That Desert is Our Country: Tuareg Rebellions and Competing Nationalisms in Contemporary Mali (1946-1996)
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When the Tamasheq rebellions in Mali and Niger ended in the second half of the 1990s, reporters and journalists set out to find the unchanging character of Saharan life, ruled by tradition and age-old ways. But of course, each and every one of them knew already that the 'veiled blue men of the desert' no longer drive caravans, but four wheel drives; that their feet are no longer scorched by burning sand as they wear trainers; that their mysterious eyes are no longer visible above their veil as they wear sunglasses; that, in short, the Kel Tamasheq have been as much touched by modernity, in the layperson's use of the word, as the next person.  

This chapter will be devoted to a description of the radical changes Tamasheq society went through between the 1950s and 1980s. From the perspective of this study, all transformations described are necessary to understand and analyse a change in political ideas ultimately leading to the Tamasheq rebellions in Mali and Niger in the 1990s. Participants of the Malian rebellion often refer to it as 'the revolution'. However, it can be argued that the revolution took place before the rebellion, and consisted of the changes described in this chapter.

This revolution is mainly the change from a rural society to an urban society, and from an economy based on household self-sufficiency and direct exchange of a limited range of goods, to one of wage labour and the introduction of new consumer items. It is also the change from a society living in a geographically limited (if large) and coherent region, to a scattered diaspora of community pockets around West Africa, the Maghreb and Europe. These major changes brought about shifts in gender relations, cultural forms of expression, education, and politics. In this chapter, we will focus on economic, social and cultural changes.

353 Webster, D., 'Journey to the heart of the Sahara', National Geographic 195-III (March 1999) 6-33, 11.

354 I am fully aware of the ongoing debate in social science on the subject of modernity. However, I feel no inclination to join this discussion here. Modernity in this thesis will not be narrowly defined or dealt with as a subject of research. It will be used in the everyday sense of the word, where it generally means the same things as in social science, but without making an issue of it.
Changes in and discussions on political perceptions will be dealt with in chapter VI. However, it were the radical changes in all other aspects of life that triggered and fed the debate on the need for social and political changes within the Tamasheq world itself and in its relations to the states they were living in. As old modes of production vanished, old modes of social and political organisation needed to be adapted.

The changes described were essentially the reaction of the concerned individuals to economic and social circumstances, forced upon them by the droughts which struck the Sahara and Sahel in the 1970s and 1980s, which destroyed their pastoral mode of existence. The Tamasheq name for the new social and cultural way of life they developed in this period is telling in its economic origins. It is called *teshumara*, a Tamasheq derivative of the French *chômage* – unemployment. The adherents to this new way of life were called *ishumar* (sing. *ashamor*) – unemployed.

An *ashamor* was first of all someone who had abandoned pastoral life in favour of employment in other economic sectors. In large parts of the Tamasheq world, this meant migration outside the Tamasheq world, since no economic options outside pastoralism existed within the community. An *ashamor* would travel between jobs, during which period he was unemployed. As the number of people looking for jobs outside the pastoral realm and outside the Tamasheq world grew, the *teshumara* became more than an economic way of life. It became a culture in itself.

I will first look at the early origins of the *teshumara* and the origins of those who were to shape it. I will then look at the economic and political background of the *teshumara*, found in the droughts of the 1970s and 1980s. Then I will present *ishumar* life as it developed in its economic and cultural aspects. Attention will be paid to the changes in economic existence, urbanisation and sedentarisation, gender relations and cultural expressions, notably a new musical and poetical genre called *al-guitara*. I will show that the changes in Tamasheq societies in this period were far from homogenous. Various routes led to various new ways of life. Therefore, lastly, I will present alternative roads to the *teshumara*, and their relationship to it.

**Teshumara**

**The first *ishumar*, the orphans of the Adagh**

Cultures do not come into existence at one given moment. They develop slowly, and it is hard to pinpoint their origins. Nevertheless, it would be convenient to point to a few points in space-time. The first is the late 1940s, when Mohamed Ali ag Attaher Insar, former chief of the Kel Intessar tribe, travelled the Middle East with a few of his tribe’s youths, to have them educated abroad (see chapter II). There was a second wave of migration in the late 1940s when some Kel Tamasheq moved permanently to Saudi Arabia where a large Tamasheq community still exists. A third movement from another place of origin occurred in the late 1950s, when a small number of Kel Tamasheq migrated from French Sudan to Southern Algeria where they looked for employment in the construction sector.
These men found work at the sites where the French built their future nuclear test bases: In-Ekker, Reggan and Takormiasse.\textsuperscript{355} And finally a fourth migration of importance took place during and after Alfellaga, when a substantial amount of Kel Adagh migrated as refugees to Southern Algeria. A number of them returned, but an estimated 500 families would remain in Southern Algeria after the end of the rebellion. These four disparate groups would form the first nucleus of what would become a large Tamashsheq diaspora after the drought in the 1970s and 1980s.

The most important group of ishumar, however, were those Kel Adagh born between the late 1950s and early 1960s. The major legacy of Alfellaga was a number of young children who are now generally called 'the orphans' or 'the children of 1963'. Often traumatised by what they had witnessed during Alfellaga, these orphans would make up the core of the Tamashsheq revolutionary movement. Likewise, their experiences will form the core of this chapter and the next. They were both the nucleus of the teshumara culture as well as the inner core of the revolutionary movement described in chapter VI.

A number of these orphans migrated to Algeria with their families, but about 400 of them were kept in boarding schools in Mali.\textsuperscript{356} Whereas other children were allowed to visit their parents during the holidays, the 400 'orphans' were permanently kept in Kidal during their school career. One can imagine what years of forced boarding school does to group formation and cohesion. It can also be imagined what being kept against one's will in a system responsible for the death of one's parents does to one's feelings.

Education generally took off in the Tamashheq world under the Keita regime.\textsuperscript{357} Whereas in 1948 the total number of students in all of Northern Mali amounted to 272, this number reached 828 in 1968 in the Cercle Kidal alone.\textsuperscript{358} The educational curriculum under the Keita regime went beyond mere courses in literacy and mathematics. Its first aim was to inculcate youngsters with a patriotic spirit and a sense of national consciousness. At school, speaking Tamashheq was forbidden. Only French and Bambara were allowed. The Mandefication described in chapter II was in full swing in the Adagh. Next to patriotism, the children were taught the sense of equality of all Malian citizens. The feudal lords and the feudal system needed to be abolished.

