



SELLING SAND IN THE DESERT

THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF MIGRATION IN AGADEZ

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Agadez plays a pivotal role in migrant journeys to North Africa and Europe. In West Africa, the town has progressively become a key migration nexus, both as a witness to and a participant in increasing migration flows transiting through the region.

Outgoing flows: according to the IOM Flow Monitoring Points (FMPs), between 320,000 and 350,000 individuals will transit through Agadez in 2016:

- Migration from West and Central African countries transiting through Libya and Algeria and moving onward to Europe (approximately 10%);
- Local circular economic migration, based on historical ties with Libya (50%) or Algeria (30%) – Nigerien migrants are mostly in this category, working for a few years in either Libya or Algeria before going back to Niger.

Incoming flows: a total of 91,500 people, both voluntary returnees and deportees, arrived to Niger from Libya and Algeria between February and August of 2016, with 77% coming from Libya and 23% through Algeria. As reported by IOM and Amnesty International, some of the migrants, especially those coming from Libya, fled sexual violence, abuses and trafficking.

* * *

The present study assesses the economic interactions between migrants and the host community, and identifies concrete innovative ways to support their aspirations to a better life. Three key questions are answered: What drives migration in and through Agadez, and who are the actors involved? What is the economy of migration in the town of Agadez? Finally, what, concretely, can IOM (International Organization for Migration) and other stakeholders do to support both host community members and migrants?

Samuel Hall conducted qualitative and quantitative activities over a period of 34 days from 13 May to 16 June, 2016. The quantitative research consisted of two primary tools: a migrant survey (410 surveys completed) and a host community survey (357 surveys completed). These quantitative tools were complemented with qualitative tools, namely focus group discussions (10) with migrants heading Northwards and on the return, case studies (4) with migrants on the return and key informant interviews (40) with stakeholders in Niamey and Agadez.

* * *

The first section details the realities of migrants' journeys and their welcome in Agadez. Analysis suggests that social links between migrants and hosts are generally limited to the commercial realm, while residents of Agadez find their

attitude towards migration and migrants influenced by conflicting financial and other incentives. Significant differences can be identified between Nigeriens' trips to Agadez (less costly, and dependant on personal networks) and those of non-Nigeriens (more likely to use smuggling networks and organised trips). Post-Agadez, the trip itself poses real dangers, both en route and upon arrival, as returning migrants described scenes of violence and discrimination in the Sahara and North Africa. From the host community perspective, Agadez' inhabitants are influenced in their perceptions of migration by financial and other contradictory interests. 62% of them consider economic activities related to migration to be no different from any other job. The key stakeholders in Agadez also face contradictory financial incentives, between that to be earned from suppressing migration and that from its facilitation.

The second section nuances the economically-focused picture of migration in Agadez and considers what the realities of the journey and of failed migrations mean, both for those undertaking them and the organisations and governments wishing to support them. Historically, development funding has not reduced migratory flows from Africa. While most migrants cite economic drivers to their migration, the decision to migrate is not made on the basis of a pure cost/benefit analysis – the lure of the possible and the mystique around migration also play a role. This can help to explain the substantial investments made by migrants, for whom the trips represent approximately the equivalent of one year of the average salary in migrants' countries of origin.

The third section expounds on three points related to the common understandings of the economy of migration. First, the economic impact of migrants on the local economy is limited by the temporariness of migration in Agadez; close to 70% of migrants interviewed plan on staying less than one month there, leaving them little incentive to seek out jobs – and their motivation to do so. In practice, most migrants leave 'as soon as (they) can' and a lot of returning migrants has spent less than a week in town. Second, while the research team did meet with migrants trying to join Libya and making stopover to work in the goldmine of Djado, migrants, particularly non-Nigeriens, do not form a significant part in the local labour market in Agadez. Except for Nigeriens and specific professionals (for example, prostitution) who come to Agadez for planned opportunities, a limited number try to work there (only 7% of non-Nigerien migrants interviewed). Of the many Nigerien migrants interviewed who earn money in Agadez, most are women, who primarily do so through domestic service and begging. Third, locals do benefit from the economic interaction and from migrants' presence – albeit in a transitory and unstable way. The impact of migrants can be felt primarily on the demand for certain basic necessities, migrants spending on average 18,990 CFA

while in Agadez on water, food, transportation, financial transfers and communication, amongst others.

The fourth section links academic insights to the field research and calls for further reflection so as to unpack assumptions about migration and development and explore local cross-border economic practices, while encouraging the IOM to take an organic approach to external interventions. A key finding of this research is that the hypotheses on which much of the migration-related programming in the region is based are problematic:

* * *

Beyond a call to focus on migrant rights, this research highlights the need to take a cross-border and trans-Saharan approach to transformative economic interventions, with a clear development agenda. A move from migration management to the development of economic exchanges is central to address more holistically development in transit countries. In this regard, adjustments should be made to the way stakeholders think about planning infrastructure and a stronger economy on the migration route, not through their own lens, but through a local economy lens. Likewise, the labour market overview conducted as part of this research has identified several potential sectors in which to invest by focusing on what the local labour market in Agadez and beyond (the trans-Saharan region) may look like tomorrow and in 5 to 10 years.

Developing infrastructures through a regional agenda

Developing a trans-Saharan and cross-border development agenda. A move from migration management to the development of economic exchanges is central to address more holistically development in a transit region like Agadez. Adjustments should be made to the way stakeholders think about planning infrastructure and a stronger economy on the migration route, not through their own (short-term) lens, but through a local economy lens.

Supporting the development of electricity, water, telecommunications and other infrastructures in the short-term. The local government should create a clear plan prioritizing the different infrastructural improvements: 1) in order of necessity and in association with other regional actors (national and supranational entities), 2) from a regional and cross-border perspective, and 3) with the technical and financial support of international donors.

Assuming protection responsibilities

Ensuring cooperation around migration with other governments is in line with migration-related protocols and legislation.

Continuing awareness building on the legal framework around migration, both in the Nigerien laws and more broadly. The government should be supported in ensuring that all legislation created around migration is in line with international conventions on the topic (such as the Palermo Protocol) and ECOWAS protocols.

Avoiding the amalgamation of migration with security. Care must be taken to ensure that questions of migration and security remain distinct issues, by, for example, avoiding the same departments handling both issues.

Providing counselling and physical and mental health resources at place of return. Migrants face many mental and physical health challenges during the journey. They require a strong support network upon return to make sure that the return is successful.

Investigating prevalence of drug use in local community and provide support as necessary. Several key informant interviews suggested that drug use is prevalent among *passeurs*. With the technical support of relevant local and international actors (MDM, CRF), it is recommended to build necessary clinics for treatment and public awareness campaigns around the negative effects of drugs.

Rethinking the local labour market

Formalising the informal. The progressive formalization of informal activities should be paired with the concrete advantages that local entrepreneurs, local traders, small- and medium-sized companies may get from it – such as a facilitated access to regional markets, quality standards, better prices, etc.

Proposing alternative income generating activities – and support for them – to the local population. The labour market overview conducted as part of this research has identified several potential areas of opportunity in which to invest: i) Diversification of Agadez' agricultural production; ii) Traditional handicrafts; iii) Small-scale mining opportunities; iv) Salt; v) Business / commerce designed to support the legal side of migration; vi) Alternative value chains for goods illegally sourced from the North.

Developing a vast low-investment / high-return training programme with migrants and host community members. IOM has already begun conducting short trainings with migrants and host community members around, for example, brick-making activities. Few skills can be taught in such short-term time-frames; however, they are an excellent opportunity to bring migrant and host community together.

Providing opportunities to the youth in the government. The various government levels present in Agadez could work with NGOs/IOs/Donors to sponsor internships within the government, providing participants with additional job skills and self-confidence and increasing the government's capacity.

Supporting vocational trainings and income-generating activities in migrants' places of origin. As detailed earlier, the most frequently given reason for migration is economic pressure – 77% of migrants state that their ideal future would be to live and work in their place of origin, and 14% to stay home and take care of their family.

Promoting alternative investments for migration money in places of origin. Returning 'failed' migrants often repeat that they would have been better off investing the money used in their journey locally. However, they may lack opportunities to

do so, financial tools and awareness of the potential this poses.

Changing mindsets

Supporting education in the region of Agadez and provide adult-education opportunities. Programming in other countries, such as UNICEF's Youth Education Packs, has tied literacy and numeracy trainings to vocational training programmes to ensure that those learning how to tailor, for example, can conduct all the necessary measurements. This is particularly important for women, whom the research has shown participate in a limited number of economic activities and frequently end up either begging or in prostitution when they migrate.

Including a youth-specific focus to programming, promoting youth empowerment. The focus on youth in programming designed to support beneficiaries in moving away from migration-related activities – and promote their inclusion in decision-making bodies at the community level – will help to provide other areas in which they can feel relevant and in charge of their future.

Optimising knowledge and information management

Adding granularity to data gathered on migrants. Much of the data gathered on the topic focuses solely on migrants' gender, country of origin and which leg of the journey they are on. Adding further details to the information gathered – and information presented (for example, on the IOM dashboard, which already successfully presents the results of awareness building activities in Niger) – will improve the government and NGOs' ability to support migrants.

Tapping into local associations and youth organisations. Local organisations are best placed to conduct research in Agadez in conjunction with the government or NGOs/IOs

etc. These local connections make it possible to more easily gather information in sensitive context, such as the ghettos, and involve the community of Agadez itself in better understanding what is happening on the ground.

Using returned migrants in awareness-raising campaigns. The most dissuasive stories of migration were those given directly by returned migrants. This should include both those who stopped during the journey and returned migrants from Europe and other "golden lands", to address the reality of life there beyond what is presented in social media.

Developing research on transit economies. There is no literature on transit economies. Further research should be conducted to fill in the gaps, notably in economic and historical studies on cross-border and circular movements.

Leveraging IOM's pivotal role in the sub-Saharan region

Critiques against the IOM have recently surfaced in academic circles. They are of two natures: the focus on 'migration management', and the removal of decision-making power from local stakeholders. In this regard, at a time when IOM is becoming directly related to the United Nations, its position will be – *de facto* and *de jure* – questioned.

IOM's current transition offers the organisation a unique opportunity to question – and possibly rethink – its approach to migration in West Africa and the sub-Saharan region. In today's context, IOM should leverage and rethink its role as a 'migration manager' as its work and unique position in Niger clearly gives the organisation the opportunity to do so by adopting a cross-border agenda and helping donors refocus on longer-term development agendas in the trans-Saharan region, while supporting migrants to travel in safety and dignity, and promoting the UN-based approach towards human rights, labour, and protection standards.

Aerial view of Agadez (Photo: France 24 – September 9, 2016)



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ACRONYMS

AU	African Union
BCEAO	Banque Centrale des Etats de l'Afrique de l'Ouest
COOPI	Cooperazione Internazionale
DCAF	Geneva Centre for Democratic Control of Armed Forces
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EU	European Union
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FMPD	Free Movement of Persons Directorate
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
HQ	Headquarters
HSA	Humanitarian and Social Affairs Directorate
IATT	Inter-agency task team
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organization
ICMPD	International Centre for Migration Policy and Development
ICRMW	UN International Convention on the Rights of Migrant Workers and their Families
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
KII	Key Informant Interview
LMIS	Labour market information system
MME	African-EU Partnership on Migration, Mobility and Employment
MS	Member State
OSBP	One Stop Border Post
OTUWA	Organisation of Trade Unions in West Africa
OTAUU	Organisation of African Trade Union Unity
SDG	UN Sustainable Development Goals for 2030
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNOWA	United Nations Office for West Africa
WAEMU	West African Economic and Monetary Union
WHO	United Nations World Health Organization



Picture 1: Outskirts of Agadez (next to IOM transit center), 2016

1. RATIONALE

"We see more and more people coming to Agadez. We need to adapt ourselves to this new industry. Tourism or uranium yesterday, migration today and probably tomorrow: Agadez never sleeps! Even if we stay poor."
Adamou, 28, Office-furniture seller, Agadez

Dreaming of Bruges and Lille, stuck in Agadez

Six months ago, 22-year-old Patrick left Cameroon to become a football star in Europe – 'either Belgium or France, Bruges or Lille, as I speak French and have relatives there'. As an ambitious and talented football player, Patrick felt compelled to leave Cameroon to try to make his dream a reality. After leaving the Agadez, Arlit and Assamaka corridor, reality proved to be much grimmer than he had anticipated. Patrick and two of his relatives, also travelling from Douala, were beaten, robbed and held captive by predatory groups. Finally, their journey ended in Tamanghasset, Algeria, where the local police put them in jail.

Patrick, his brother and their cousin were then sent back to Niger, where they had already stayed for ten days at the International Organization for Migration's (IOM) transit and assistance centre in Agadez. *'The next step is Niamey, probably by bus but maybe by plane, as my cousin is sick. And then I don't know. I don't want to go back to Algeria, as people were very aggressive, especially in the last two to three months. But we don't know what to tell people in Douala; they all saved some money for our trip and we all failed'*. For Patrick, it is back to his starting place, minus his travel costs and additional money he was sent from home during the journey and with the addition of psychological traumas. Looking for the silver lining, Patrick's cousin added that *'at least, [we] were very lucky to be alive'*.

