this purpose, he buys silver and leather goods, swords, fabrics, clothes, and also calabashes, old wooden bowls, and dromedary saddles in the summer at comparatively cheap prices in

Agadez, a centre for craftsmanship. In autumn, with the beginning tourism season, he returns to Libya and sells the things which he has previously purchased in Niger to European travellers. At the end of the season, he returns to Niger and visits his family, before going back to Agadez again, buying things there and subsequently setting out for Libya again.

Moussa and Mohamed are "Taxis". Moussa, from Kidal in Mali, owns an old rickety Toyota with which he runs clandestine traffic between Mali and Algeria. He illegally drives potential migrants from West Africa headed for European Union countries as well as many *Ishumar* from Kidal to Tamanghasset in Algeria. He has two wives: One lives in Kidal, the other in Tamanrasset. Mohamed, originally from Niger, but living partly in Libya and partly in Algeria, is a guide who leads migrants and refugees from Algeria to Libya through the mountains. He knows the mountain passages which can be crossed, he knows where even in summer there are still enough water holes, and he anticipates where potential bandits or the military could lie in wait for them.

Assaghid is permanently moving between Arlit in Niger and Tamanrasset in Algeria. His Toyota pick up is equipped with several cans and barrels to transport cheap fuel from Algeria to Niger. He was born in Niger; his car is registered in Algeria, and part of his family lives in Niger, the other in Libya.

Finally, Haruna left the Nigerien Sahara a couple of years ago and moved to Libya. He subsequently lived with relatives in the South of Libya. He tried to work in garden cultivation, but because the hard work does not pay well, he moved to Algeria and spent his time with other relatives. He gets food and small amounts of money from other *Ishumar*, and his days go by with chatting, drinking tea, and listening to *Ishumar* music tapes.

All these different examples of *Ishumar* mobility have several things in common: No matter which job seeking strategies they employ, all of them are moving permanently. These permanent movements are only possible due to multiple places of residence and – as we will see later on – multiple citizenships. A dense net of kinship ties facilitates their mobility strategies across the borders. "Being mobile is not a break with their past or a breakdown of their social environment" (Van Dijk et. al. 2001: 14), but networking takes place in the new surroundings and links people to their places of origin. Regarding gender aspects, moving is an especially "natural thing to do" for men (De Bruijn et. al 2001: 69). Anja Fischer (2008) elaborated the different radii in which male and female Algerian nomads operate and identified six dimensions of the nomadic labour. While the women's radius is concentrated around the tent with a

maximum expansion towards wells, relatives' tents, and the goat herds, men operate in a much wider dimension (ibid.: 64). Their original duty of herding the camels and being responsible for food and supplies allows them more mobility in terms of traveling and being abroad for months. Finally, the examples mentioned above clarify that "mobility is more than the movement of people alone: also non-human and non-material things such as ideas and values can move or adopt specific forms as a result of the movement of people" (Van Dijk et. al. 2001: 9). Trade, no matter if legal or clandestine, was a constituting element of traditional nomadic life. The huge caravans in the Sahara provided the exchange of dates, salt, millet, and animals and connected the Tuareg with the outer world of Arabs, Hausa, Fulbe, etc. Recent trade activities are mostly illegal. State restrictions, poverty, and a general lack of governmental support have forced *Ishumar* to consider new life strategies in smuggling or clandestine movements.

### Why clandestine?

To cross borders it is necessary to have official identification documents (a passport or an identity card) and to pay customs duty, which is impossible for most nomads (Claudot-Hawad 2006: 665). In the meantime, most Saharan and Sahelian States have established national programs to provide their citizens with passports with relatively little effort. While nomads hardly have any use for birth certificates, citizenship documents, or passports, one could argue that *Ishumar* might profit from legal papers, considering that their transnational movements require a legal identity. The contrary is the rule: Either *Ishumar* refuse to deal with legal papers, or - as we will see in the next chapter - they acquire multiple citizenships in order to satisfy all of the Saharan states at the same time. But why do *Ishumar* widely refuse to use legal papers and still cross the Sahara clandestinely? First of all, many *Ishumar* still do not possess any identity cards. Those who are already registered by the respective state in many cases do not understand the necessity of passports or citizenship, since belonging to a state has relatively little importance to them. *Ishumar* often point out that nothing and no one can keep them from roaming freely in the Sahara: neither government restrictions, nor the issuance of passports:

"We have always been moving like this, "a young *Ashamur* tells me and continues: "in the past with camels, today with Toyotas. What is the difference between Niger, Mali, Algeria, or Libya? It's still our land (*akal nana*), the land of the Tuareg" (*akal n majeghen*)!

Today, the Tuareg distinguish themselves according to national affiliation, and one speaks of *Kel*<sup>5</sup> Mali, *Kel* Niger, Libyan, or Algerian Tuareg. National socialisation, varying education systems, different lingua francas, unequal integration in politics, and varying economic opportunities have affected the Tuareg's affiliation. Nowadays, belonging is based less on tribal structures than on national constructs (Kohl 2007: 200). Similarly, the *Ishumar* distinguish themselves through national categories, but due to their shared fate and circumstances are more strongly adopting an ideology of common affiliation and belonging. *Ishumar* are not only the vagabonds of society, but at the same time a sort of a cosmopolitan elite (Lecocq 2004). Due to their transnational moving life, they see, hear, know, and understand more than their nomadic counterparts who just move in cycles in their relatively bounded territory. "The displacement and trans-local lives of men and women in local and global contexts are gradually eroding a normative, ethnic, and political Tuareg identity linked to an imagined stateless nation (*tumast*)" (Giuffrida 2010). *Ishumar* are much more conscious of this imagined stateless nation than nomads living in the Sahara. A nomadic pastoralist in the Air Mountains for example has few ideas about his peers in Algeria or Libya. He knows about them, of course, but in reality he has probably never seen Libyan or Malian Tuareg. *Ishumar* are in constant contact with Tuareg from all other territories, therefore incorporate the idea of *tumast*, and fulfill and implement it through transnational movements between their several territories.

The second major problem of crossing the Saharan borders legally are the states themselves. During his fieldwork Julien Brachet (2007: 229) personally experienced the unfair and unjustifiable sanctions of several police officers when crossing the border between Niger and Algeria. Most *Ishumar* are treated like he was: After getting the visa from the Algerian consulate in Agadez, Brachet went to the Nigerien border post in Assamakka and left the country legally. The Algerian border post is about 20 to 30 kilometers away in a small village named In Guezzam. Together with two Algerian traders, several Nigerien and Malian *Ishumar*, and one man from Guinea, they reached the Algerian border village In Guezzam on a Toyota. After checking his visa and realizing that he was traveling with several migrants, Brachet was sent back to Niger without any official explanation. *Ishumar* trying to get official and legal visas for Libya tell similar stories. Either they wait at the Libyan consulate in Agadez for several weeks or months to obtain their visas, or they just receive the repetitive answer "come back tomorrow" until the applicant loses his

<sup>5</sup> *Kel* is Tamasheq and means "the people from".



patience and either abandons the idea of heading to Libya, or travels clandestinely. But also European states are acting like this: The French consulate in Niamey is well known for refusing visas even if the applicant has all the necessary documents and the requested amount of money. As a result, the majority of *Ishumar* as well as all other Sub-Saharan migrants cross the borders without passing the border posts, illegally and clandestinely (Brachet 2007: 230, Kohl 2009: 35pp.).

### Borderline - Strategies

Let us focus on the strategies *Ishumar* use to cross the Saharan borders clandestinely. I would like to mention first that *Ishumar* are not just passengers when crossing the borders, but rather the agents in transnational illegal movements. Exclusively *Ishumar* are working in this kind of business: *Ishumar* provide the transport facilities, they organize transportation, and they deliver passengers and goods through the Sahara. Let us examine the reasons and their advantages compared to other ethnic groups (Arabs, Hausa, and Fulbe) in the region.