After school hours, children were occupied with the Pioneers, a national scouting corps, where they were taught how to camp and shoot rifles. Strange occupations indeed given their nomadic origins and their parents' revolt. In addition to the Pioneers, the troupes artistiques, folk groups performing theatre, songs and dances, played an important educational

\textsuperscript{355} Tschumy, J., \textit{Le bureau de main d'oeuvre d'Adrar (Sahara)} (Paris CHEAM no. 3937 n.d.).

\textsuperscript{356} Commandant du Cercle de Kidal à Gouverneur de Gao, 09/06/1966. Objet: demande de maintien de la cantine scolaire pour enfants sans parents. ACK.

\textsuperscript{357} The following is largely based on: ag Litny, I., \textit{Systemes educatifs et societé touarègue: Les Kel Adagh du nord du Mali} (Mémoire de diplôme EHESS 1992).

\textsuperscript{358} Ag Litny (1992), op. cit., 133 and 156.
role. These *troupes artistiques* had a uniquely Southern repertoire of Bambara songs and dances. The theatre pieces were meant to educate and uplift both performers and audience on a large variety of social issues. In Northern Mali, theatre often had slavery and feudalism as its main themes. The *troupes artistiques* also performed outside the Adagh. Captain Diby Sillas Diarra, *Commandant du Cercle* Kidal, was of the opinion that in this way, the Kel Adagh children would get to know their country and appreciate the efforts made in their education by the party.

**Economic background to the *teshumara* – the droughts**

The late colonial period was a golden age in Tamasheq material culture and prosperity. This was largely owing to climatological conditions. Rainfall in the 1950s was more than abundant, pastures increased and so did the number of livestock. During the 1960s, this favourable trend reversed, slowly developing towards a catastrophic period of drought in the early 1970s reaching its peak in 1973.

As the details of climatology, ecological impact and such like have been well-covered elsewhere, I will here just briefly sum up the cycle of devastating effects. The drought had provoked a dramatic slaughter of animals by the Malian army in the Adagh, leaving herds depleted. Under the most favourable conditions, a camel reproduces every two years. One can imagine that the herds of the mostly camel-breeding Kel Adagh had not yet recovered from the impact of *Alfellaga* when the drought hit hardest only ten years later. The annual decline in rainfall slowly but surely dried up wells and temporary lakes, while pasture decreased.

Periods of poorer climatic conditions are normal in the Sahara, and reacting to them in a timely and adequate way is an integral part of nomadic life. In a period of drought, families or clans would normally first settle around temporary wells, and in the case of continuing drought, they would normally either migrate southwards to the Azawad or Niger Bend areas with their herds, or move northwards towards Algeria to sell surplus animals. The revenues would be spent on extra grain stocks which could replace the falling lactation yields of the undernourished herds.

But conditions were not normal. First of all, transhumance was more strictly monitored by the authorities in the years after *Alfellaga* than they had been before, which hampered movement and caused many to wait until the last moment before moving out of their own area. Herdsmen had to compete with the few agriculturalists for water at the permanent wells, with favour being given to the latter. They also had to compete with each other over access to a smaller number of wells and pastures. Third, the Azawad and Niger Bend areas were struck just as hard by rainfall deficits, offering no relief to the already hard-hit herds. There was therefore a collective move towards the river Niger, as had taken place during the

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droughts of 1947 and 1914. This was to no avail. The river had dried to a trickling stream, leaving the sedentary population with failed crops and the pastoralists without pasture for the animals. Fourth, the move towards Algeria to sell surplus livestock was impossible as there was no livestock left to sell. The result of this disastrous course of events was an estimated livestock loss of eighty percent of their herds and a massive exodus of Kel Tamasheq seeking refuge elsewhere.

Taking the 'normal' course of migration towards the Azawad, many inhabitants of the Adagh and the Azawad ended up fleeing without livestock to Niger. There, they roamed the streets of Niamey and populated a Red Cross refugee camp called Lazaret. In 1975, an estimated 13,000 Kel Tamasheq still inhabited this camp, although by then the worst was over. Others took the road to Algeria, where they populated refugee camps at the border towns of Timiaouene and Bordj Mokhtar, where an estimated 12,000 Kel Tamasheq sought help. Some moved on to Tamanrasset and other cities in Southern Algeria, where they were helped by their relatives who had fled during Alfellaga. Others went to the South of Mali, and from there to cities throughout West Africa, as far away as Abidjan. But the vast majority of the Kel Tamasheq did not have the strength or the means to leave. They had to stay on, waiting for help that never arrived in the towns of Northern Mali. Their numbers were estimated at 47,000, dispersed over thirty refugee camps in the Gao and Timbuktu Régions.

The number of people who died in this catastrophe cannot be estimated, but they undoubtedly were many. As far as misery can be measured, the famine in the Sahel was estimated to have been worse than those in war-torn Nigeria and Bangladesh in the 1960s. Most victims were children who, weakened by malnutrition, died of seemingly innocent diseases like measles. Undernourishment, oedema, diarrhoea and cholera did the rest.

The drought of 1973 meant a near total collapse of the pastoral economy in Northern Mali. Anything that was left was then taken by a second period of severe drought in the early 1980s, culminating in 1984. If the Adagh was hit less hard this second time, the onslaught was even heavier in more Southern regions. This time, the wave of refugees came particularly from the Azawad and moved mostly to Algeria and Libya. Otherwise, an almost identically devastating pattern repeated itself.

361 Swift (1979), however, reports that Algerian merchants residing in Gao still bought livestock for export to Algeria in the early 1970s.
363 Ag Litny (1992), op. cit., 162.
Political background to the *teshumara*

The political background to the *teshumara* can be found in the outcomes of *Alfellaga* and the droughts. The outcomes of *Alfellaga* have been dealt with in chapter II and will be dealt with further in chapter VI. I will here limit myself to the political events and effects of the droughts within Mali, Algeria and Libya on the Kel Tamasheq community.

The Kel Tamasheq were not the only ones to suffer under Modibo Keita. As I have shown in chapter II, the economic policy of the regime was a failure. In 1967, the Malian Franc was devaluated and relinked to the West African CFA Franc, in exchange for new loans from France to rebalance the state budget and to jump start the economy. The desired effect of the monetary agreements did not occur. The economy collapsed further and the state budget remained in deficit. The crisis was aggravated by the agitations of the *Milice Populaire* and the *Brigade de Vigilance*; two armed para-military forces under command of the USRDA party. In July 1967, Modibo Keita had urged these organisations to purge the party and the country of ‘... the smugglers and speculators, the degenerated rank and file at all levels whose revolutionary flame has withered or died ...’. They did so with zeal, unleashing a reign of terror.