Like Patrick and his family, thousands of migrants arrived in Algeria in recent years, mostly transiting from neighbouring Niger. In 2013, after the discovery of the bodies of 52 children 80 kilometres north of Arlit, Algeria and Niger signed a bilateral agreement to return migrants in Algeria to Niger and then their homelands via Agadez and Niamey.¹ However, migration flows northwards have not stopped, and in June 2016, the corpses of 34 migrants were discovered near the same Algeria-Niger border, apparently abandoned by their smugglers.² This suggests that *'the deportation agreement is only a media band aid on a wooden leg that does not deter smugglers or migrants to cross the desert.'* (UNHCR, Niamey)

In Patrick's odyssey to Europe, in every West African migrant's trip to North Africa or Europe, Agadez plays a pivotal role. In West Africa, the town has progressively become a key migration nexus, being both a witness to and participant in the increasing flows transiting through the region. In this regard, this study aims to identify the *potential* that Niger's position as a country of transit offers in developing economic and livelihoods opportunities for both migrants and the host communities in Agadez as well as in countries and regions of origin.

Why this study?

In a context of manifold crises faced by Niger, including climate change and population growth, some stakeholders questioned the timeliness and relevance of this study: *'This research is necessary, but to whom? I doubt it can bring any real tangible value to decision-makers in Niamey. In Europe, certainly, as they mainly see the country as a*

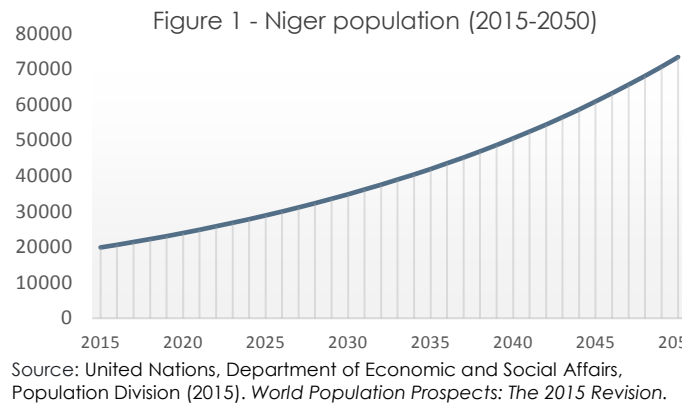
¹ Simon Worrall, for National Geographic, "Opinion: Fatal Exodus: Consequences of a Great Migration," *National Geographic News*, November 5, 2013, <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2013/11/131104-migrants-sahara-africa-europe/>.

² Agence France-Presse, "Bodies of 34 Migrants Found in Niger Desert," *The Guardian*, June 16, 2016, sec. World news, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jun/16/bodies-migrants-found-niger-desert-people-smugglers-algeria>.

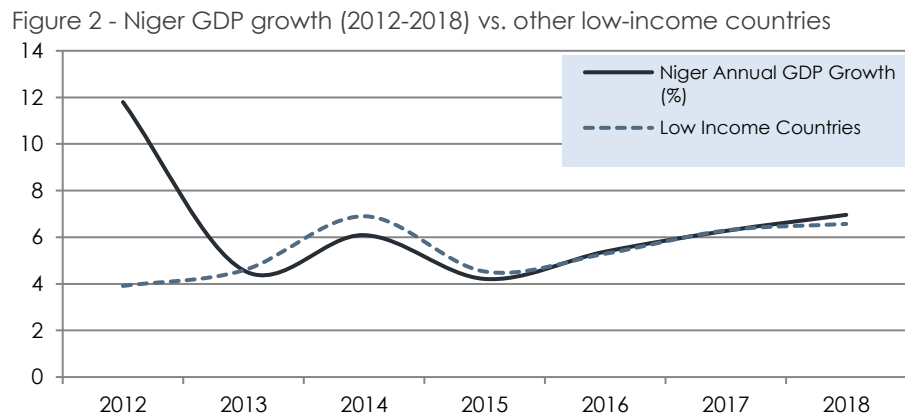
'transit country'; but I doubt migration and displacement are in people's top priorities here. Assuming the same fertility rate, the population of Niger will amount to more than 90 million people in 2050.' (UN, Economic Analyst)

Demographic pressure does appear as a time bomb in Niger, laying the ground for possible humanitarian crises should the economic situation not improve. Runaway fertility rates (7.6 children/woman in 2014) contribute to Niger being the country with the highest population growth rate on earth (3.8% in 2015).³ In comparison, the number of migrants in Niger still amounts to 1% of the population (122,300 in 2000 and 189,300 in 2015), to be compared with Gambia or Ivory Coast – both at 10% in 2015).⁴

Moreover, the country is today one of the poorest countries of the world, ranking 188th of 188 countries on the United Nations Human Development Index, with a poverty rate of 48.9% and a per capita income of \$420 per year in 2015.⁵ Niger faces the challenges of extreme poverty, frequent nutrition crises, demographic growth, unstable governance, endemic corruption, internal ethnical tensions, illicit trafficking, radicalisation, and terrorist-linked security threats, leading to massive forced displacement. According to UNHCR, there were 302,387 displaced persons in the Diffa region as of September 2016.⁶



In this context, the formal and informal job markets are not likely to absorb approximately 180,000 new entrants to the local market every year (300,000 in 2020).⁷ According to the World Bank, while Niger has enjoyed significant GDP growth rates in the past decade, this has not translated into improved employment conditions for the working poor: 'In spite of very low official unemployment rates, between 2 and 5%, the reality is much grimmer in Niger, with high levels of vulnerable jobs in the traditional agriculture or informal sector, low productivity and youth unemployment' (World Bank, Business Analyst for West Africa).



Source: Based on data from the World Bank <http://data.worldbank.org/country/niger>

³ "Fertility Rate, Total (Births per Woman)," World Bank, 2016, <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.TFRT.IN>. See also UNFPA's portal: http://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/FINAL_Niger.pdf

⁴ "Net Migration Data," World Bank, 2016, <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SM.POP.NETM>. A recent article from Reuters summarises this crucial aspect: "But Niger's President Mahatma Issoufou also proposed something perhaps more significant, in the long run, than a development package - bringing Niger's population growth down from 3.9 percent, the highest in the world. Though he gave no details on how this could be achieved, demography clearly holds the key both to Europe's migration crisis and to the African poverty feeding it. As long as population growth in African countries outstrips their ability to educate, house and employ their citizens, large numbers of people will continue to brave the deserts and seas to escape. "You can't resolve this by just paying money," said Owoeeye Olumide, a demographer at Bowen university in southwest Nigeria, one of the world's most densely populated regions. "There are going to be too many people ... the development you need will not be possible. You have to lower fertility rates and bring down population (by educating and empowering women)." See Reuters, October 13, 2016. Available at <http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-europe-migrants-africa-idUKKCN12D1N9>

⁵ "Niger Overview," World Bank, April 13, 2016, <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/niger/overview>.

⁶ As reported by UNHCR, citing the Government of Niger, Adrian Edwards, "Security and Humanitarian Situations Worsen in Diffa, Niger, as Boko Haram Continues Attacks in the Region," UNHCR, October 17, 2016, <http://www.unhcr.org/news/briefing/2016/5/574418af7/security-humanitarian-situations-worsen-diffa-niger-boko-haram-continues.html>. And <http://reliefweb.int/report/niger/unhcr-niger-september-2016-factsheet>

⁷ Samuel Hall's estimates, based on "Niger Overview."

This economic study, however, is necessary to Niger and key stakeholders there, as its findings and recommendations go beyond the traditional dialogue on migration in Agadez to date. The potential economic benefits of irregular migration – crucial given the economic position of Niger overall – have been until now completely excluded from research, with the focus of reports instead on the infrastructure challenges posed.⁸ By contrast, the present study not only assesses the economic interactions between migrant *and* host community, but also identifies concrete – and sometimes innovative – ways to support both the host community's and the migrants' aspirations to a better life. Three key questions will therefore be answered:

- What drives migration in and through Agadez, and who are the actors involved?
- What is the economy of migration in the town of Agadez?
- What, concretely, can IOM and other key stakeholders do to support both host community members and migrants?

Research methodology

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) plays a prominent role in migration in Niger, and Agadez in particular, supporting a field office and a migrant centre there. IOM has been allocated funds by the EU Instrument for Stability and Peace to strengthen the capacity of Niger's government to manage its borders and migratory flows effectively and to ensure the well-being of local communities and migrants in Agadez. In response to the 'missing' information described above, IOM commissioned Samuel Hall to conduct research on the topic of the economic impact of migration on the economy of Agadez.

Overview

Qualitative and quantitative research activities were successfully conducted over a period of 34 days from 13 May to 16 June, 2016. Prior to the fieldwork, discussions with IOM staff in Agadez as well as field teams (ANESJ for the qualitative research and the Nigerien Red Cross for the quantitative research) were conducted to plan research and logistics activities in the field. Fieldwork activities were then initiated with qualitative fieldwork training on 13 May and quantitative training and pilot exercise in Agadez on 14-15 May. *Samuel Hall* staff came from Nairobi to conduct the training and pilot exercises in Agadez and ensure full comprehension of the surveys and sampling plans. Quantitative enumerators were also trained in the use of electronic data collection. This enabled the team remote-managing the fieldwork to validate the surveys conducted each day as data was uploaded each evening (or the next morning, depending on internet connections) by the research supervisor. The quantitative team consisted of 10 members, five men and five women, and two supervisors, organised through the Nigerien Red Cross in Agadez (regularly used by IOM for survey needs). The qualitative work was conducted through the ANESJ (a local youth organisation), with the support of two supervisors, and one male and one female enumerator. For each focus group discussion, one person would take notes while the other facilitated the focus group. Quantitative fieldwork was conducted in Agadez from 16 May to 28 May, while the qualitative research continued through 6 June to accommodate an additional field visit to Arlit.

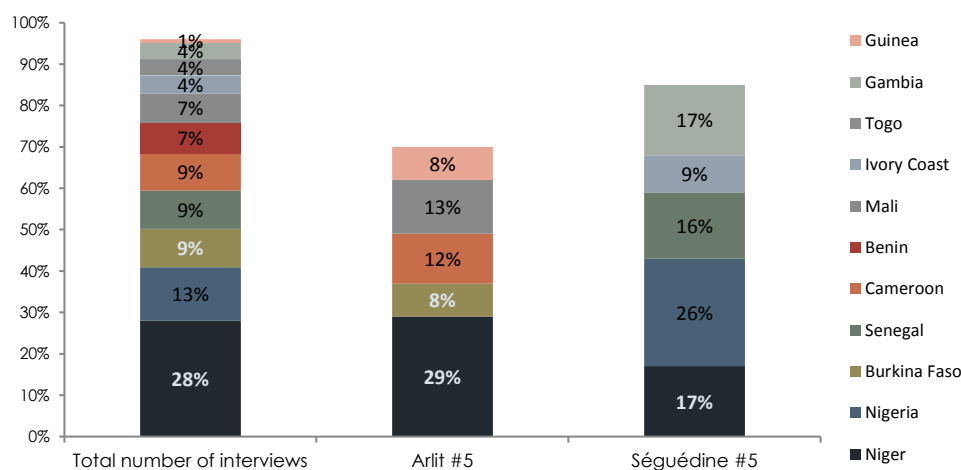
Brief migrant profiling

Samuel Hall interviewed migrants from 18 different nationalities, including both departing (quantitative and qualitative research) and returning (qualitative) Nigeriens.⁹ These included representatives from each of the five most frequently identified nationalities at IOM's FMP points in Séguédine and Arlit.

⁸ Studies to date have found that "how the costs and benefits of irregular migration are distributed is not obvious and the situation is more mixed" (Düvell, 2011 : 63). See Franck Düvell, "Irregular Immigration, Economics and Politics," *DICE Report* 9, no. 3 (2011): 60.

⁹ 'The United Nations define as an international migrant 'a person who changes his or her country of usual residence', regardless of duration (Statistics Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, UNFPA, <http://unstats.un.org>). Our definition of 'migrant', in the Nigerien context

Figure 3 - Comparison of top 5 nationality outflows in Séguédine/Arlit to Samuel Hall quantitative survey



Based on the FMP Report Niger 14-20 June 2016

In line with the inception report, the quantitative research consisted of two primary tools, a migrant survey (410 surveys completed; migrants defined as people not originally from Agadez, who did not live in Agadez permanently, and who were on their way to another destination) and a host community survey (357 surveys completed).

These quantitative tools were completed with Focus Group Discussions (10) with migrants heading Northwards and on the return, Case studies (4) with migrants on the return, and Key informant interviews (49) with stakeholders in Niamey and Agadez. The table below summarises the total fieldwork conducted for this research. Further details on the sampling and methodology can be found in the annex.

Table 1 - Total fieldwork conducted, by type and location

	AGADEZ	ARLIT	NIAMEY	TOTAL
Quantitative Tools				767
Host community survey	357 (97F / 260M)			357
Migrant survey	410 (184F / 226M)			410
Qualitative Tools				54
Focus group discussions	8	2		10
Case studies	2	2		4
Key informant interviews	23	2	24	49

Migrants transiting through Agadez remain among the most vulnerable members of the community, in spite of the extreme poverty of the region and town. During their journey, many endure human rights violations, abuse and discrimination – like Patrick, his cousin and his brother. Furthermore, women and children are almost systematically victims of human trafficking.¹⁰ For most outgoing or incoming migrants interviewed, mobility is perceived as one of the few, if not the only, options for people, particularly young people, to find decent work and escape poverty, persecution and violence. However, while migrants are in a clearly vulnerable situation during their journey, it does not always mean that they were the 'poor among the poor' in their home country. By assessing the nature of the economic exchanges between migrants and host communities in Agadez, this study seeks not only to better understand the profiles of the different actors involved in the migration industry, but also to critically contribute to the diagnosis made and solutions proposed by Nigerien and international stakeholders.

mirrors Brachet's (2007). We will favour the intention over the movement, i.e. we will call 'transit migrant' or 'migrant' those who are in transit, and have not changed their usual residence *stricto sensu*, but have the intention to do so.

