HERKUNFT ZUKUNFT STUDENTCONFERENCE 2020

The determinants of migration: a case study of Libyan Tuareg

Yentl de Lange, 26 November 2020

Tintin Wulia, *Fallen* (still), 2011. Single-channel video. Courtesy of the artist. Trough artandeucation.net

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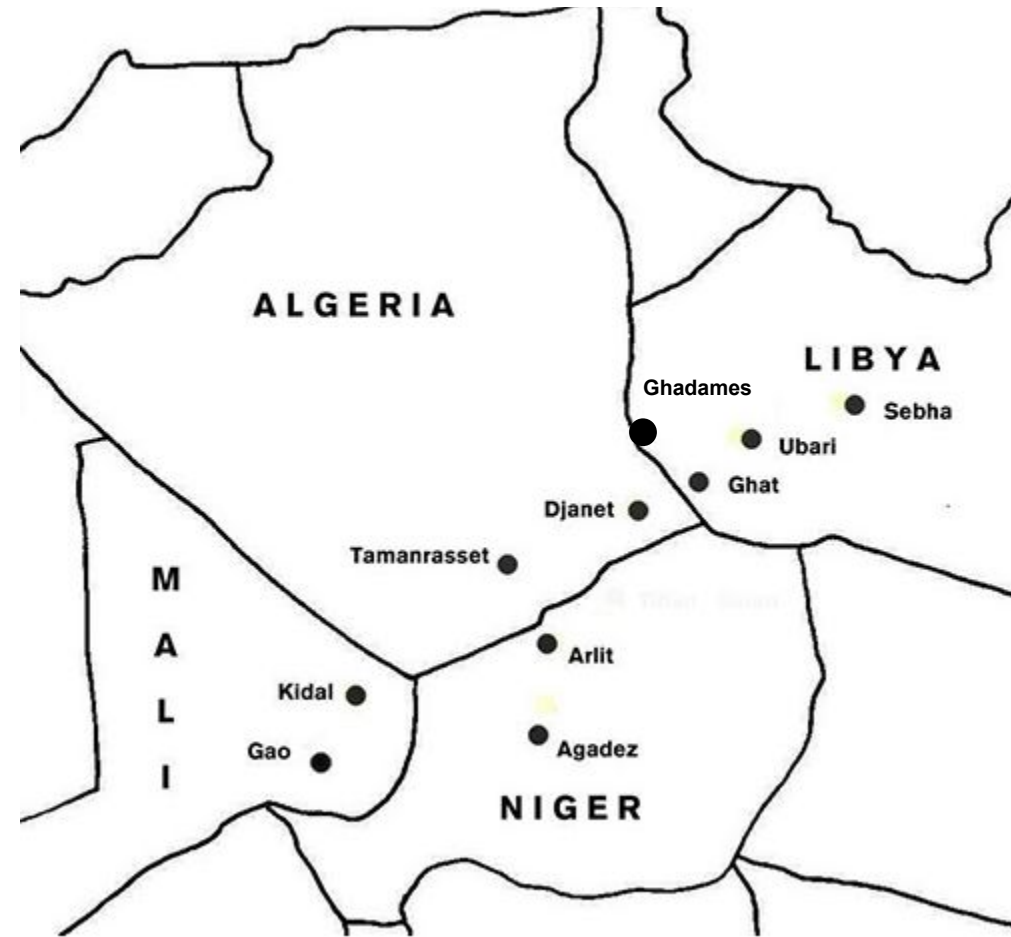
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Context Tuareg

- Nomads under different administrations
- Colonial period: borders
- Process of sedentarisation:
  - Border controls intensified after 1960
  - Desertification
- Gaddafi's assimilation policy
- 'Libyan Arab citizenship' (1980)
  > Valerie Stocker, Ines Kohl
- After 2012: digital ID number system:
  raqm waṭanī versus *raqm idārī*

(Kohl 2010)

Research question

What role do essential factors, such as a structurally marginalised position, statelessness and an ongoing violent conflict, play in decisions to migrate or to stay among Libyan Tuareg?

This study
> Gives new insights in the role of statelessness within migration decision-making
> Debunks the prevailing assumption that mobility in Africa is mostly driven by violence or conflict
> Provides a deeper understanding of the marginalised position of Libyan Tuareg

Structure of research

- Qualitative approach
- Aspiration/capabilities model > focus on general life ambitions
- Semi-structured interviews with 16 respondents
- Three groups:
  - Tuareg with a *raqm waṭanī* in Libya
  - Tuareg with a *raqm idārī* in Libya
  - Tuareg with a *raqm idārī* in Europe

Tuareg with a *raqm waṭanī* in Libya

- Surprised with my research question
- Strong attachment homeland
- Migration is part of life
- Aspirations, but no capability to return
- Problems around *raqm idārī* are small

Tuareg with a *raqm idārī* in Libya

- Discussing migration/mobility is urgent
- Feeling of marginalisation: limited capabilities compared to others
- Joining the army seen as only capability
- Right to mobility
- Migration as a vehicle
- Attachment to the homeland
- Problems around *raqm idārī* are enormous

Tuareg with a *raqm idārī* in Europe

- Crossing the sea is a capability
- Citizenship is a vehicle

Conclusion

- Citizenship is not necessarily a definite factor that upholds or cuts back the effects of the connection to the homeland on the respondents' life choices.
- Statelessness is a problem that can be solved through migration
- Not only awareness of personal possibilities lead to migration aspirations, but also the awareness of the possibilities of an individual's acquaintances contribute to migration decision-making.

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