The various crises highlighted the internal division within the USRDA between 'moderates' and Marxist 'hardliners', that had always existed. Modibo Keita had started his political career as a 'moderate', but had gradually developed towards the left side of the party. Keita strongly believed that at heart, the root of the country's problems should not be sought in the socialist option itself, but in those who were appointed to carry out socialist policies. To purge party and state of incompetent and moderate elements, Keita dissolved the executive office of the party in August 1967. In January 1968, Parliament was also dissolved. All political institutions were replaced by the *Comité National pour la Défence de la Révolution*, in which only Marxist hardliners found a place, but this did not end the economic crisis and even aggravated the Cultural Revolution-style actions of the *Milice Populaire* and the *Brigade de Vigilance*.

Finally, what seemed inevitable in those early years of post-colonial Africa happened. On 19 November 1968, a group of young army officers calling themselves the *Comité Militaire de la Libération Nationale* - CMLN - staged a coup d'état. Modibo Keita and his principal ministers were imprisoned and sent, ironically, to Kidal prison.

Let me finish this story from a Kel Adagh point of view. The news of the coup d'état was enthusiastically greeted in the Adagh. The fall of Keita, a reality to the Kel Adagh as he entered Kidal as a prisoner, was at first equated with freedom and the end of Malian rule. Children abandoned school. Caravans were formed to move to Algeria, probably as the effects

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367 See Campmas, op. cit.
of the drought were already being felt and many wanted to sell livestock before disaster befall them. The administration reacted quickly by organising an ‘explanatory campaign’ to warn the Kel Adagh against ‘a possible deformation of the meaning of liberty’. The caravans were halted, children were sent back to school, business remained as usual.

For Commandant du Cercle Diby Sillas Diarra, the coup d’état had a salutary effect. He was promoted to Gouverneur of the Région Gao. His promotion would not last long. The reign of suspicion characterizing the last days of the Keita regime had been inherited by the officers of the CMLN. In August 1969, Diarra and a few fellow officers were accused of plotting against the state. He was tried and sent to the prison camp of Taoudeni at the very northern edge of Mali. Effectively, Taoudenit functioned as a death camp. The inmates were forced to work in salt mines with only 30 minutes of rest a day. They drank only salted water, were undernourished and underclothed and deprived of medication. Diarra’s last breath was kicked out of him by his guards on 22 June 1972. Despite the fact that none of them witnessed these events, Diarra’s arrest, deportation and death are still remembered with some glee by the Kel Adagh.

At first, the takeover by the CMLN, under the leadership of Lieutenant Moussa Traoré, had some positive effects. The USRDA was abolished, the Brigades de Vigilance and the Milice Populaire were disarmed and disbanded. International confidence in the country was restored, despite the fact that the new regime had announced it would not drastically alter the political course. However, private enterprise and commerce were restored, in the hope of attracting new foreign capital. Borders were opened for outside investment but also for Malian inhabitants who wanted to travel. The re-opening of the borders was enthusiastically welcomed by young Kel Tamasheq, who left for Algeria in search of employment.

But soon old habits crept back in, which could only be expected as most of the administrative personnel remained in place. The economy remained stagnant. The Malian economy was opened to foreign investment, but existing state enterprises remained state-owned, curbing foreign investment. Import and export of certain primary goods, notably petrol and cotton, remained a state privilege easily exploited by those in control. Corruption mounted, centred around an in-group, the core of which was composed of officers around Moussa Traoré, his family and in-laws. Traoré’s wife Mariam and her relatives, generally known as le clan de Madame, predated even more on state revenues than the officers themselves.

The mounting corruption and its devastating effects soon became apparent to the Kel Tamasheq, when the drought of the 1970s was at its height. Their cattle perished, their means of existence disappeared, the Kel

368 Cercle de Kidat, Revue mensuelle des événements du mois de novembre 1968. ACK.
369 Samaké, G., Le chemin d’honneur (Bamako 1992). Samaké was one of the accused officers and one of two to leave Taoudeni alive.

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Tamasheq in Mali and Niger could do nothing else than flee to the neighbouring countries, or to the cities and villages further south. Here they were at first left to their own devices. The sedentary populations at the banks of the Niger and further south had food problems of their own. By 1972 the drought refugees concentrated around the towns and villages had become veritable refugee camps.

By then, it had dawned on governments and international agencies that a disaster was taking place in the Sahel. Relief aid was organised, but largely ineffectively. The bureaucracies of agencies such as FAO and USAID were highly ineffective and unprepared. They reacted too late and inadequately. When sufficient amounts of foodstuffs and medicine were finally assembled, they were shipped to the ports of West Africa without taking into account the handling capacities of these ports and the difficulties in transporting the goods from these ports to the Sahel. These problems, of course, went unnoticed by the Kel Tamasheq. But other problems were noticeable. What food arrived in the refugee camps and drought-struck areas, arrived too late and was often of a kind or quality unfit for human consumption.

When relief food arrived, it passed from the hands of the providing agencies into the care of the local authorities who were in charge of its distribution. The result, under the heavily corrupted Traoré regime was twofold. First of all, large portions of the offered foodstuffs were not freely distributed as was intended, but sold by functionaries at local markets at high prices. Second, relief goods that were freely distributed were distributed unequally between the sedentary population and the nomads. The monitoring groups from the US Center for Disease Control surveying the famine in the Sahel and reporting to the US Government concluded that –

'Survey data from 3,500 children emphasise the fact that undernutrition in the four country area [sic] is to be found more among nomads than sedentary persons, and more in the north than in the south. Children from nomad clusters ranged on the average ten to seventeen percent below the threshold while those from sedentary or Southern groups were approximately three to seven percent below. The existence of pockets of extreme undernutrition is supported by data from all countries but particularly from Mali where up to 80% of children from one nomad cluster were acutely undernourished. The above statements on the nutritional status of children must be considered conservative,...'  