¹⁰ Interview with CRF and ICRC.



Picture 2: Street of Agadez, 2016

2. TRANSIT

*“Transit (noun) / ˈtɹæn.zɪt/ from Latin transitus, from transire to go across, pass (...)
d: passage of a celestial body over the meridian of a place or through the field of a telescope
e: passage of a smaller body (as Venus) across the disk of a larger (as the sun)”*

Migration flows and frameworks

Historically, the circulation of men, livestock and goods – through nomadic pastoralism (oasis) and caravan trade (*funduq*) – is at the heart of the socio-economic structuration of sub-Saharan regions: ‘Agadez was built by traders and nomads, which is still present in people’s mindset’ (Governor of Air). Circulation, mobility and migration are thus the most relevant lenses to understand the progressive development of Agadez, as the town has always been a hub or crossroad – regardless of political borders. In this logic, the cleavage inherited from the colonial political geography between sub-Saharan and Berber zones should no longer be considered as relevant or operational; instead, trans-Saharan relationships are predominant over the spatial cutting up of Maghreb and Sahel, which suggests that Sahara is rather a continuum linking the two zones.¹¹

Agadez represents a concrete circulation platform connecting Saharan commercial hubs and networks, ensuring the continuity between trans-Saharan zones: ‘People often assume that there is a wall between Libya and Algeria, on the one hand, and Niger or Mali on the other. It is based on a very naïve representation of the Sahara: as they do not know the existing informal commercial exchanges in the desert, they assume that there is none! But it is not accurate. There is a dynamic continuum, precisely because of the desert. The distinction between these two spaces says more about their ignorance and prejudice than reality.’ (Sultan of Air).

Agadez, with its warrens of ornate mud-walled buildings, is a remarkable UNESCO World Heritage site, but the city has been abandoned by tourists after attacks nearby by Boko Haram and other jihadists. So, as one smuggler explains to me, the cars and buses of the tourist industry have now been repurposed into a migration industry.

Thomas Friedman, *The New York Times*, April 13, 2016

While migration through Agadez is nothing new, its scope has increased significantly in the past decades. Simultaneously, the legal framework surrounding it has evolved, the licitness of such flows ebbing and flowing with the institution of ever-changing laws around it, arriving at the current state of seemingly contradictory imperatives, from the ECOWAS free movement of peoples to Niger’s latest law on migration.

¹¹ Louis Blin, *L’Algérie Du Sahara Au Sahel, l’Harmathan, Paris, 1990.*

Agadez, migration hub

According to a recent ILO study, an estimated 90% of the region's 8.4 million migrants in West Africa originate from ECOWAS countries, highlighting the intra-regional nature of much of the movement in the area and making it the area with the highest mobility in the African continent.¹² Historically, migrants originating from (northern) inland areas used to move towards the richer coastal socio-economic hubs of Ivory Coast, Ghana, Senegal or Nigeria. Livelihood opportunities generated by cash crops, natural resource exploitation and trading were the main drivers of the region's mobility dynamics. From the 1990s onwards, these traditional patterns were disrupted by a combination of political conflicts and instability in many sub-Saharan and North-African countries. In parallel, European countries started controlling legal channels for travel and employment, which also strongly contributed to reshaping the regional dynamics and reshuffling roles between countries of origin, transit and destination. Agadez is symptomatic of those recent and ongoing changes.

As the largest city in central Niger, with a population of approximately of 124,300 as of the 2011 census (currently estimated to be materially higher), Agadez is both the capital of the most traditional Tuareg-Berber federation (Aïr) and the capital of the administrative region of Agadez. The Agadez region is the largest territorial subdivision in Africa and represents 52% of the total area of Niger. Despite its size, the region remains sparsely populated, with its approximately 350,000 inhabitants accounting for less than 3% of the total population of Niger.

All the respondents interviewed through this research process confirmed that the rise of insecurity and violence – after the two Tuareg rebellions of 1991 and 2006, and the Libya crisis in 2011 – led to drastic declines in the economic and livelihood opportunities in Agadez. And while pastoralism has been the historical and traditional source of income in Agadez, conflicts and insecurity have driven a progressive shift initially to the formal and informal touristic industry (80s' and 90s') and then to informal mining activities (uranium with Areva in the early 2000s', gold deposits in Djado in 2014) and the illicit migration business (continuously growing since 2011 and the Libya crisis).

As highlighted by the GIZ regional coordinator in Agadez, '*people and families who used to earn an income from touristic activities, as guides or shopkeepers, transformed themselves into miners or smugglers.*' (GIZ, Regional Coordinator for Agadez). Those different industries often use similar local and transnational hubs, crossroads, and networks: ghetto owners, smugglers, transport actors and money transfer services – they all make money out of an increasingly lucrative migration business in a local context where alternatives are scarce and not as rewarding. In this regard, the increase in the sheer scope of migration in Niger correlates with a significant change in the economic activities prevalent in Agadez. The types of activities present, participants in these activities and products and services requested have all evolved. The tourist activities present before have all but disappeared, and those participating in them have been forced to reconvert to other activities. As rightly pointed out by a recent IOM statistical report of FMPs:

(The migration business is now) part of a self-perpetuating cycle: increased migrant flows from the ECOWAS region through Niger increase the demand for transportation, food and shelter for people; the increased demand for transport broadens the market, subsequently making it easier for others to get information on how to migrate and cheaper for them to do so. Increased migration flows in the region therefore are part of a reinforcing cycle where more migrant flows make them a more significant part of the economy and the culture, therefore making it easier for others to follow in the footsteps of previous migrants. One could speak of economies of scale.¹³

Finally, migration dynamics are the main social, economic, and political structuring factors in Agadez, by redefining the functions and interactions between local economic actors.¹⁴

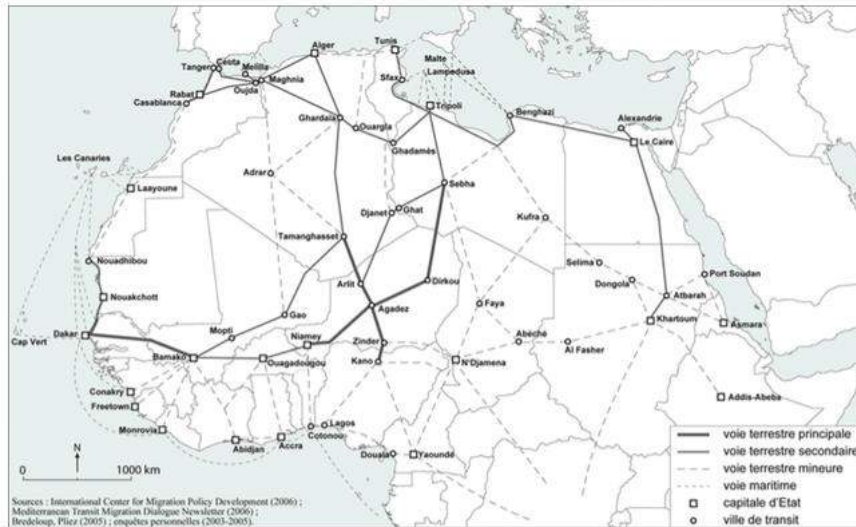
¹² KENZA DIMECHKIE, "Labour Migration Baseline Assessment" (FMM West Africa, 2015).

<http://www.rodakar.iom.int/oimsenegal/sites/default/files/reports/fmm%20west%20africa%20-%20labour%20Migration.pdf>.

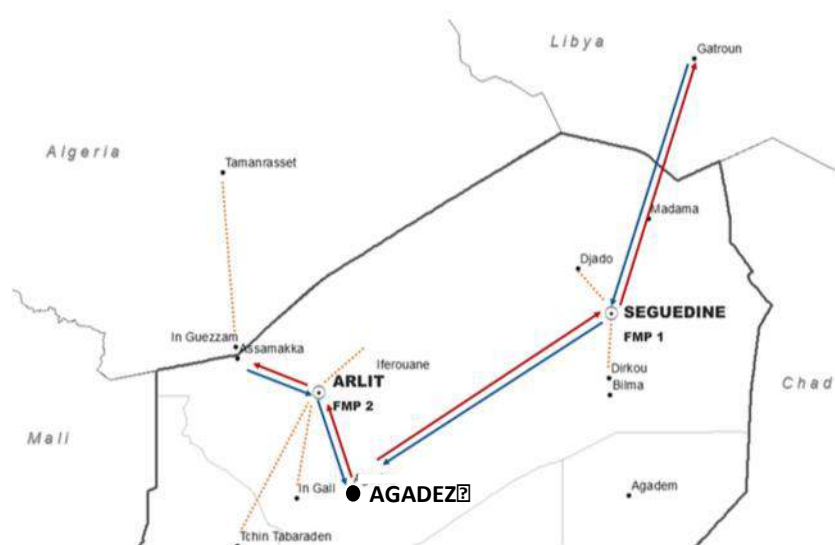
¹³ "Weekly Statistical Report - NIGER Flow Monitoring Points" (IOM, February 2016), http://doe.iom.int/docs/NIGER_IOM_FMP_EN_report_01-23Feb2016.pdf.

¹⁴ Julien Brachet, "Un Désert Cosmopolite. Migrations de Transit Dans La Région d'Agadez (Sahara Nigérien)" (Université Panthéon-Sorbonne-Paris I, 2007), <https://tel.archives-ouvertes.fr/tel-00339059/>.

Map 1: Migration routes in West-Africa (Brachet, 2007)



Map 2: Location of Flow Monitoring Points (IOM, 2016)



Outgoing flows

According to the IOM Flow Monitoring Points (FMPs), an estimated 256,262 people moved from Niger to North Africa between 1 February and 15 August 2016, with 93% heading to Libya and 7% to Algeria.¹⁵ As a point of comparison, in 2008 the total flow of migrants transiting through Niger was estimated to be between 40,000 and 80,000.¹⁶ Assuming the same pace, 2016 figures are therefore on track to at least more than quadruple these flows and reach 320,000 to 350,000. Two categories of migration should be distinguished here:

- Migration from West and Central African countries transiting through Libya and Algeria and moving onward to Europe (approximately 10% according to RMMS);¹⁷
- Local circular economic migration, based on historical ties with Libya (47%) or Algeria (31%) – Nigerien migrants are mostly in this category, working for several years in either Libya or Algeria before going back to Niger. People also engage in short trips to these countries to buy merchandise and transport it back to Niger to sell it.¹⁸

¹⁵ "Weekly Statistical Report - NIGER Flow Monitoring Points."

¹⁶ Harouna Mounkaila, "Migration Au Niger : Document Thématique 2009" (IOM, 2009).

¹⁷ See the RMMS synthesis "Mixed Migration in East Africa" (RMMS West Africa, June 2016), <http://www.regionalmms.org/westafrica/RMMSWestAfricaMonthlySummaryJune2016.pdf>.

¹⁸ Idem.

A rapid comparison of migration routes between 2007 (Brachet) and 2016 (IOM, FMPs) shows that traditional migration routes or crossroads can change over time:

- "Séguédine has always been a mandatory step for trans-Saharan trade between Lake Chad and Libya. But until recently, migrants were only stopping for a while. Now, it has become an alternative to Dirkou, which is ten times more populated. The number of migrants spending three or four days, or more, in Séguédine has increased dramatically, which creates some tensions over resources." (Conseil Régional d'Agadez)

- "To avoid controls and stay under the radar, some migrants purposefully bypass Agadez and use different routes. They sometimes stay in small villages for one or two nights; it is very difficult to know who those people are. As they cannot access money transfer services directly, I wonder if they keep all the cash on them. Of course, it means taking a considerable risk, especially for people who are virtually non-existent." (Money Transfer Retailer, Agadez)

Incoming flows

A total of 91,500 people, both voluntary returnees and deportees, arrived to Niger from Libya and Algeria between February and August of 2016, with 77% coming from Libya and 23% through Algeria. As reported by IOM and Amnesty International, some of the migrants, especially those coming from Libya, fled sexual violence, abuses and trafficking.¹⁹ Migrants in this incoming flow consist of the following three categories:

- Returning Nigerien workers, either returning from Algeria as deportees following the agreement between the two countries or from Libya in view of the current political context.
- Returning ECOWAS migrants who are returning to their place of origin (Mali, Gambia, Cameroon, Chad, or Senegal, but also Nigeria or Liberia to a lesser extent). These West African migrants are generally either (a) migrants who worked in Libya for several years, incited to leave by the current situation, or (b) migrants who went to Libya to attempt a crossing towards Europe but were discouraged by the difficult and sometimes violent conditions in Libya.
- Economic ECOWAS migrants (mainly from Senegal, Mali, and Chad) coming to Niger, and the Aïr region in particular, to work on the mineral mines of Djado or Irefouane (gold) as well as Arlit (uranium) or Tchirozerine (coal). The artisanal, volatile, and deregulated nature of those exploitations makes it very difficult for local authorities (or IOM) to assess the status of these migrants, the proportion of secondary displaced to Libya and Algeria and the possible tensions that their presence may generate with Nigerien workers.

Blurred institutional and regulatory frameworks

To put the Agadez lens in a broader perspective, it is essential to clearly understand the legal status of migrants transiting through or working in Niger.

General framework: ECOWAS Free Movement Protocols

The Economic Community Of West African States (ECOWAS), a regional group of fifteen countries including Niger founded in 1975, is the main institutional framework governing international migrations in the region.²⁰ The underlying assumption of the 1979 Protocol Relating to Free Movement of Persons, Residence and Establishment for ECOWAS community citizens is the positive correlation between migration and economic development – free movement being the key to regional integration.