### Desert knowledge and know-how

The Sahara between Niger, Algeria, and Libya is known as the Tenere. Tenere is a Tamasheq word and means "extensive plain desert without elevations, without vegetation." It is indeed a vast plain without any vegetation, people, or water, which is considered the epitome of desert, and is also referred to as *esuf* (loneliness, solitude), as lonesome empty region. In crossing the Tenere one has to have geographical knowledge, a profound sense of orientation relying on few landmarks, and a certain know-how how to survive in arid areas. Similar to the *caravanier* (*madougou*) who to this day crosses the Tenere in order to reach the salt salines of Fachi and Bilma, the clandestine driver (*afrodeur*) has to be equipped with this know-how, as expressed by Moussa, a young *Ashamur* who has crossed the Tenere several times:

"Most of the drivers know the route between Djanet and Arlit very well and all follow their own track. Although you can see lots of tracks en route, you must not follow any of them, for most of them are smugglers' paths, and you don't know where they lead to. Every driver has his own route. Only shortly before Arlit all the different ways connect into a bundle of tracks." When I asked Moussa how the drivers keep from losing their orientation, he said: "Of course nobody has a compass or maps or even GPS. The drivers know in which direction Arlit is situated and drive

towards it, but not directly. From Djanet, most of them move eastward and only after one day head west and then drive straight on towards Arlit. Nevertheless, you need to know the Tenere very well and be able to read the stars, or else ..." Moussa makes a gesture indicating a cut through the throat. "The Tenere is no playground. The Tenere is dangerous!" (Kohl 2009: 43).

Tuareg receive the necessary know-how already in their early years with their education. Young children are responsible for herding the goats and sheep and move to the boundaries of their territory (Fischer 2008: 101pp.; Claudot-Hawad 2002: 23). At a very young age children learn to read the traces of the Sahara in order not to get lost. The smallest changes in the environment are noticed, tracks of people and animals can be determined, landmarks, the sun and the moon lead the direction, and even in places without wells, Tuareg notice where it pays off to dig holes for water. Living in accordance with nature is an advantage which nomads possess and have to practice in order to survive.

### The use of kinship affiliations

Tuareg are a tribal society where belonging is based on kinship and on blood relations. Blood is the key element in defining kinship, creating genealogy, defining descent, and it is connected to identity and group affiliation (Abu-Lughod 1999, Popenoe 2004). During the African nation building process blood relationships were replaced by nationalist ideas and have since then been based on a territorial concept. The soil, the land, and the territory were used as the new binding national factor instead of blood (Lecocq 2004: 104). In the case of *Ishumar* an additional factor of affiliation must be mentioned: Unity through the same destiny, the same fate. *Ishumar* share the same destiny of recurrent droughts, political marginalization, and rebellion. This resulted in a strong sense of unity and mutual loyalty, which is based on shared life experiences. Blood, soil, and destiny are three different elements in the creation of identity. With the issuance of national identity cards for *Ishumar*, the three modes are mixed: The Tuaregs' original conception of blood and kinship affiliation was complemented by an aspect of destiny. In addition, they received documents allowing them to stay within a certain territory. Even though national affiliation has gained more importance as external demarcation, kinship is the major element to define belonging internally. *Ishumar* can count on their tribal affiliations, on kinship, and social and trade networks which have formed across ethnic boundaries and nations (Giuffrida 2010). When crossing borders illegally, they benefit from information from

several relatives working in the military, as policemen or border guards. They tell them when to go, which route to take, or just let them pass without papers, just because they are both Tuareg. Let me clarify this point with Aghalis words:

"The last time I came from Niger via Algeria to Libya, I walked the last kilometers to the Libyan border by myself, when Libyan border patrols seized me and asked me where I wanted to go. I told them that I was Targi, coming from Algeria and that I wanted to go to Libya. The officer asked me, if I had documents. I answered him that I didn't, as this was my country, after all. The officer nodded – he had two badges on his shoulder! – and said in Tamasheq 'yes, you are right'. He asked me to get onto his Toyota, brought me to the official border post, gave me water to drink and said good bye." Aghali laughs, "they are also just Tuareg, who serve at the border!"