Information on what happened 'on the ground' in Mali was scarce. Most agencies and governments relied for information on the few journalists


who went to the Sahel. Their accounts may have been scant, but not necessarily incorrect. For *le Monde* reporter Philippe Decreane, the amount of corruption and governmental non-cooperation, and the misery in the refugee camps surrounding Timbuktu he witnessed, led him to conclude that the Malian Government was carrying out a deliberate genocide on the Kel Tamasheq. \(^{372}\) As relief workers were generally denied access to the refugee camps and as Decreane could not help but see the sales of relief aid in the markets of the North, his version of events may have had some basis in fact. Similar conclusions and impressions of existing 'traditional enmities between nomadic and sedentary populations' were reached by the CDC commission cited above.

The conclusions might have been exaggerated, but a few things cannot be denied. The conclusions of 'traditional enmities between nomads and sedentary populations' made by the CDC were not totally unfounded. In times of tension the division between nomads and sedentary populations becomes stronger. It can also not be denied that the relations between state and Tamasheq society had been strained from the start, to say the least. The drought and its effects on the Kel Tamasheq might not have been unwelcome to the Traoré regime at the time. Finally, the accusations made by Decreane, even when they were incorrect, very likely express the thoughts of those Kel Tamasheq who witnessed their children die of malnutrition and disease in the aid-abandoned camps. Unsurprisingly, many left the country, with no intention to return permanently, even after the drought was over.

In their countries of exile, in Algeria and Libya but also in Niger and Nigeria, the migrants were struck by the comparative, or even absolute wealth of their new surroundings. But even on their travels within Mali the differences between North and South were visible. Southern Mali was, in their eyes, green and fertile, better developed and wealthier. This could only lead to the conclusion that the Malian state was totally incompetent and corrupt in dealing with the North. However, the riches of the countries of exile were unaccessible to the *ishumar* and other Kel Tamasheq refugees. And whenever the host states could, they tried to expel the unwelcome Kel Tamasheq.

Already in the late 1960s, the Algerian local authorities had discussed the possibility of sending back those Kel Adagh who had fled from Alfelilaga. At the time, a number of these Kel Adagh had volunteered to return, as the effects of the drought were already being felt in Algeria. The Malian authorities, however, refused to have them back. Since they had opted for Algeria as their fatherland, the Kel Adagh had to bear the consequences of this decision for better or worse. Nevertheless, in 1970, a first group of Kel Adagh was expelled from Algeria to Mali, without the consent of the Malian authorities, who closely monitored the returnees. \(^{373}\) In 1974 and again in 1983, haphazard returns of drought refugees were

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372 Boilley (1999), op. cit., 378-82.
373 Cercle de Kidai, Revue des événements du 2ième trimestre 1970. ACK.
organised in Niger as well as in Algeria.\textsuperscript{374} The largest expulsion from Algeria would come in April 1986, when at least 6,000 Kel Tamasheq from Mali and 2,000 from Niger, were rounded up in Tamanrasset and transported to the borders on trucks. At the borders they were left to their own devices, without water or food. The expulsions had been merciless and was exposed in the international media.

From 1987 onwards, the Algerian Government started a larger, better planned project to 'reintegrate the drought refugees in their countries of origin' with the help of UN-FIDA. The programme came into effect at the end of 1989.\textsuperscript{375} In Libya, the Kel Tamasheq were slightly more welcome, especially after a speech by Colonel Mu'ammar Qadhafi in 1982, in which he declared Libya to be the home country and place of origin of all the Kel Tamasheq, which gave them the undeniable right to 'return' there. In practice, the ishumar were confronted with Libyan racism and discrimination. At the Libyan border, many ishumar were arrested and molested. As immigrant workers, only the lowest jobs were open to them. In the streets, they were insulted. Legal papers remained hard to get, which kept the ishumar in Libya in a precarious illegal situation.

\textbf{The life of the ishumar}

It can be said that the teshumara was a direct consequence of the droughts of 1973 and 1984. As it left the Kel Tamasheq without livestock, they had to look for other ways to survive and organise their lives. The droughts reshaped Tamasheq existence in the most drastic way possible. By force and overnight, Tamasheq life changed from rural and pastoral to urban and wage-earning. Particularly among the educated Tamasheq elite, the drought led to a rethinking of pastoral life. Many young Kel Tamasheq reached the conclusion that pastoral existence had no future.

'\textit{Pastoralism as we have always practised it is no longer an honourable option in our days. For different reasons it is condemned to be abandoned or at least to be restructured. It is not a goal in itself, and a Tuareg is not in the least predestined to be born and die a pastoralist}.\textsuperscript{376}'

As no new means of existence could be found in Mali, many stayed in their places of exile in Algeria, Libya, Niger and the rest of West Africa. Another solution was found, as elsewhere in Mali, in a seasonal migration towards cities to look for temporary jobs. In Mali, this seasonal trek is known as \textit{l'exode}. Young Tamasheq men looked for employment in sectors that were at first totally alien to them. Employment was found in various occupations, such as salaried herdsmanship, agriculture in the oasis towns of the Sahara, the guarding of villas (notably those of expatriates),

\textsuperscript{374} Klute (2001), op. cit., 214.
\textsuperscript{375} Ibidem, 217.
construction work and masonry, car mechanics and even fishery. Most jobs were temporary, and many moved from town to town, from job to job. Later on, this plethora of jobs was completed with military service in Libya, which will be dealt with extensively in the next chapter.

A more profitable, but far more dangerous occupation many ishumar took up, was trafficking between Algeria, Mali and Niger. The Algerian state subsidised basic goods, such as flour, bread, sugar, oil, tea, dates and petrol. This price policy meant that these goods could be acquired cheaply in Southern Algeria, whereas they were often lacking in Mali and Niger. These goods were bought in Algeria and transported southwards, on foot or on the backs of donkeys or camels. They were then sold for CFA Francs in Mali and Niger, which were taken back to Algeria. As Algeria suffered from a lack of foreign currency, and as the CFA Franc was easily exchanged for French Francs at fixed rates, CFA Francs were in high demand, often going for six times their official exchange rates at the Algerian black market. The profit in smuggling was thus doubled. Goods were sold in Mali and Niger, and the small profit made was then quadrupled in Algeria.