However, while a Labour and Employment Policy was adopted by ECOWAS in 2009 to elaborate, harmonise, coordinate, implement and monitor regional policies towards employment and decent work, to date, *'the labour dimension of migration has received almost no actual attention from ECOWAS member states, as it is naturally a highly politicized topic'* (UNDP, *Economic Analyst*). In practice, the ECOWAS protocols generally defer to the national legal frameworks. The absence of a collective binding agreement or minimal common standards open the floodgates to discriminatory practices in terms of access to information, delivery of work and residence permits, and restrictions and quotas on foreign-owned businesses.

Thus, while *de jure* the principles of free movement restrict the number of irregular migrant workers in the sub-region to a minimum, the barriers that arise in practice mean that *de facto* there continue to be many migrants circulating and working without legal status: *'Most migrants transiting through Agadez originate from ECOWAS countries and are legally allowed to travel or stay in Niger. They are not illegal or irregular, but undocumented migrants'* (GIZ, *Region Coordinator*).

Such a blurring of lines between legal/formal and illegal/informal practices seems to be common in Niger. The progressive erasure of the line between the legal and the illegal also reshapes the social and economic profile of

¹⁹ See: the update from Amnesty (June 2016): Amnesty International, "Refugees and Migrants Fleeing Sexual Violence, Abuse and Exploitation in Libya," *Amnesty International*, January 7, 2016, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2016/07/refugees-and-migrants-fleeing-sexual-violence-abuse-and-exploitation-in-libya/>.

²⁰ With the exception of UN conventions.

Agadez:²¹ 'This is where I see a major risk for this town: illegal activities exploiting the situation of vulnerable migrants are tolerated, as if they were informal touristic activities or normal sources of income. But smuggling and trafficking can kill, whatever ghetto owners, coxeurs, drivers, migrants and even officials say!' (CRF, Regional Coordinator).

Nigerien frameworks: National laws and local strategies

Matters are further complicated by the national legislation of Niger. On 11 May 2015, the Nigerien government adopted the 'Loi relative au trafic illicite des migrants' (law pursuant to the illicit trafficking of migrants). This law punishes the transportation of migrants illicitly for financial gain – i.e., nearly all of the migratory flows through Agadez. However, as of 2016 it has yet to be fully implemented.²² Represented as promoting the human rights of migrants – often abrogated by smugglers, who take them through dangerous journeys in the desert without care for safety – this law criminalises the transportation of migrants but also details how to proceed to the return of 'victims of illicit trafficking'.

This falls in line with the EU-supported push for the limitation and control of migration described in the next section, as does the migration strategy at a local level. The Agadez *Plan de Développement Régional 2016-2020*'s primary targeted impact with regards to migration is "le nombre de migrants enregistrés est réduit" – the number of migrants registered is reduced. To do so, two deliverables are given, a) that information and data around migration is better understood [and is collected] and b) that structures to welcome, raise awareness of and orient migrants and potential migrants are created and are operational.

Table 2 - Main rights and protections granted by the Free Movement Protocols to ECOWAS migrant workers

Source: ILO, <i>Labour Migration – Baseline Assessment</i> , FMM West Africa, 2015
<i>The right of entering, residing, and establishing in Member State (Protocol A/P.1/5/79, Article 2)</i>
<i>Protection of property, goods or fixed assets legally acquired in Member States, and equal treatment with nationals in regard to tax laws. (Supplementary Protocol A/SP.1/7/85, Article 7)</i>
<i>The right of residence (Supplementary Protocol A/SP1/7/86) grants ECOWAS Community citizens the right to 'reside in other member states for the purpose of seeking and carrying out income-earning employment' (Article 2). It includes the right to apply for jobs and take up employment in accordance with the legal and administrative provisions governing national workers' employment. It also establishes the principle of equal treatment between migrant workers and nationals in regard to employment security, re-employment in the case of job loss, access to training and education, and access to social, cultural and health facilities. (Supp. Protocol A/SP1.1/7/86, Articles 2 and 3)</i>
<i>Protection from mass expulsion; individual expulsion must be based on "a well-founded legal or administrative decision" and must be carried out in respect of their fundamental rights. (Supp. Protocol A/SP1.1/7/86, Article 14)</i>
<i>The right to transfer earnings or savings without impediment from Member States (Supp. Protocol A/SP1.1/7/86, Article 17)</i>
<i>The right to equal treatment with nationals in regard to employment security, re-employment in case of job loss, training and professional education (Supp. Protocol A/SP1.1/7/86, Article 23)</i>
<i>The right of establishment (Supplementary Protocol A/SP2/5/90) grants ECOWAS Community citizens access to economic activities and the right to carry out these activities, as well as the right to set up and manage enterprises under the same legislative conditions the host member state applies to its own nationals (Supp. Protocol A/SP.2/5/90, Article 2)</i>
<i>Protection from confiscation of assets and capital on a discriminatory bases (Supp. Protocol A/SP.2/5/90, Article 7)</i>
<i>The Supplementary Protocols also calls on Member States to cooperate with each other on issues of labour migration governance, including labour supply and demand, monitoring and sharing information on labour markets, harmonisation of employment and labour policies, prevention of employment of migrants in irregular status, and the elimination of administrative and legal barriers to establishing companies.</i>

²¹ Botte (2004) and Hibou (1998)

²² Conor Gaffey, "How Niger Became West Africa's People-Smuggling Hub," Newsweek, June 17, 2016, <http://europe.newsweek.com/why-niger-west-africas-people-smuggling-hub-471600>.

Key stakeholder approaches

"The crisis in Mali, instability in Libya and Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria are all threatening Niger's security and development. In addition, the country is faced with the illegal trafficking of drugs, weapons and people on its territory. Some of this organised crime serves to fund terrorist groups which are using Niger's vast desert regions as trafficking routes or safe havens. This combination of threats makes it vital for Niger to have a well-functioning security sector."²³ – EUCAP Sahel Niger civilian mission, April 2016

The approach towards migration in Agadez by governmental stakeholders is – at multiple levels – one of regulation and criminalisation, both legislatively and in the language used to describe the migration, as it highlights migration's ties to illegal trafficking of weapons and other goods.

The budget for the EUCAP Sahel Niger mission nearly doubled for the July 2015 - July 2016 period, from 9.8 million euros in the previous budget to 18.4 million euros. This increase has allowed for the creation of a permanent EUCAP presence in Agadez, which is 'key to supporting the Nigerien authorities in border and migration management [and] the fight against terrorism and organised crime'.²⁴ The approach from the EU Council towards migration in Agadez – and the money to be made from it – clearly draws a link between migration and terrorism and organised crime. As such, illegal migration is something to be combated.

Governmental Approaches to Migration in Agadez		
<p style="text-align: center;">EU</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Funds EUCAP mission in Niger to support the government's security sector 	<p style="text-align: center;">Government of Niger</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •2015 law criminalising illicit traffic 	<p style="text-align: center;">Agadez region</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •2016-2020 Development plan calls for measurement of and dissuasion around migration

Most of the ever-increasing numbers of migrants passing through Agadez then, in theory, have the right to travel at least to Agadez (82% of non-Nigerien migrants interviewed had papers with them, and 79% were asked for papers to enter Agadez). However, the smuggling law has the additional impacts of a) portraying these migrants as nearly all illicit (by implication) as well as b) identifying their return to the country of origin as an appropriate "solution" (in Chapter VI, "*Des processus relatifs au retour des migrants objets du trafic illicite*"). The regional government takes an approach focused on better understanding migration but has the ultimate goal of reducing it. The consideration of the potential positive impacts of migration is absent.

²³ "The EUCAP Sahel Niger Civilian Mission" (EEAS, April 2016), http://eeas.europa.eu/csdp/missions-and-operations/eucap-sahel-niger/pdf/factsheet_eucap_sahel_niger_en.pdf.

²⁴ "EUCAP Sahel Niger: Council Nearly Doubles Mission's Annual Budget - Consilium," *Consilium Europe*, May 10, 2015, <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2015/10/05-eucap-sahel-niger-council-nearly-doubles-missions-annual-budget/>.



Picture 3: Money transfer, 2016

3. REALITIES

“A stone is heavy, and the sand weighty; but a fool's wrath is heavier than them both.”
 (King James) Bible, Proverbs, 27:3

Three key groups are impacted by and participate in migration in Agadez: the host community, Nigerien migrants, and non-Nigerien migrants.

Country of origin, and in particular the Nigerien / non-Nigerien citizenship divide, as well as gender, emerge as the main predictors of the type of journey experienced. Nearly universally, those who made it to North Africa had very negative experiences. Meanwhile, the welcome in Agadez was more favourable, driven in particular by the perception – accurate or not, as will be discussed in the next chapters – that migration has a positive impact on the local economy. Local authorities face the draw of financial flows in conflict with each other, forced to measure European funds to “regularise” migration and funds that can be more easily earned from the migrants themselves.

This section examines the modalities of migration through Agadez from an experiential perspective: considering the specificities of migrant journeys themselves in order to identify protection and other challenges for stakeholders to address, as well as the welcome received in Agadez in order to understand the factors at play in host community decisions.

A typical journey

Nigerien and non-Nigerien migrants differ in the specifics of their trips as detailed in the table below.

Table 3 – Characteristics of Nigerien and Non-Nigerien journeys

	Nigeriens	Non-Nigeriens
Person who suggested trip	Most (74%) decided to leave on their own	60% decided to leave alone; friends are the most frequent influencers for those who did not (35.3%)
Sources of funding	37% self-funded; 23% given by family; 1% given by friends; 16% borrow from family and 20% borrowed from someone else (multiple responses possible)	69% self-funded; 33% given by family; 8% given by friends; 9% borrowed from family and 6% borrowed from others (multiple responses possible)
Time since trip began	65% one month or less ago; 21% 1-2 months ago	87% one month or less ago
Primary mode of transportation to date	65% car, 39% bus	43% car, 92% bus
Planned stay in Agadez	55% two weeks or less; 29% 12 weeks or more	94% two weeks or less; none more than 7 weeks
Accommodations	Personal recommendations key: 89% of Nigeriens found it through someone they know, 9% by someone at the bus station	Personal recommendations key: 64% of non-Nigeriens found it through someone they know, 22% by someone at the bus station

A few of these points have programming implications:

- Short trip lengths mean that any programming to support migrants in Agadez must be designed on a short timescale.
- Those who have borrowed or been given money for the trip, rather than earned it themselves, may face differing levels of familial pressure when it comes to the possibility of their return.

The reasons for the different experiences of Nigeriens and non-Nigeriens will be furthered detailed subsequently.

Migration as a hazardous solution: Protection challenges of the trip itself

All migrants face protection challenges during their journey. The major ones are highlighted below, as well as sub-groups especially relevant to them.

Journey realities

Much research has already been conducted on the modalities of migration from West and Central Africa through Agadez and northwards. While the focus of this study is not to further describe these, certain specificities of this migration – and the experiences of certain sub-groups in it – must be considered in order to enable the design of programming to address the needs of the migrants, in particular with regards to protection challenges. One point is clear: the *El Dorado* envisioned by aspiring migrants is achieved by few, and those who do reach it face a difficult and expensive trip.

'If I had to do it again, I would not. Crossing the desert to Tamanghasset was the worst experience of my life. We lost everything, I spent 3 weeks in jail, I got harassed and beaten by criminals who do not respect human life; people in Algeria were hostile and insulted us, threw stones at us. If I make it to Liberia, I will tell my brothers to stay and make a living there – even small'. Focus group discussion, Liberian migrants deported from Algeria, Agadez, IOM centre

Violent journeys

Although organised trafficking of migrants on these routes is more limited than in the Horn of Africa, migrants nonetheless face violent journeys through Agadez, and upon arrival in Libya.

Three primary instigators of violence can be identified:

- Armed / security governmental forces – closely tied to the corruption issues discussed in the previous chapter
- Transporters / others involved in the migration chain, and
- Bandits / criminal groups and predators

'A friend was slapped [at the border post] and so I paid 10000 CFA. That is where it started, at each post we have to pay. But what marked me the most is the post at Burkina, the guards there humiliated me: they hit me and took all my money'. Male focus group discussion, migrants travelling North, Agadez

'I left Bamako to cross the northern part of the country, passing through Kidal, where certain armed persons attacked us and financially and sexually abused us for three days. On the fourth day, with the arrival of another vehicle, their chief ordered them to take us to Djanet'. Female focus group discussion, returning migrant, Agadez

'I lost my friends and the products which we were exporting to go sell in Algeria. The driver was the accomplice of an attack by men in turbans, who took our products and killed my friends'. Male case study, returning migrant, Arlit

Not feeling welcome: Difficult stereotypes on arrival

Those migrants who do arrive in North Africa face an additional challenge: numerous returning migrants reported instances of severe racism, violence, and abuse, as was corroborated by external sources. For example, some noted not being paid because they were black, and several suggested that a clear distinction in Libya is drawn between sub-Saharan Africans and 'Arabs', even when the former speak Arabic.