The above mentioned conception of the imagined stateless nation (*tumast*) provides a strong frame of reference and coherence beyond national boundaries. Much more than the other Saharan states, Libya is aware of the Tuaregs transnational component and supports border-crossing Tuareg to some extent. Algeria is much stricter. Through European Union specifications, the Saharan states are used to act as guards in order to stop illegal migration. The European Union does not distinguish between potential migrants to Europe and local borderliners. Illegal migration concerns two completely different strategies and actors: *Ishumar* have been moving for years without passports, aware of the different governments between the borders. But in contrast to the other Sub-Saharan migrants they just move in their created borderland and stay mostly in Algeria and Libya, from where they return to their home countries. The consequences of this not well thought out and inconsiderate policy affects and attacks the Tuareg as a transnational mobile society whose only opportunity is its transnationalism in order to get better living conditions free of poverty, famine, repression, and marginalisation.

### The benefit of multiple national identities

In addition to kinship affiliations, national identities play a major role. All Tuareg-inhabited countries (Mali, Niger, Algeria, Libya and partly Burkina Faso) are beginning to count their population and to equip them with identity cards and passports with relatively little effort. *Ishumar* utilise this system and get themselves ID cards in all of these countries, but with different names and varying birth dates. The governments' increasing

efforts to integrate pastoral nomads in their state systems is used by *Ishumar* for their own objectives. Today, many *Ishumar* have several citizenships and a wide variety of different identity-creating cards. Depending on where they go, they pull out the respective document. Let me clarify this point through an example:

Hamidan was born in Niger, is working in Libya and got married in Algeria. He has two Nigerian birth certificates with different names and dates of birth, a Nigerian passport, and proof of Libyan citizenship under a different name. Depending on where he goes, he pulls the respective document out of his pocket. When he goes to Algeria, he leaves all papers at home, for "if the police catch you, it is better that they catch you without documents and deport you to wherever you want to go...", Hamidan laughs.

Providing evidence of birth for a nomadic society born into the desert without exact references in terms of time and place, and recording an identity based on nation states and citizenship for people scattered across five nations and moving about these borderlands without documents, has become a necessity in an age of states, borders, and control. Yet, *Ishumar* move beyond this global system and transcend national loyalties, without destroying or undermining these (see Kohl 2007a:167pp., 2009: 55). Utilising several ID cards is a strategy in order to pursue their transnational movements which are part of their culture and the only way of escaping their prison of political marginalisation as an effect of French colonialism, corrupt African regimes and still widely supported European policies.

### Conclusion

With my Tuareg-*Ishumar*-Borderliner-example I wanted to emphasize several main aspects of trans-national mobility. Transnational mobility is not only structured by push- and pull factors (see Hahn & Klute 2007: 9pp.), and the recent movements are not just the result of socio-structural factors. Instead, the movements are perceived as decisions of migrants themselves, who often embody a societal elite and incorporate cosmopolitan ideals. The example of *Ishumar* illustrates that these ex-nomads indeed are considered to be a certain elite of their society with cosmopolitan thoughts who alter, modify, and sometimes change the ideals, norms, values and imaginations of their society just through their transnational orientation. Consequently, transnational mobility can be described as *agency*. Transnational border crossers and borderliners have the potential for active and creative engagement. Furthermore, we should not forget that

transnational mobility is not an exception to "normal" life and the opposite of sedentary ways of living, but becomes the "rule" and embodies "normality" – especially on the African continent, where mobility has a high value. We can say that transnational mobility is *normal*. Transnational mobility is not a disturbing effect like the European Union suggests, but part of African cultures. One merely has to distinguish between the different forms of mobility-strategies, as I sought to clarify through the *Ishumars'* border crossings and strategies. We have to be aware that transnational mobility is *culture*. *Ishumar*, for example, embody a multiple traveling culture with multiple citizenships, multiple places of residence, and multiple strategies of moving.

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