A third benefit of this trafficking was that the remaining inhabitants of Northern Mali and Niger were provided with basic products, unavailable in the state run shops at home, for reasonable prices. Most ishumar would spend the money earned on luxury items, such as watches, stereos, sun glasses or other signs of modernity. Others would save their money and invest it in more trafficking, buying cars to facilitate transport. Or they would set up legal businesses in Algeria, if they had access to the Algerian administration to obtain the necessary papers. This latter option was open to those Kel Adagh who had fled to Algeria during Alfellaga, and who had taken up Algerian citizenship, which was offered to them at the time. Many ishumar varied their economic existence, taking up jobs as herdsmen or gardeners, moving on to masonry, saving some money, which would then be invested in smuggling. The experiences in trafficking consumer goods which so many ishumar acquired during the 1970s and 1980s proved to be of immense value during the rebellion, when petrol, food and weapons had to be brought into Mali.

Except for those Kel Tamashiq who found employment as salaried herdsmen in Algeria or Libya, all jobs were to be found in cities. It should be emphasised that not only young men migrated from the Tamasheq homelands. Most Kel Tamashiq moved to the city as refugees during the droughts. These refugees were mostly women, children and elderly persons, as the men either stayed on to save the herds or had already

377 Due to the failure of Modibo Keita's planned economy, the Malian Franc was first devalued and relinked to the CFA Franc in 1967 and then abolished in 1984 when Mali re-entered the CFA franc zone.

378 Ag Ahar, E., 'L'initiation d'un ashamur', H. Claudot-Hawad (ed.), Touaregs, exil et résistance REMMM 57 (1990), 141-153, 144. E. Ag Ahar is an alias for the Tamashiq poet Hawad, who wrote this article in interview style. However, his statement is no less valid of ishumar practices.
moved to look for work. Young women also travelled to the cities of Southern Algeria looking for a better life. They often travelled alone. The mobility and independence of Tamashq women made many Algerians look disfavourably upon the refugees. Particularly the Kel Hoggar, the Kel Tamashq inhabiting Southern Algeria, had a denigrating attitude towards the Malian and Nigerian newcomers, which was expressed in a discourse on the looseness of the refugee women.

In the Southern Algerian city of Tamanrasset a whole new shanty town arose after the drought, inhabited by the Malian Kel Tamashq. It was called Tahaggart-shumara, which would translate as ‘unemployed in the Hoggar’ – the Algerian mountain range in which Tamanrasset was situated. Similar neighbourhoods arose in Djanet, Adrar, and in Libyan cities, such as Ghat and Ghadames. Tamanrasset was the main destination in Algeria for the Malian Kel Tamashq. Djanet was the main destination for the Nigerian Kel Tamashq. In Libya, there was a mix of all communities. In these neighbourhoods the teshumara developed. To the Kel Tamashq, city life is characterised by a number of traits – salaried employment discussed above, living in houses, the availability of consumer goods (not per se to the impoverished newcomers), and a multilingual and multicultural environment.

For those who are used to living in a tent, living in a house is a constricting experience indeed. A Tamashq tent is open at least to one side, often more, giving a view over the vast plains or mountains. Tamashq camps are often small, consisting of about five tents, spaced about 50 metres apart. The next camp can be kilometres away. Urban space is thus a stark contrast to nomad space. Houses are walled and roofed on all sides, situated at smaller intervals and only looking out on the court walls or on other houses. I have never seen Tahaggart-shumara, but I can imagine it to be as the newer neighbourhoods of the city of Kidal. Houses are square, wattle and daub constructions, with a flat roof. They are also relatively small. The house is surrounded by a large walled court. Within the court is a toilet in one of the corners of the court walls, and in the middle of the court a tent can often be found where people live and sleep. The house is used to store household items, clothes et cetera, but it is not a living space. In the early days of Tahaggart-shumara the court walls and houses were lacking. It was a ramshackle town of improvised tents, but it developed into a space similar to the one described. Although at present many Kel Tamasheq are city-born, the unease about living indoors is still prevalent.

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Even if I wanted to live in a house,  
always locked with a key,  
where there is no cooling breeze.  
The body does not benefit from its shade.  
It has no use but for resignation."
As the *ishumar* earned money, new consumer items became available to them. Dietary habits changed. To a pastoral Kel Tamasheq, the ideal repast consists of fresh milk and fat meat, with three glasses of sweet tea for dessert. When fresh milk and meat are scarce, this diet is completed with dairy products – cheese, buttermilk and butter – wild or cultivated grains, dates and gathered fruits. Food taboos exist. Fish is out of the question even when available. Poultry is only eaten by children who hunt them in the bush. This ideal diet was abandoned during the droughts, and again during the second rebellion, when the Kel Tamasheq were even forced to eat fish, as canned herrings were shipped to the desert as relief aid. But the diet also changed in exile. In chapter II, I have described the failed efforts made by the administration to get the Kel Tamasheq to eat vegetables. It can only be the irony of history that the *ishumar* now adopted what they had at first refused. As fresh fruits and vegetables were available, they slowly adopted them. At present, many repatriated (if this is the correct term) youngsters in Kidal relish the memory of fresh apples and grapes, available at the markets of Algeria and Libya. Yams, potatoes, tomatoes, onions, cabbage and lettuce have found their way into Tamasheq dishes. Fresh dairy products were harder to get. Fresh milk was substituted with milk powder and butter with olive or peanut oil.

Even those Kel Tamasheq who stayed in Mali were now prepared to take up gardening. The Kel Adagh themselves investigated the possibilities of horticulture in their mountains. In 1977, Acherif ag Mohamed, a Kel Adagh, graduated at the *Ecole Normale Supérieure* in Bamako with a thesis entitled ‘Les possibilités agricoles dans le Cercle de Kidal’. His well-researched thesis is a plea for agricultural development in the Adagh despite possible resistance from the population.

‘During the search for a theoretical solution to the social problem posed by the drought and its consequences, I thought of the agricultural possibilities in the Cercle de Kidal. In fact, these possibilities exist and their exploitation is necessary to save thousands of human lives.’

In a way, Acherif pleaded for the reintroduction of the agricultural endeavours of the Keita regime described in chapter II, which he might well have witnessed. His plea fell on deaf ears both at government level and at the level of external development aid. However, some Kel Tamasheq inhabiting the Niger Bend did settle and take up gardening to some extent. The second drought of the 1980s brought more and more effective relief aid to the Niger Bend. Many NGO’s such as the Norwegian AEN set up lasting and large scale development projects. However, to many of these NGO’s, development can only be brought to sedentary people. In reaction (but also on their own accord), some Kel Tamasheq in the Niger Bend constructed villages and took up gardening and farming.