'I experienced a very regrettable situation as I felt like a slave with no liberty. Even when you work to earn money you risk losing your life in asking an Arab for your pay'. Male Focus group discussion, returning migrants, Agadez

'There is a place where migrants meet up in the morning to go wait for Arabs, who come each day to find people to offer them work. If you are lucky, you will find one [...] who will have you work all day. And yet at the end of the day he will chase you away without remuneration [...] they are not welcoming and have no consideration for black skin, for them a black is a slave, even when they come to you to discuss work, they close their noses, saying that all black skin smells bad'. Male Focus group discussion, returning migrants, Agadez

Recent interviews in Italy by Amnesty International noted that “The majority of people Amnesty International spoke to reported being victims of human trafficking. They were held by smugglers as soon as they entered Libya or sold on to criminal gangs. Several described being beaten, raped, tortured, or exploited by those who held them captive. Some witnessed people being shot dead by smugglers, others saw people left to die as a result of illness or ill-treatment.”²⁵

Migration as a differentiated experience

The migration experience is not the same for all: several subgroups face specific challenges – or in the case of Nigeriens, advantages – in their experiences both reaching Agadez as well as afterwards. The information collected here highlights the specificities of the experiences of certain populations amongst the overall migrant population, in order to understand how the needs of different groups can best be addressed.

Women: privileged but at risk

Qualitative female respondents reported a chivalry of sorts when travelling without men, with others on the road helping them. Perceived as weaker and in need of help, they are privileged by transporters when needing help.

‘The travel conditions are not the same [for men and women] as in Africa women are weak and must always be helped. The men with whom I share a bus have been helping me since I have left’. Female case study, migrant travelling North, Arlit.

‘While trip conditions are the same for men and women, some transporters favour them more than men because they have children and cannot bear the walk on foot or the lack of water. In brief, they suffer more than men given their bodies’. Male case study, returning migrant, Agadez

‘Travel conditions are not the same for men and women, there is a difference, as the drivers respect women and help them more. During the trip, women receive priority for food and drink’. Female case study, returning migrant, Agadez

However, this recognition of the ‘inherent weakness’ of women is juxtaposed by a strong risk of sexual abuse.

‘Generally women lose in dignity... [they face] sexual aggression, torture and racism’. Female focus group discussion, migrants travelling north, Agadez

‘The children in the neighbourhood think we are sluts, each time I go out men call to me, “Sister come”, and the night even with other migrants I am obliged to submit myself to their sexual needs’. Mixed focus group discussion, migrants travelling North, Agadez

The widespread nature of this abuse was confirmed in key informant interviews. A psychologist from the COOPI (Cooperazione Internazionale) working at the IOM migration centre in Niamey stated ‘I do not think a single woman has come without having been raped at least once’.²⁶ Despite this, resources to address the violence faced by women are limited. While migrants on the return can benefit from assistance at IOM migration centres, those migrating north have no clear recourse. North of Agadez, there is little health-related infrastructure to which migrants can turn. On the roads between Agadez and Dirkou and Bilma, there is very limited infrastructure: a health centre in Séguédine and another in Dirkou.²⁷

Lack of health treatments can have clear and long-lasting impacts on the lives of the women involved, as noted in an article on the impacts of conflict-related sexual violence in the *Forced Migration Review*: ‘Women and girls with extreme pain and deep internal tears are often left to heal without medication or surgical intervention – and may suffer vesico-vaginal fistulae (tears) and permanent damage to the uterus and vagina and may also contract HIV or other sexually transmitted infections [...] When violence is perpetrated by a more powerful other – for example by virtue of the fact that the perpetrator is physically stronger, in a gang and/or armed – the trauma of the wounding is compounded by the trauma of being helpless.’²⁸

²⁵ Amnesty International, “Refugees and Migrants Fleeing Sexual Violence, Abuse and Exploitation in Libya.”

²⁶ KII Coopi Staff psychologist 18.03 Niamey

²⁷ KII Ministère de la Santé, Dr. Abdou Ibrahim, 17.03 Niamey

²⁸ Katie Thomas, “Sexual Violence: Weapon of War,” *Forced Migration Review* 27 (2007): 15–16.

Other studies have confirmed the widespread nature of such violence. Research conducted amongst sub-Saharan migrants in Morocco (sample of 60 females and 94 males), for example, found that 30% reported having been sexually victimised themselves and 35% forced to watch while a relative or co-traveller was violated.²⁹

This poses questions at two levels:

- How can migrant women be supported on this front during and after their trips?
- Putting aside the physical and mental impact of such abuse on the women victims of it, more broadly how can governments and other policy makers address the normalisation of sexual violence in this context?

This is of particular concern given the first point noted in this section – that women are perceived as receiving extra support during the trip and sometimes favourable treatment.

Gambians: favoured targets of border corruption

Numerous Gambian migrants interviewed reported having to pay additional / more significant amounts of money for border crossings. They stated that the authorities requesting money from them declared that the Gambian president authorised them to deny entry to Gambian migrants, consequently facilitating the request for more money. Although the Gambian president has spoken out against migration – stating, for example, on the occasion of the funeral of migrants who had perished in the Mediterranean sea, *'Those who paid for their sons and daughters to embark on this risky journey claimed their children would have died if they were still around [...] but if these people are true Muslims and really believe what they are saying, then they should equally believe that their sons and daughters could have made it at home if they were ready to invest and work'*,³⁰ – no direct revocation of the right to migrate of Gambia's citizens has been found. This perception is nonetheless widespread enough to have been remarked on by numerous migrants.

'Arrived at the Burkina-Niger border it was even worse – they menaced me asking for 100000 CFA, as they already have the authorisation of our president to block all Gambians from crossing their border'. Male focus group discussion, migrant travelling North, Arlit

'[The border crossing] which marked me the most was the crossing at Kantuaré [sic] where I was maltreated, marginalised and hit as I reacted when they asked me for twice the sum received by all other nationalities. They told me that the Gambian president gave them the order to refuse all migrating Gambians crossing this border'. Male focus group discussion, migrant travelling North, Agadez

'At the Niger border I also paid 15000 CFA as for the security forces it is forbidden to Gambians to access the Nigerien territory'. Male focus group discussion, migrant travelling North, Agadez

Therefore, the overall costs faced by Gambians migrating are higher than those of other nations. This can have clear repercussions, especially in the case of 'failed' migrations, when they must rebuild their life in Gambia with even less from which to start.

Nigeriens: an easier start to the journey

By reason of their nationality, Nigeriens do face a somewhat easier journey to North Africa – making repeated short-term migrations more feasible, as several respondents noted:

- Nigeriens do not face the repeated border crossing fees on the way to Agadez and have more positive interactions with security forces.
- Nigerien migrants may benefit from charity along the route and have more interactions with the local communities.

²⁹ Ines Keygnaert et al., "Sexual Violence and Sub-Saharan Migrants in Morocco: A Community-Based Participatory Assessment Using Respondent Driven Sampling," *Globalization and Health* 10, no. 1 (2014): 1.

³⁰ AFP, "Gambia's Jammeh Criticises Families of Dead Migrants," Yahoo, (May 15, 2015), <http://news.yahoo.com/gambias-jammeh-criticises-families-dead-migrants-115603241.html>.

'The conditions of this trip are perfect as I already know the route and have my papers; I did not have any problem with security forces, nothing new in this trip; for me it is like going to the market and returning'. Female focus group discussion, migrants travelling North, Agadez

'As I have told you, I am Nigerien, so I can move in Agadez without any problems. [...] We always hear about the desert on the radio, that the crossing is very difficult, but me, I am with a Nigerien brother, the driver who will take me to Algeria, that is why I feel in security. [...] I have not had problems with security forces as they know I am Nigerien and have my papers'. Male case study, returning migrant, Arlit

'The fact of migration has become for us a way to work and come home at the end of the day, you can our say that our trip is seasonal. During our trip, we worked to have money, for example, at the police posts we send the women and children to beg, and for we men, once in Agadez we went through the mosques, especially the Agadez mosque on Friday, to explain our conditions of life after the prayer, and thank God, we received money, clothes, and sometimes food'. Male case study, returning migrant, Agadez

Perceptions of migration

Overall, the economic impact of migration is perceived positively, but the host community's view of the migrants themselves is less clear-cut, and a significant minority state that they think migration has a very negative impact on the economy, as can be seen in Figure 4.

When asked to describe the nature of migrant-related economic activities, a majority of host community members do not consider these differently from other economic activities, only just a few more than a quarter recognised the illegal nature of some of these activities – insisting in particular on the two critical aspects of transportation and accommodation (*ghettos*) (Figure 5). The migrants themselves were generally positive on the attitudes of Nigeriens towards them – whatever attitudes exist around migration related-activities, migrants do not necessarily hold the same views.

Figure 4 – Host community ratings of economic impact of migrants (1 = very positive, 5 = very negative)

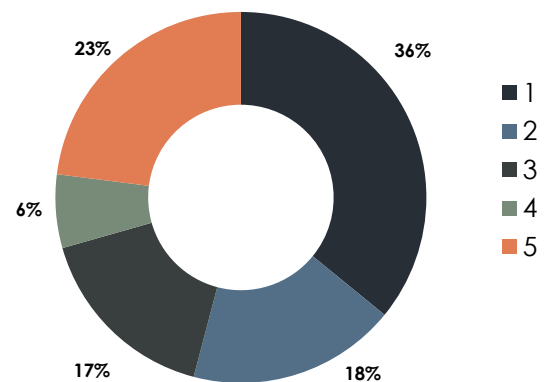
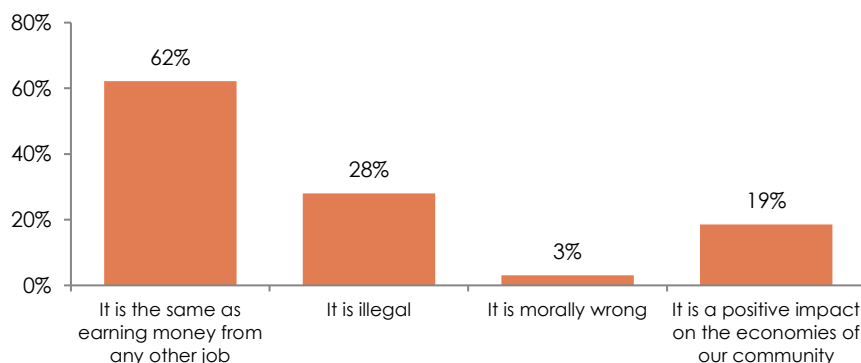


Figure 5 – What do you think of people in Agadez earning money from migration-related work?



'I meet youth from Agadez, we often speak about the differences between life in Gambia and in Niger, I feel well around them, they are very welcoming'. Focus group discussion, migrants heading North, Agadez

'During my stay I have created economic and social relations with the storeowners of Agadez, who are welcoming, and often when I feel isolated I go to speak with them'. Focus group discussion, migrants heading North, Agadez

Mixed incentives for stakeholders

Like the inhabitants of Agadez, governmental officials in Agadez face competing drivers in determining their attitudes towards migration.

From an economic and legal perspective, there are contradictions between possible sources of income for government officials such as border guards and policemen: the more potentially remunerative sources of income, and easily accessible ones – in particular requiring bribes of incomes crossing the border – can easily outpace what is the salary of a policeman and the average Nigerien. 99% of non-Nigerien migrants reported being asked for bribes at some point during the journey to Agadez.

The European Union and other donors are investing in curbing migration – and in order to affect this are donating funding and support to the enforcement of migration-related laws. While this support is also of appeal to the government, lacking in other sources of income, it intrinsically challenges the illegal sources of income perceived by many of those in the field. This contradiction of incentives challenges the ability – and desire in some cases – of the government to challenge migration. That being said, the official position of the local municipality, as it is addressed in the most recent *Plan de Développement Régional*, focuses on reducing numbers of migrants.

With regards to migration, the inhabitants of Agadez find themselves pulled in two different directions. On the one hand, migrants offer a clear source of income for many in the community in a location where few other alternatives exist. On the other hand, migration leads to increased stress on local infrastructure and unclear legislation and incentives from the government around their activities, which results in a decreased likelihood of tourism resuming.

Money to be made from migration – two sides to the equation

The financial incentives to the government and its agents around migration come from two sides: money from the migrants themselves, generally illegally collected in the form of bribes, and funding from donors (as described with EUCAP above) generally focused on controlling and decreasing migration and supporting migrants in their return.

The appeal and scope of monetary demands to migrants. The freedom of movement created by ECOWAS and the correlated increase in migration both removed a source of income from the local municipality and increased the potential gain to government officials through less legal means. Prior to 2010, the municipality of Agadez received taxes from migration, but these have been eliminated, which in conjunction with the pressure that migration places on the local infrastructure has not been positive for the municipality.³¹ However, numerous government employees – that is to say, police and border guards – make a significant amount of money from corruption as the research found 99% of non-Nigerien migrants reported having been asked at least once for money by a government official – and this occurred systematically in Niger, as 92% of this 99% were asked for money at the border to Niger, and 89% upon entering Agadez.