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381 Ag Mohamed (1977), op. cit., 41.
Not only dietary habits changed. Clothing habits changed as well. Most women stuck to their customary dress: a wrap-around skirt and a long veil wrapped around the body with an attached head-scarf. Their face remained unveiled, to the contempt of many other inhabitants of Southern Algeria. The male *ishumar* dress code differed sharply from traditional dress. Sandals were exchanged for sneakers or high heeled boots. Wide trousers gave way to jeans or ‘flared’ trousers. T-shirts and collared shirts, sometimes completed with a *gandoura* – a thin burnous – covered the upper part of their body.

More telling were the changes in wearing the *eghewid* – the male turban and veil. In Tamasheq culture, the *eghewid* is the main symbol expressing male honour, dignity and pride. The customary *eghewid* is a complex, multi-layered wrapping of various cloths, which can be as long as twenty metres or more. In general, the less amount of the face visible, the more a man is preserving his honour. To a Tamasheq, his mouth is a private part. The veiling of a man’s face is most important in the presence of female company, especially female in-laws and cousins. The bigger a man’s turban, the greater his age, wealth and standing. The *ishumar* deliberately expressed the turmoil they found their society to be in and their desire for radical changes in the way they dealt with the *eghewid*. The multiple layers were abandoned for a single cloth. The length of this cloth was reduced considerably to about four metres, which expressed their chosen status as young and irresponsible men, but also the loss of honour Tamasheq society had faced. This shortened *eghewid* was wrapped around the head in a careless fashion, which expressed the turmoil of society and their rebellious state of mind.\(^{382}\) The mouth was carefully exposed, instead of covered, as a reminder of the loss of honour Tamasheq society had undergone in the last decades: a lost rebellion; two droughts forcing them into exile and mendicity, on show to the world as TV crews passed the refugee camps. The lowered veil exposed a moustache and shaved chin; an abhorrence to elder men, who shaved their moustache and grew beards in accordance with the prescriptions of the prophet Muhammad. Some *ishumar* even went further. They entirely gave up wearing an *eghewid*, even in the presence of women.\(^{383}\)

This is but one small aspect of the notable changes in gender relations also taking shape in the 1970s and 1980s, due to the change from a pastoral to an urban wage economy.\(^{384}\) In pastoral society, the tent and

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382 For detailed presentations of veil and turban and related concepts of honour, see Claudot-Hawad, H., *'Visage voilé'* (1993); and Rasmussen, S., *'Veiled self, transparent meanings'*; *Ethnology* XXXII-2 (1991), 101-17. Claudot-Hawad remarks that the *Iifulagen* of 1963 also wrapped their turban in a chaotic way, to express their status as rebel.

383 At present, a reverse trend is visible. Many former *ishumar*, walking around unveiled in their younger days, took to wearing the *eghewid* again after the end of the rebellion. This might well be an indication of a general sense of reinstated honour.

accompanying household items are a woman's possession, presented to her at her first marriage by her mother and female relatives. Her husband is only living in, until the marriage is dissolved, when he becomes homeless. In urban society, the house is often built or rented by a man, who then lodges his wife. In the case of divorce, it is she who has to look for other living space. In pastoral society, the bride price is paid by the future husband and his relatives in livestock. In urban society, the bride price is paid in money, which is then either used to buy new household utensils, or gold jewellery (instead of the formerly preferred silver). When needed, jewellery could be sold.

The expected virtues of future brides also changed gradually. In Tamasheq society, virginity is not highly prized. In contrast to most of the surrounding cultures, Tamasheq female sexual conduct or purity is not related to group or masculine honour. Extra-marital affairs are only a cause of shame when a woman becomes pregnant out of wedlock. Today, virginity is still not related to group or masculine honour, but many men individually disapprove of what they have come to look upon as 'loose' sexual morals or 'knowledge of (too many) men' from their future wives.

A last, notable change is the gradual acceptance of polygamous marriages. Tamasheq society characteristically has a strong preference for (serial) monogamy. Although the legality of polygamy in Islam is known and accepted, it was highly disapproved of. Polygamous practice was limited to a few affluent members of the religious part of society, the ineslemen. Recently, the move towards polygamy amongst richer city-dwellers is growing, despite still being regarded as 'not done'.

Two young ishumar, Mohamed Lamine ag Mohamed Fall (right) and Iyad ag Ghali (left) have their picture taken. Somewhere in Libya, late 1970s. Courtesy of Mohamed Lamine ag Mohamed Fall.
At-gultara

The evenings in Tahaggart-shumara were regularly enlivened with parties called *zahuten* – from the Arabic *zahu*: distraction.\(^{386}\) The parties were staged at the houses of young women or, as the parties began to attract more police attention, outside the city. The men would provide the necessities: food, tea, sugar, tobacco and cigarettes. People flirted with each other, sported their newest gadgets, danced, and women would sing songs in a style generally called *tindé*.

*Tindé* is perforce a female performance. From a mortar and two pestles, an improvised drum is made, the *tindé*, played by a woman. Another woman will sing to the rhythm, improvising the lyrics as she goes. More women sit around the drum and singer, accompanying drum and song with handclapping. A famous singer of these early days of the *teshumara*, was Lalla, a young Kel Adagh woman. Her house in Tahaggart-shumara attracted many *ishumar*. She sang traditional songs, as well as songs which treated the life of the *ishumar*. These songs were taped on cassettes and copied for those who were not present.

Another new phenomenon was the introduction of *aggiwin* in Kel Adagh and Azawad culture. The *aggiwin* can best be compared to the West African *griots*: musicians of caste origins, who recite oral histories and sing family praises to those who pay them to do so. The *aggiwin* originally came from the Timbuktu area where they had for long been part of Tamasheq culture, but they were previously unknown in the Adagh and Azawad. The *ishumar* spent fortunes on these *aggiwin*, but by the late 1970s their activities were condemned as anti-revolutionary. In that same period, a new musical genre came into existence: *al-guitara*.

Contrary to *tindé*, *al-guitara* is an almost uniquely male genre developed by *ishumar* in Libya and Algeria.\(^{387}\) In these countries, but also in the Malian *troupes artistiques*, the *ishumar* became familiar with guitars (from which the style derives its name), and rock music. The first to make *al-guitara* music were a few Kel Adagh men from the *tewsit* Irreguenaten, notably Ibrahim ag Alkhabib, nicknamed Ibraybone. Ibraybone started his musical career playing a self-made instrument out of a plastic jerrycan and some strings. But soon he would learn to play the electric guitar. He was joined by other now famous artists such as Inteyedin, Keddu ag Osad, Mohamed ‘Japonais’ ag Itial, Sweyloum and Abenneben. Together these men formed a band called Kel Tinariven – “Those from the deserts”. They were accompanied by some background vocalists and an improvised jerrycan-drum. Musical inspiration came from the virtuouos solos of Jimmy Hendrix and from the simple clear chord schemes of Dire Straits. Despite these influences, *al-guitara* developed into an original sound with strong influences of local musical genres. However, sound remained long subordinate to message. This message was one of reflection on Tamasheq existence. It developed from a ‘bluesy’ perspective on misery into a call for

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386 Based on Bellili & Dida (1993), op. cit.

387 Based on Belalima (1996), op. cit.
active revolution to all the Kel Tamasheq. The first known song dates from 1978. It reflects the misery of Tamasheq existence –

_The world changes, we sit in ruins._[^388]

But slowly the message changed from one of despair to one of hope for a better future through common action –

_We pull up our trousers and fasten our belts, we no longer accept the mistreatment we have endured._[^389]

In the coming decades, the music from the band Kel Tinariwen or its individual members would accompany all major stages of the _teshumara_ and _tanekra_ resistance movement, as well as the rebellion and its various stages. But the Kel Tinariwen had no monopoly on poetical expression. It is open to all members of Tamasheq society. Those who are gifted for poetry only gain more renown. All major concepts of the _teshumara_ and, more important, the _tanekra_ movement were expressed in poetry by some of its main participants.

**Alternatives to the _teshumara_**

Above, I have outlined some of the most important economic, material and cultural aspects of the _teshumara_. It should be strongly emphasised that the _teshumara_ was not uniform, and not the only form of modernity open to the Kel Tamasheq. I will here deal with some of the aspects of _teshumara_ diversity and with alternatives to _teshumara_ existence, notably the path of formal education. Then again, the latter path did not exclude _teshumara_ existence. The two paths could be complementary, as both contributed to the construction of the revolutionary movement, but in practice they were often at odds.

The region of exile chosen by various Kel Tamasheq had a large influence on the form their lives took. The _teshumara_ described above is particular to those who migrated to the Maghreb. The Kel Tamasheq who moved to the cities of coastal West Africa had different influences transforming their way of life. The Malian Kel Tamasheq who moved to the Ivory Coast, for example, found employment on the coffee and cocoa plantations where they worked alongside other Malian immigrants. Under these circumstances, a particular Tamashq culture such as the _teshumara_, even if it did develop, could hardly be expressed. Naturally, cultural influences were different as well. Kel Tamasheq women in West Africa soon adopted local clothes and fashions, contrary to their kinswomen in the Maghreb.


Different origins within Tamashq society also influenced personal experiences, or at least the chances one was given in a new environment. The number of Kel Tamashq of slave origins moving to the Maghreb was small, compared to their numbers moving to West Africa. I have noted above that the *ishumar* in Libya were confronted with racism and discrimination. Those Kel Tamashq who considered themselves as 'white' were, in Libya, now confronted with a contrary opinion on their physical appearance. To the average Libyan, a 'white' Kel Tamashq was simply a 'black' African. The racial prejudice the 'black' Kel Tamashq of slave origins were confronted with in the Maghreb was multiplied, since skin colour is differentiated in the Maghreb as in other parts of the world, which made them even more 'black' than they were in Tamashq society.

The situation was entirely different in West African places of exile. Here, the 'black' Kel Tamashq easily blended into the local environment as their physical appearance did not betray them as Kel Tamashq. The 'white' Kel Tamashq on the other hand, stuck out strongly as immigrants. They were often compared to and treated in ways similar to the Gypsies in Europe. Although one might expect that the common experience of 'otherness' and foreign racism would enhance common ties between Kel Tamashq of all castes, this proved not to be the case, as we shall see in the next chapter.

A second difference with regards to caste origins is related to attitudes to work. As I have described elsewhere, manual labour was an abhorrence to the Tamashq nobility. Having lost their herds, some apparently even preferred starvation to taking up manual labour. This happened, of course, only in a few exceptional cases, but the noble Kel Tamashq nevertheless saw constraints with regards to professional occupations. These should be as close as possible to their previous ways of existence. Herding, guarding houses, driving, smuggling and, later, military service were acceptable. Construction work, gardening or other forms of manual labour were not. This was different from the Kel Tamashq of the protected strata of society; *imghad* and former slaves. The latter, not constricted by any social code of conduct, or no longer feeling these restrictions, could take up any profession. At present, a large community of former Tamashq slaves are successful fish retailers in Abidjan, an unimaginable occupation for other Kel Tamashq.\(^{390}\)

At the beginning of this chapter, I indicated that large groups of Kel Tamashq had migrated to Saudi Arabia in the 1940s. Most of these immigrants were religious specialists, the so called *ineslemen*, who came particularly from the *tewsit* Kel Essuq. Their trajectories differed considerably from those of the *ishumar*. At present, a large Tamashq community is living in Saudi Arabia, notably in the holy cities of Mecca and Medina. Many took up religious professions, teaching Arabic, or instructing in the Qur'an. Some even managed to gain positions of considerable prestige and wealth.

\(^{390}\) Personal communication by Annemarie Bouman, who is conducting research among Kel Tamashq of slave origins in Burkina Faso and Niger.
The religious path did not only lead to Mecca and Medina. During colonial times (and probably even before), a number of Kel Tamasheq had travelled to Egypt, where they studied at the prestigious el-Azhar university. This institution linked the Kel Tamasheq with developments in the wider Muslim world and the new directions of Muslim thought in the 19th and 20th century, which were known in colonial times as Wahabism, a term which has recently resurfaced to denote 'fundamentalist Islam'.

The majority of ishumar was confronted with developments in the Muslim world as well in their Maghreb diaspora. Although it should be said that the teshumara has a profoundly worldly character, some ishumar were nevertheless influenced by Muslim ways of thinking. The Kel Adagh, who until the 1980s formed the majority of ishumar, had always been renowned in the Tamasheq world as pious and learned Muslims. Their piousness and Muslim learning had originally given them their status and place in the overall hierarchy of the Tamasheq community. Even at present, piety and punctuality in ritual performance form an important part of their identity. It is no wonder that some of the most influential members of the tanekra nationalist movement stressed the importance for Muslim ideas on social organisation and the restructuring and rebuilding of Tamasheq society.