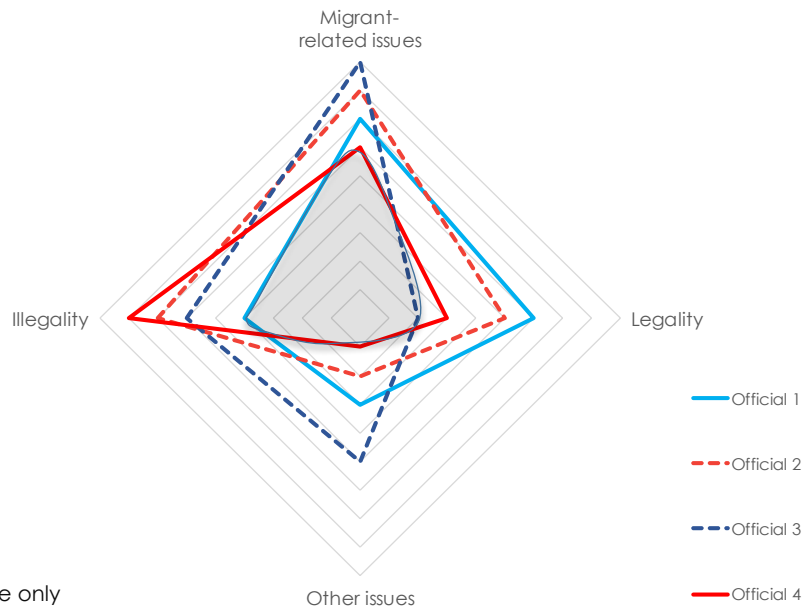
The *Guardian* reported in 2015 that the average young policemen earns less than \$190 per month, or about 113,000 CFA per month.³² Reported monetary demands upon entering Agadez range from 500 to 15,000 CFA per person. Given the migrant flows, one bus full of migrants could easily allow a policeman or guard to equal their monthly salary in one day. And indeed, such temptation is hard to resist: the same year, *Reuters* reported having seen a confidential government report which noted that '*corruption was so entrenched here [Agadez] that to tackle migrant smuggling would require replacing almost all military and police officials*'.³³ When asked to comment on these articles, most officials in Agadez declined to provide any statement, however four of them from the Regional Council, Governorate, and Mairie of Agadez accepted to answer questions on the migration-corruption nexus in Agadez, validating the assumption that government officials spend most of their time addressing migration-related problems and often take advantage of the informal situation of northbound migration to capture "*additional sums of money*" from migrants heading to Libya or Algeria – as highlighted by the red-coloured area in the figure below.

³¹ KII, Adjoint au Maire d'Agadez

³² Daniel Flynn and Reuters, "Corruption Stymies Niger's Attempts to Stem Flow of Migrants to Europe," *The Guardian*, June 22, 2015, sec. Global development, <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2015/jun/22/corruption-niger-attempt-stem-flow-migrants-europe-smugglers-sahara>.

³³ "Graft Stalls Niger's Bid to End Migrant Route to Europe," *Reuters*, June 19, 2015, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-europe-migrants-niger-insight-idUSKBN0OZ0GC20150619>.

Figure 6 - Visualisation of incentives faced by government officials (4 respondents – indicative only)



NB: This figure is indicative only

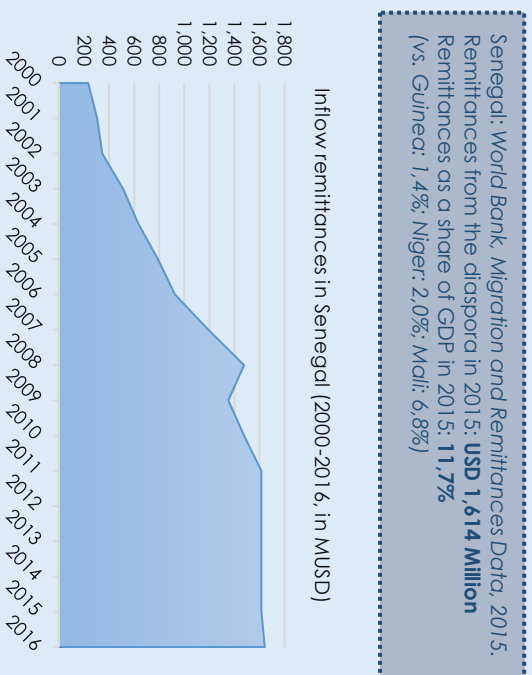
This section has detailed the realities of migrants' journeys and their welcome in Agadez:

- The funding mechanisms and nature of trips by Nigerien and non-Nigerien migrants differ significantly, with Nigerien migrations more likely to fall into traditional cyclical patterns of migration to North Africa and back again.
- The violent, and potentially traumatising journeys experienced by many migrants necessitate further attention to health and psychological issues.
- Social links between migrants and hosts are generally limited to the commercial, and for many even these are taken care of by an intermediary.
- Residents of Agadez, including both officials and other inhabitants, find their attitude towards migration and migrants influenced by conflicting financial and other incentives.

The following chapter will build on this to understand why, despite the manifold challenges, migrants continue to come to and through Agadez.

N'Diaye, 20-year old man from Sédhiou (Senegal)

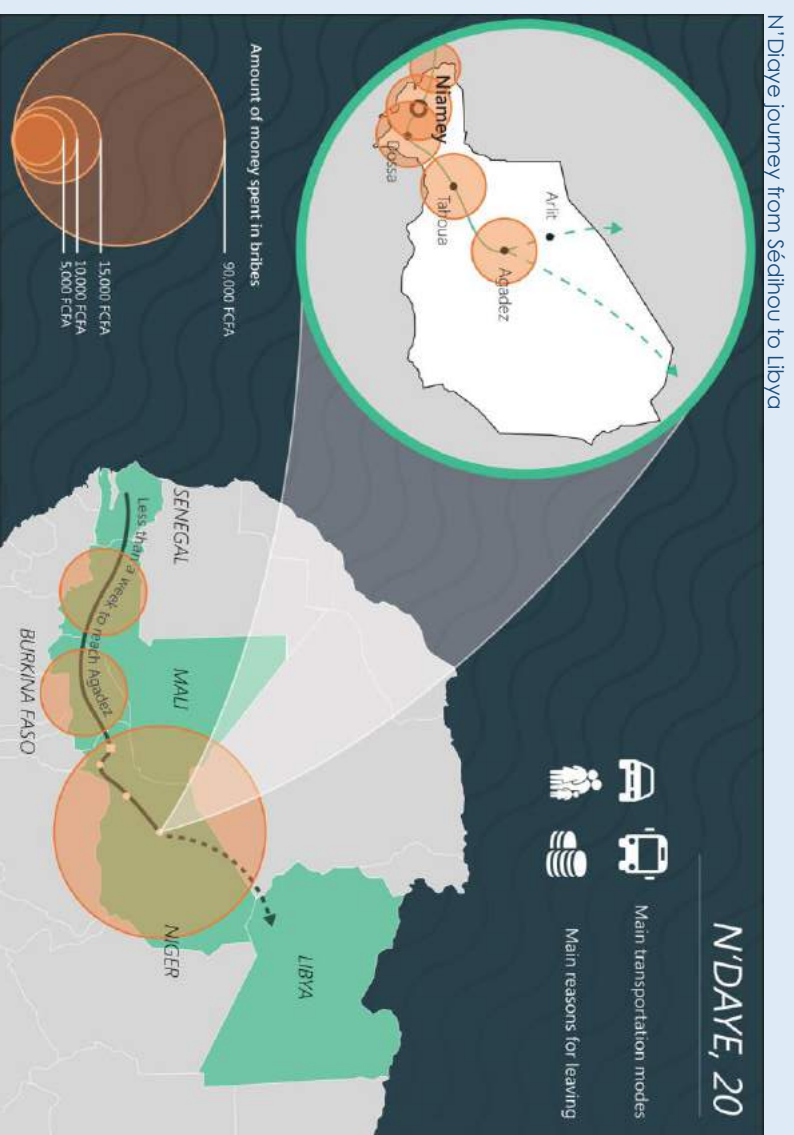
'Sending money back to my family and country.'



N'Diaye, a 20-year old native from Sédhiou in Casamance, had left his country less than a week before the research team interviewed him. When asked the reasons why he decided to leave his country, N'Diaye mentions the lack of economic opportunities and the fact that 'old European countries need young people.' N'Diaye is the fourth and last son of a relatively better-off family in his village. He went to a Quranic school and he thinks that it is 'impossible to find jobs in Dakar because those schools do not fit into the job market and because people from (Sédhiou) are not well accepted.' With a growth rate of 6.5% in 2015 and 6.6% expected for 2016, Senegal is now the second fastest growing economy in West Africa, behind Côte d'Ivoire. However, behind the rosy macroeconomic picture, poverty remains a major concern in Senegal, affecting 47% of the population in 2015. In particular, inequality and geographic disparities are still very pronounced, 'with almost 2 out of 3 poor in rural areas, especially in the south, versus one in four in Dakar' according to the World Bank.

After a first attempt in December 2015 through the coast, which was unsuccessful, N'Diaye decided to re-attempt, travelling through Mali to Niamey and on to Agadez. He is proud to say that he did not have to 'work along the way or save for the journey, as (he) already had enough money.' When asked if he is scared by the two deserts he has to cross, N'Diaye's answer is nuanced: 'We all know stories of people who are arrested, taken prisons, beaten and robbed. I know people who stayed stuck in Niger or Libya for months before going back to Sédhiou. They had lost everything. Other people tell stories about migrants who die at sea or in the desert. But what else can I do? My family is not the poorest and I am luckier than many who have to sell off their belongings to afford rice or oil sometimes, but there is nothing to do for me in Casamance. Why should I stay there?'

So far, N'Diaye has been lucky and paid fewer bribes than anticipated, made it to Agadez in less than a week, and easily found a good coxer, who introduced him and other migrants to a ghetto 'with honest people' and contacts to cross the Libyan border. He is scheduled to leave on Monday and hopes to see his idol Leo Messi play in Barcelona 'maybe next year.' In front of the money transfer agency where the interview took place, N'Diaye's last words are suddenly more serious and go beyond his individual case: 'I know that some people who are in Agadez today with me may die in the desert or maybe in the Mediterranean, but it is a risk I am ready to take because I will then be a better person and will also be able to send money back to my family and my country.'



Emmanuel, 38-year old grandfather of two from Monrovia (Liberia)

“The Chinese say that they will create thousands of jobs, but we have been waiting for decades”

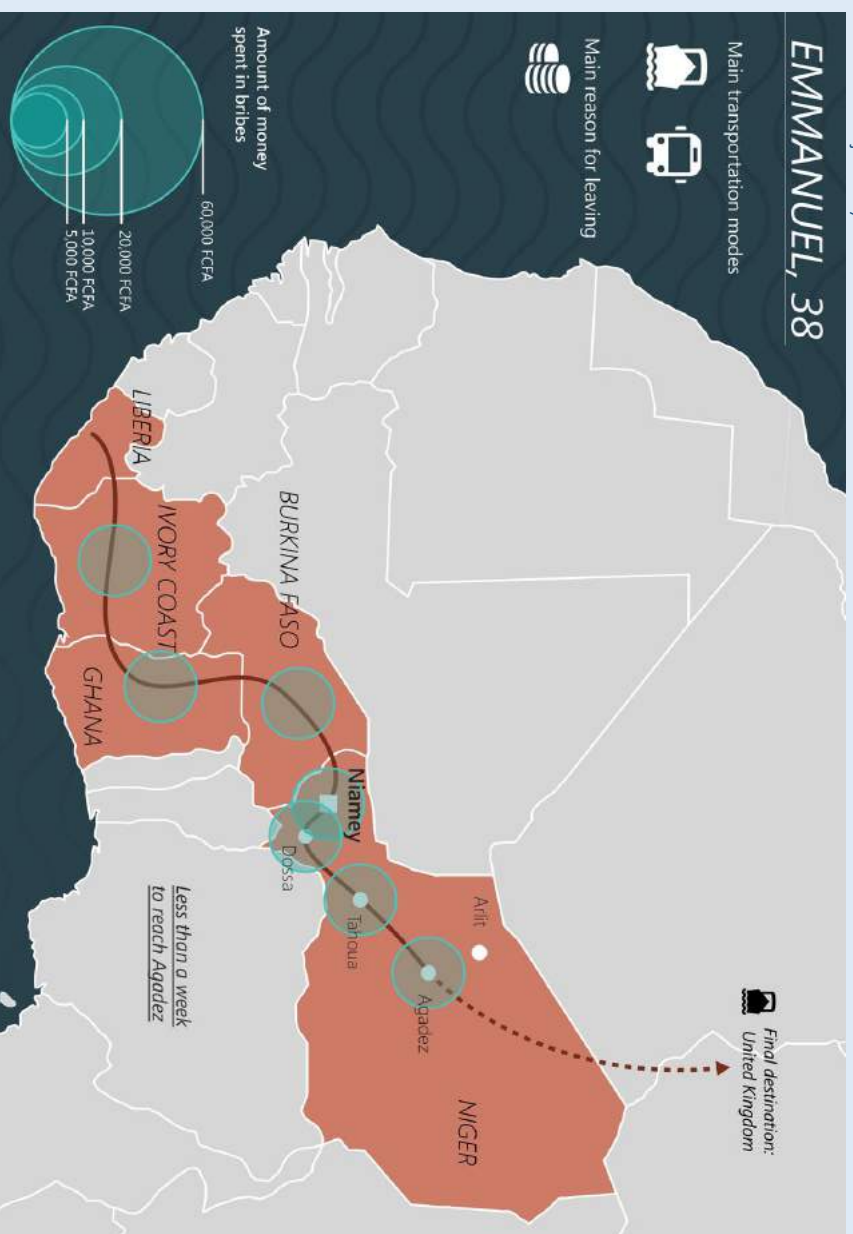
Emmanuel had been working as a day labourer with onion traders from Agadez for a couple of weeks at the time of the interview. According to his Nigerian employer, Emmanuel is ‘a hard-working man, respectful and humble that young Nigerian or migrants who cannot handle physical tasks.’ (Nigerien onion trader, Agadez) He comes from Buchanan, a port that lies 110km southeast of Monrovia (Liberia). His family was displaced when he was a teenager, during the first civil war (1989-1996) that killed 600,000 people: ‘My family was the first one to escape our village, when I was 12, before the fighting happens. Our neighbours were killed a few weeks later and I think we have been very lucky.’

Why is Emmanuel embarking on such a risky journey to Europe at 38, already grandfather of three? According to him, there are many reasons that explain his decision and his age was a strong factor: ‘My sons are old enough to care for their mother and I think it is easier to leave when you know that people at home do not depend on you.’ He had not really thought about leaving Buchanan before last Fall, when he was introduced to a smuggler, who guaranteed him success – ‘even if he also said that there were obstacles to overcome, like the desert, ocean (sic), and tunnel to the United Kingdom.’ He shared his final decision to migrate with his family, although his wife did not approve.

In Buchanan, corruption, unemployment, and illiteracy are still endemic, while shortage of electricity and water are common. Iron, rubber, and palm oil used to provide employment opportunities to the local unskilled youth, but things have changed with the civil war, the influx of displaced, and the collapse of the local economic system. According to Emmanuel, ‘the Chinese say they will create thousands of jobs in Buchanan, but we have been waiting for decades.’

After an exhausting seven-day trip across five countries, Emmanuel finally arrived in Agadez, where he had not initially planned to spend more than two or three days. He finally revised his opinion and may stay longer to get some rest and make some money selling onions on the market: ‘People here have been good to me.’

Emmanuel's journey from Buchanan to the UK



View of the bazaar in Agadez



Sahoura, 32-year old woman from Kantché (Niger)

“I heard the story of a woman from Daoutché who became very rich through Zakat in Alger”

Sahoura's journey from Kantché to Alger



Panoramic view of IOM transit and assistance centre in Agadez

In June 2014, the Nigerian Justice Minister and government spokesman made a strong statement: 'There are criminal networks from Kantche to Algeria who are organizing the trafficking of people who are then forced to do shameful things. These Nigeriens in Algeria have lost all dignity and are dishonouring our country.' Sahoura, a 32-year old woman coming is one of these women, even if she is not under the impression that she is dishonouring her country: according to her, she is only doing what she can to generate "enough money for her family to survive", through a seasonal migration from Kantche to Tamanrasset or Alger.

Kantche is a department from the province of Zinder that is particularly deprived, with the highest fertility rates (4.3), a strong density of population (170/km²), moderate to severe acute malnutrition, high unemployment rates, and poor economic opportunities. Traditionally, local households seek alternate seasonal sources of income during the dry season following harvest. This process, called the Exodus takes place between January and April but recent trends indicate longer periods of time (up to six months, when men travel to Algeria to find informal jobs as day labourers).

Sahoura's story is emblematic of another recent trend: the increasing feminisation of Nigerien's Exodus to Algeria, through the Kantche-Agadez-Arlit-Tamanrasset axis. Married to a Nigerian man, Sahoura divorced a few days before making the decision of travelling to Algeria. She left with three children, her 8-year old son and another two children 'from other women in the village (...) to make more money through begging and street work.' She had planned to stay in Alger for 6 to 9 months, but was caught by local authorities and repatriated in a convoy of migrants arrived at the IOM transit center in Agadez. The money from the trip came from different sources, mainly from networks in Tamanrasset and Alger, where Sahoura and her three 'children' spent respectively 3 weeks and 6 days. She also confessed having to sell family goods without telling her husband, the day before she left.

When asked if she sees herself as a victim of trafficking, Sahoura denies such a status, even if she paradoxically mentions aggressions and forced begging 'with the three children, who generally get more money than adults'. Begging can be financially rewarding, thanks to Zakat, a form of compulsory charity that is one of the five pillars of Islam and 'people in Algeria are good Muslims.' She has also worked as a prostitute, mainly in Alger, which was not forced, according to her, even if she was part of a 'network in the two cities.'

Sahoura eludes the question of her repatriation by saying that she 'wanted to come back anyway' and that she 'will not go back to Algeria, at least before a year or two.' Finally, when asked if she had heard of the 92 women and children from Matamèye (region of Kantché) who died in December 2013, her answer shows the determination of this new type of female migrants, regardless of dangers and information: 'Of course, we heard a lot of things about the children who died in the desert. Some of them may be true. But I also heard the story of a woman from Daoutché who became very rich through Zakat in Alger.' As synthesised by a representative from CRF in Agadez: 'it is all smoke and mirrors, smugglers exploit aspirations, dreams, and ignorance.'



Picture 4: IOM transit and assistance center, 2016

4. MOTIVATIONS AND AMBITIONS

'I was surprised, as always, by how easy the act of leaving was, and how good it felt. The world was suddenly rich with possibility'.
Jack Kerouac, *On the Road*

Migrant and host dreams for the future

In the context of Agadez, the overwhelming narrative provided by news articles and existing analyses is a clear one: migrants migrate due to a lack of opportunity, despite recognising the hardships the journey will pose. For example, Thomas Friedman, *New York Times* columnist, writes on 13 April 2006, of Agadez, 'Fleeing devastated agriculture, overpopulation and unemployment, migrants from a dozen countries gather here in caravans every Monday night and make a mad dash through the Sahara to Libya, hoping to eventually hop across the Mediterranean to Europe'. And indeed, a rapid look at the quantitative results from this research would confirm this narrative: when asked for the reason for their migration, 81% of respondents stated, 'for economic reasons, i.e. to find employment'. The next most common response was 'due to natural disasters', with 9% of respondents selecting this. The overlap between these two reasons is quite clear, as drought makes farmers and pastoralists, among others, unable to continue their economic activities.

Yet, a closer look at the situation highlights the oversimplified nature of this narrative, and data collected in the course of this research underlines two key elements complicating it.

First, the choice of migration as a solution to economic problems suggests, as Carling refers to it, a *place-bound* understanding of their problems. People perceive themselves as poor in their home countries – even when, relative to other migrants, they may not be (reported weekly household incomes prior to the migrants' journeys ranged from 0-100,000 CFA weekly). If they migrate, the rationale goes, they will be able to escape their poverty. But the images they have been given of a potential life elsewhere – and the trip there – do not correspond to reality.

Second, *aspirations* around the act of migration itself are clear amongst a number of those interviewed. The perception of migration itself as appealing will continue to draw migrants even if economic issues are resolved. These are particularly perpetuated by the use of social media and are apparent even amongst some return migrants. Carling writes:

When we seek to explore determinants of migration, aspirations play a role in two interconnected ways. First, people's general aspirations in life can be important factors that directly or indirectly affect migration. These could relate to happiness, wealth, security, or family formation, for instance. Second, we can use the term migration aspirations to describe the conviction that migration is desirable. In some cases, this conviction could reflect enthusiasm about migration; in other cases, migration is simply the lesser of two evils.³⁴

Return migrants are split in their view of migration. While a majority say they will never migrate again, a minority seem willing to keep trying, no matter the difficulties, confirming migration as an aspiration in and of itself. The difficulties of resuming a role in their place of origin after such a failed migration, as described here, may also play a role.

Migrants are not alone in their ambitions for a different life. Host community members in Agadez also wish to change their lives. Similarly, though, a disconnect appears between their expressed desires – skills they wish to learn, and so

³⁴ Jørgen Carling, "The Role of Aspirations in Migration" (Peace Research Institute Oslo, 2014), 2, http://s3.amazonaws.com/academia.edu.documents/34771461/Carling_2014_The_role_of_aspirations_in_migration_2014-07.pdf?AWSAccessKeyId=AKIAJ56TQJRTWSMTNPEA&Expires=1474558197&Signature=QO%2BZKc%2BwWqDQkErguHNuJLZw34s%3D&response-content-disposition=inline%3B%20filename%3DThe_role_of_aspirations_in_migration.pdf.

on – and the reality of the situation in Agadez currently. Here, the perceived impact of migration on the local economy gains in importance, as this forms the primary lens through which the host community considers possible opportunity.

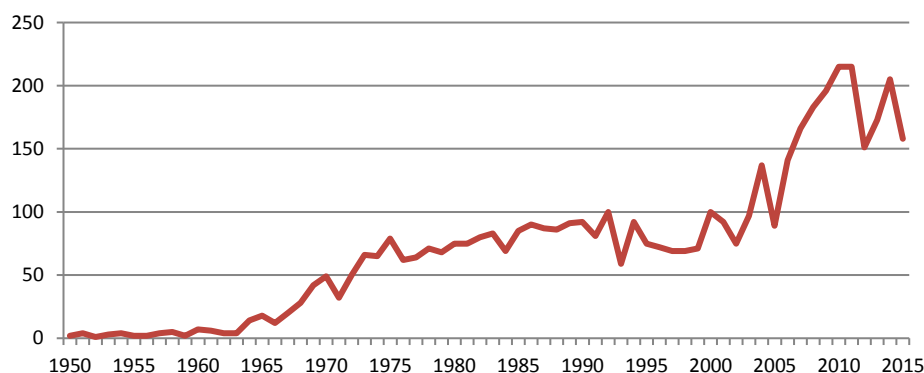
The next sections will therefore further nuance the economically-focused picture of migration in Agadez. It will consider what, in this context, the realities of the journey, and of failed migrations, means for those undertaking them and the organisations and governments wishing to support them. It will also explore how this migration impacts hosts community ambitions.

Why migrate? Nuancing the economic pressure model

While, undeniably, economics plays a key role on the decision to migrate, for many this explanation is insufficient. Numerous studies have highlighted the fact that it is not the poorest populations who migrate and that there exists no clear correspondence between the economic “push” and appeal of Europe “pull” factors.³⁵ Brachet underlines two key ideas on this front, namely, that attraction – the appeal of the “other” – is a stronger force than the “repulsion” of poverty, but also that it is crucial to go beyond this mechanical understanding of migratory fluxes.³⁶ Both push and pull factors are felt by the populations who remain and those who migrate: numerous migrants interviewed, for example, reported clear understanding of the dangers of their trip, and economic and social challenges they would face in their destination countries.

This is highlighted by the impact – or rather, lack thereof – of development projects in Africa on reducing migration. While these do not necessarily lead to development, they serve as an interestingly lens through which to approach an economically- and development- focused approach to “solving” migration. Over the past 50 years, the number of development projects in Africa, whether infrastructure-related, investment-related or other, has increased drastically. The graph below, notwithstanding the recent dip, highlights this using the World Bank as an example.

Figure 7 – Number of World Bank projects and operations in Africa approved, per year³⁷



Simultaneously, migration flows from Africa have continued to increase drastically. Organisations have also been conducting more and more awareness campaigns, attempting to spread the word on the challenges of migration. The combination of development programmes and awareness campaigns, amongst others, are based on the premise that people will make rational choices – and when people are (1) given information that suggests that migration will be dangerous and (2) supported by alternatives at home, they will be much less likely to migrate. In that case, awareness campaigns and economic programming successfully leading to development would end migration – yet, clearly, they have not. Further examining how migration is viewed – and what drives it – is therefore crucial to providing more effective alternatives.

³⁵ Wihtol De Wenden, “L'Europe Des Migrations,” *La Documentation Française*, 2001.

³⁶ Brachet, “Un Désert Cosmopolite. Migrations de Transit Dans La Région d'Agadez (Sahara Nigérien).”

³⁷ World Bank list of Projects & Operations, accessible here: <http://data.worldbank.org/data-catalog/projects-portfolio>

Migration as a tool: escaping place-bound poverty

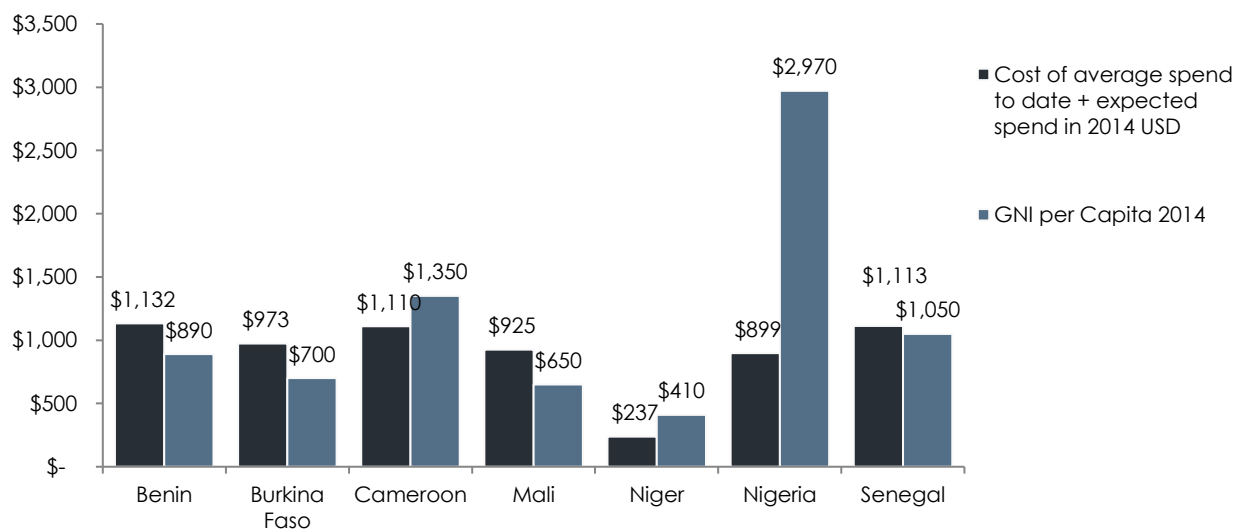
Nigeria and Niger were countries of origin with the lowest rates of people migrating 'for economic reasons, i.e. to find employment' as one of the main reasons for their displacement. Respectively, 'only' 74% and 69% of migrants interviewed gave that answer.³⁸

Economics clearly cannot be denied as a driver of migration – yet, from an economic perspective, migration is not actually the most logical response:

Improbable economics of migration

From a purely economic perspective, for all those who do not reach their final destination – and even some who do – migration is an economic sinkhole, a lost gamble.