A more important alternative to the teshumara was the path of formal education. In colonial times, completion of primary education was the end of one’s education, as the French did not allow the Kel Tamasheq to study further, as this would alienate the Kel Tamasheq from their natural environment and life as a pastoralist. As late as 1955, Claude Blanguernon, a school director in Tamanrasset whose task it was to educate the Kel Tamasheq wrote –

'I do not believe it to be necessary to bring the Tuareg to a high level of education ... this will not be beneficiary to them as the educated nomad will find himself cut off from his tribe, his habits and, fatally, will not be able to stay a nomad'.

This changed in independent Mali. Inside and outside the Adagh and Azawad, the number of Tamasheq Lycéens rose over the years. A number of these Lycéens managed to enter higher education in Mali at Bamako’s Ecole Nationale Supérieure or the Ecole Nationale de l’Administration. Only the Ecole Nationale Inter-Armes – the Malian military academy – remained closed to them, as the regime still feared the possible effects of well-trained Kel Tamasheq soldiers on the security of the state.

A number of Kel Tamasheq pursued higher education outside Mali, mostly in Algeria but sometimes as far away as Khartoum, Nouakchott or France. The educated could join the civil service or they could offer their services to Western NGO’s, which abounded in Northern Mali after the droughts. These Kel Tamasheq also lived in cities, were exposed to new

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cultures and ways of thinking, new consumer goods, new cultural expressions and forms of organisation. But the outcome would be totally different from the teshumara experience. Whereas the ishumar developed a more and more radical political outlook, calling for revolution and independence, the educated Kel Tamasheq had a far more moderate standpoint with regards to the state, but a far more radical outlook on the necessary changes within Tamasheq society itself.

As I have said, teshumara and education were not, however, mutually exclusive. On one hand, a part of teshumara ideas evolved around education (see chapter VI) and many ishumar in Algeria and Libya attended schools in their host countries. But the educational efforts of the ishumar were hard to sustain due to their illegal, migratory existence. Besides, their education was in Arabic (which accounted for part of the Muslim influences within the teshumara), whereas those educated in Mali were instructed through French. This greatly hampered communication on intellectual matters. Both groups simply used other terms and vocabulary to express themselves.

On the other hand, a number of educated Kel Tamasheq lived an ishumar existence for a part of their lives, as migrants in Algeria, Libya or elsewhere. Although they had more steady jobs – often as teachers – they too were confronted with semi-legality, discrimination, expulsions and the other teshumara experiences. A number of these educated ishumar would become influential members of the tanekra movement during one period or another. Students based in Europe in particular would come to hold a special position during the rebellion, as they dispersed information on the rebellion in Europe and provided contact between the rebels and various organisations. Nevertheless, animosity between these educated Kel Tamasheq and the ‘true’ ishumar ran high.

I've heard you are educated
We have not seen the benefit
Our history is known to all
But you bear no witness
The tears of the old burn all living hearts
And the image of children who lost all
Searching for water without halt
At deep, dried-up wells
And you tell me you live normally
An organised, quiet life
Since your birth you run in vain
Surrounded by enemies
The easy life always escapes you
Unless you make some effort to commit yourself
To reach that truth that belongs to you

The nicknames tagged onto the educated by their *ishumar* counterparts are revealing. They were called the ‘*ondit*’ or ‘*entoucas*’, after the French expressions *on dit que* and *en tout cas* they often employed even when speaking Tamashq. They were accused of having knowledge, but not using it for the benefit of the Kel Tamashq, or even of outright betrayal to the Tamashq cause. Finally, they were accused of being acculturated, a strange accusation that could easily be inverted. On their part, the educated reproached the *ishumar* for being ignorant of the realities of the world, uncivilised and pursuing an irrelevant cause. Changing society was necessary, but not along the vague and half-conceived ideas of the *ishumar*. The educated, in turn, called the *ishumar* ‘*mazbuten*’ from their favourite Arabic expression *mazbut – ‘right’, ‘OK’*. The animosity between both groups would reach a head during the rebellion, when the rebels had no choice than to let the educated negotiate with the Malian Government, in their place, as the rebels saw themselves unfit to do so or had been side-tracked by the Malian authorities. In any case, in this dispute between *ishumar* and the educated I have entered the arena of political debates within Tamashq society. They are the focus of chapter VI – *tanekra*.

**Conclusion**

In the second half of the twentieth century, Tamashq society underwent dramatic changes. In the late colonial period and under the Keita regime in the 1950s and 1960s, the Kel Tamashq actively resisted changes forced upon them by external political powers. But changes caused by the ecological disasters of the 1970s and 1980s could not be circumvented. The two great droughts ruined Tamashq pastoral existence, the basis of social and economic life. In reaction to these droughts, young Malian and Nigerien Kel Tamashq joined a diasporic community in the Maghreb, West Africa and beyond, which had already been created from the 1940s onwards.

In these countries, the Kel Tamashq were faced with living conditions very different from their own. Tents in the Saharan mountains and plains were abandoned for houses in cities. A pastoral subsistence and trade economy was changed for wage labour, smuggling, white collar work and, later, military careers. In reaction to these new living conditions, Tamashq culture changed considerably. With wages and urban dwellings came new consumer goods. Gender relations changed as a result of new ways of living and under the influence of dominant host cultures. New styles of cultural expression, music and poetry developed. Dietary habits changed as well.

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393 Belalimat (1996), op. cit., 75.
394 Conversation with Moussa ag Keyna. Leiden, 04/10/01.
Although most changes in cultural patterns were reactions to drastically different living conditions, it should not be said that change was only a forced reaction. Especially the young Kel Tamasheq in the Maghreb consciously changed their behaviour, expressing the upheaval within Tamasheq society. This explicitly developed culture became known as *teshumara*, ‘the way of the unemployed’. Conscious of their own perilous situation and that of their kin, and realizing that Tamasheq culture as they knew it was not suitable for the situation they found themselves in, the *ishumar actively thought about, debated, and sought solutions to the problems of their community.

These solutions became more and more political in outlook during the 1980s. Cultural changes and the reflections on social, economic and political upheaval gave birth to a nationalist movement proclaiming revolution in Tamasheq society. However, while political revolution was preached, the real revolution had already taken place. Where Modibo Keita had unsuccessfully tried to instigate revolution through coercion, the Kel Tamasheq now sought his goals themselves – namely a revolution in social relations, in economics and in nomadic existence.