Figure 8 – Average total expected expenditures by migrants (in 2014 USD) vs. 2014 GNI per capita³⁹



The above graph considers the average expected cost reported by migrants from different countries, compared to the average Gross National Income per Capita in their country (converted at the 2014 CFA -> USD rate in order to provide a comparable figure). In many cases, the expected cost of the trip is actually *more* than the GNI per Capita for one year in that country. For those who successfully arrive at destination, the trade-off may be worth it, as they can expect higher earnings at destination (which are frequently sent back home, in turn fuelling more desire for migration).

However, interviewed migrants on the return – admittedly a biased case, as most had 'failed' at their migratory journey – are now returning to a home where many have nothing, having sold their belongings, and therefore given up their means of earning money, to fund their trip in the first place.

'I sold my motorbike, my computer, and used some savings earned through tutoring sessions and my scholarship for my studies [to fund my trip]'. Male Focus group discussion, returning migrants, Agadez

'I sold my two sewing machines for \$1000 [to fund my trip]'. Male Focus group discussion, returning migrants, Agadez

This additionally highlights the fact that the migrants who can afford to make this trip are not the poorest of the poor. This confirms the theory that poverty as a driver for migration may be, in some cases at least, a relative one rather than absolute. Therefore, purely economic approaches to decreasing migration by reducing poverty will not be fully successful.

³⁸ While a few others had lower rates the sample was too small to draw conclusions

³⁹ Calculated by a) using the middle of a spend range when spend was given in range rather than number format and b) only using those respondents for whom there was complete spend to date and expected spend on rest of trip information. N=29 for Mali respondents, more than 30 for all others

The unfavourable economics of the migration trip, and the fact that the poorest residents are actually not the only ones migrating, suggests that something further must be going on. Carling found for Cape Verde that 'If we disregard extreme cases of survival migration, poverty-driven migration does not reflect absolute levels of poverty, but rather, that people *think of themselves* as poor. Such a perception is related to aspirations, imagining a better life than the present one. When they see migration as a potential solution, as an instrument, it reflects an understanding of their poverty as *place-bound*. [...] Consequently, people saw 'poverty' as the fundamental cause of migration, despite Cape Verde's relative prosperity'.⁴⁰

In this particular case, this suggests that even when migrants report economic reasons as the primary reason for their migration, other factors must be taken into account. This is crucial to understanding both (a) how to support migrants during and after trips, and (b) how to support them at home so that they do not feel obligated to make the trip.

Migration as an aspiration: the lure of the possible

Returning migrants interviewed are split in their view of migration: while a majority say never again, and would recommend the same to their compatriots, a strong minority either state that they would try it again, or at least encourage others to attempt the journey.

Carling's use of the term *migration aspirations* is useful in understanding this: rather than bringing one to a goal, as when migration is operationalised as a tool to escape poverty, here appears a myth created around the act of migration itself.

Unsuccessful attempts at de-mystification of migration

IOM, along with other key stakeholders in Agadez, Niger, and surrounding countries, have undertaken a de-mystification of migration, publishing information about the realities of the trip and the challenges faced by migrants upon arrival. Migrants interviewed reported receiving some of this information, yet continuing with their trip. Several eventualities must therefore be considered:

- First, that too few migrants are receiving this information, or that they are receiving the wrong information. Indeed, several migrants reported that they wish they had received more or different information about the trip prior to its start.

'The information which I would like to have, is how to make a safe and legal migration'. Focus group discussion, migrants travelling North, Agadez

'I wanted to have the real information about migration before beginning, through the radio or TV channels'. Focus group discussion, migrants travelling North, Agadez

- Second, that the negative information presented is insufficient to overcome the appeal of positive information presented by friends and others, or disbelieved.

'We can never have credible information on the migratory phenomenon as it is a very complicated system with regards to our States [...]. I always hear talk around migration – but there is no solution for these migrants. If you have decided to go, this information can be discouraging'. Focus group discussion, migrants travelling North, Agadez

- Finally, that migrants are choosing to disregard the information presented as they feel they have no other choice.

'I do not look for information on migration as I know it is a question of life or death, as many of my compatriots have lost their lives while migrating'. Focus group discussion, migrants travelling North, Agadez

⁴⁰ Carling, "The Role of Aspirations in Migration." p. 2

This is confirmed by the fact that the migrants are in fact on the move – despite the fact that 77% of migrants stated that their ideal future would be to live and work in their place of origin, and 14% to stay home and take care of their family.

Social media: building misleading images of successful migration

Samuel Hall research on *The Youth-Employment-Migration Nexus* in Somalia found that ‘Social media and networks have contributed to widening the chasm between the image and reality of migration abroad; while not confronted with the dangers of the migration paths there or the challenges in finding employment and housing, youth see pictures of fun activities and sights that do not exist in Somaliland and Puntland’.⁴¹ In 2011, research on the topic conducted primarily in West Africa highlighted that ‘Concerning ethnoscapes, it is worth mentioning that images of Europe as a paradise are often confirmed and reinforced by translocal interactions between migrants in Europe and their communities in their countries of emigration. Although life in Europe is not paradise-like for many Africans, they frequently remit biased information about ‘the good life’ to their family and friends, thereby strengthening the connection between migration and social prestige’.⁴²

Indeed, a number of migrants interviewed in the course of this research, from varying West African countries, reported social media as a strong incentive for migration, by presenting attractive images of life abroad, as well as allowing those abroad to more easily ‘recruit’ their friends to come.

‘I had the idea to leave through social networks. Each time I connected myself, my friends already in Italy sent me photos, and this motivated me to begin my trip’. Focus group discussion, migrants travelling North, Arlit

‘My friend is in Italy and sends us his photos on WhatsApp and Facebook, well-dressed. From there, the desire to become like him began to inspire me, especially when I saw the conditions in which he is able to support his parents’. Male focus group discussion, migrants travelling North, Agadez

‘The idea of this trip came to me through a friend, who left our country a long time ago, we speak on Facebook. She would tell me about her life in Algeria and her work [...] My friend has promised to help me once I arrive in Algeria’.” Female focus group discussion, migrants travelling North, Agadez

No matter the awareness campaigns conducted by organisations – social media offers an equally, if not more, visible view of what migration entails – and makes it easier to embark on.

Migration as the obvious solution: ease of organisation drawing migration

The ability of social media to connect people living far away and encourage migration (as potential migrants can be assured of a potential job when they reach destination or a place to stay) plays into a broader trend which key informants identified as actually not just facilitating but drawing migration: the ease with which trips can be organised.

Agadez itself has been a centre for migration for hundreds of years. Desert caravans used to pass there before crossing the Sahara. Recently, however several trends have facilitated this movement significantly:

- **The existence of social media has facilitated the organisation of migration journeys.** Potential migrants can easily connect not just with those who have made the trip, but also transporters, lodgers and more.
- The fall of Libyan leader Ghaddafi in 2011 reportedly drastically increased the supply of Toyota Hilux vehicles available to transporters (pick-ups can more easily fit a large number of migrants / vehicle than similarly sized cars). In combination with the increase in possible drivers with the decline in tourism in Agadez, **the price of migration went down:** ‘Migration in Agadez is driven by both supply and demand. Since 2011, the availability of multiple Hilux (cars) every week, and sometimes everyday, attracted many more migrants than before. You can even observe some interesting economies of scale in the smuggling business. It is a perfectly rational and

⁴¹ Samuel Hall, “Investing in Somali Youth Exploring the Youth-Employment-Migration Nexus in Somaliland and Puntland,” December 8, 2015, <http://samuelhall.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/YOUTH-EMPLOYMENT-MIGRATION-RESEARCH1.pdf>, p. 36

⁴² Joris Schapendonk, “Turbulent Trajectories: Sub-Saharan African Migrants Heading North” (Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen, 2011), p. 84

deregulated industry!' (GIZ Regional Coordinator, Agadez)

- **Structural limitations around governmental capacity to address migration** even as numbers increase. Even as EUROL sends support to Agadez, the number of migrants has increased drastically.⁴³ Putting aside corruption issues and the efficacy of border guards and other patrol forces in stopping migration, the sheer scope of migration means that migrants are less likely to be stopped by them – which in turn, by making migration easier, contributes to a self-perpetuating cycle.

Life after migration: what next for returning migrants?

Migrants who return home after a “failed” migration generally expressed one of two attitudes: the desire to try again (less frequent, and, as discussed above, based on migration aspirations rather than purely economic reasoning), or, at least when interviewed, a desire to never migrate again. Three key points emerged from conversations with returning migrants and key informants from organisations working with them:

- The challenges of returning to face relatives who had funded your trip with empty hands;
- Health concerns and traumas caused by physical and sexual abuses;
- A professional “fresh start” at home.

Failed social expectations

In many cases, migration is funded – willingly or not (key informants recounted instances of migrants having ‘borrowed’ money from family members who were unaware of the fact) – by migrants’ family members. There is therefore an expectation that this money will be recouped upon the migrants’ arrival and employment abroad – which can prove problematic when migrants return home empty-handed, leaving people having endured a physically and mentally difficult journey without a strong social network. ‘I do not think I will be welcomed’, responded one interviewee, ‘as I return home and do not bring anything’, (*Male Focus group discussion, returning migrants, Agadez*). Another stated ‘My family will call me incapable. In my family we always mock those who have failed’ (*Male focus group discussion, returning migrants, Agadez*). In cases where migrants took money to go, return may be even more difficult. However, most returning migrants interviewed thought they would be welcomed by their families despite the unprofitable nature of their migrations: ‘I think I will be welcomed by my family, because I am alive.’ (*Male focus group discussion, returning migrants, Agadez*)

The failure to reach expectations on a social front has a second key impact: in addition to possibly making it more difficult for returned migrants to reintegrate into their home, it can also be a force of re-migration. In her work on Afghan returnees and deportees, Nassim Majidi found that: ‘Migration is a collective endeavour, with obligations and expectations that must be fulfilled in order to provide the necessary conditions for a decent life for all. Whether being seen as resourceful, or ashamed of having failed, deportees’ return is an individual and collective failure: coming back with empty pockets, having not fulfilled the migration plan – often a collectively financed plan – they live a failure that only adds to the initial plans for migration. This sense of failure is most often addressed through re-migration, as the only way out’.⁴⁴

Health concerns

The previous section identified some of the health problems faced by migrants caused by physical and sexual violence. Returning migrants interviewed also noted some concerning physical and mental health symptoms more generally:

‘This trip has caused much fatigue, now my entire body hurts as though I had been hit. We have trouble sleeping as we are too tired, and cannot concentrate with the sadness and deception of the trip [...] Sometimes I want to cry’. Male case study, returning migrant, Agadez

‘I cannot sleep, nor can I concentrate’. Male case study, returning migrant, Arlit

⁴³ Kill with Marina

⁴⁴ Nassim Majidi, “Managing Migration Remotely: Return, Reintegration and Rebordering in Afghanistan: L,” 2016, <http://www.theses.fr/s50795>. p. 139

Recent research on returning migrants and health has highlighted that 'migrants often return home less healthy than when they left'.⁴⁵ This is as 'the health status of returning migrants reflects the accumulation of health consequences related to the conditions of the migration process, including the return phase. The health of returnees is closely related to the social determinants of and risk factors for health, as well as to immigration and labour policies influencing the migrants access to health services'.⁴⁶

Finding a future at home

Most of those migrants who did not aspire to an immediate return migration stated that they wished to create a future for themselves at home. Achieving this, however, may be easier said than done. Migrants often sell their belongings, including those necessary for income generation, as well as land to fund their migration. Key informants also highlighted the difficulties of resuming one's place in a business. Returning migrants may, for example, find themselves hierarchically below those who used to be their underlings.⁴⁷ For both those who had migration aspirations and those who saw it as a medium for escape, finding a future at home will require a new approach.

'My destination is my country, to start activities again there, as my failure is part of my destiny'. Male focus group discussion, returning migrants, Agadez

'Once I have returned home I want to continue to work in carpentry, and be satisfied with the little I earn. Better the suffering of your own country, I have realized that migrating is not a solution for our poverty but rather source of our degradation'. Male focus group discussion, returning migrants, Agadez

Host community ambitions

Most host community members interviewed reported wishing to learn new employment-skills (88% of females interviewed and 70% of males interviewed), suggesting that existing vocational training programmes for migrants and host community members present a strong approach to supporting the host community. When asked what skills they wish to learn, two key points stand out:

- **By far the most frequently mentioned domain of interest is "commerce"**. Of those 357 host community members responding that they wish to learn a new skill, a full 170 (45% of women and 48% of men) gave "commerce" as the response. However, behind the word "commerce" itself, it would probably be misleading to assume that survey respondents want to work in the distribution sector; by contrast, *commercial* activities are multi-form and do not refer to any particular skills; in other words, learning "commercial" skills is actually synonymous of "making money" or "finding a job" – and not of actual skills or capacity development. More fundamentally, such an absence of determination shows that most respondents: 1) have an incomplete representation of the local labour market (supply, demand, skills gaps, opportunities); and 2) do not have clear professional expectations or aspirations. In the context of Agadez, answers like "commerce" or "business" are finally indicative of individual disempowerment and professional deprivation.
- **Likewise, most of the answers given reflect existing professions and jobs in Agadez**. Other than the very prominent "commerce", the more frequent answers related to artisanal work, financial services, transportation and skilled trades, highlighting a certain understanding of the reality of today's labour market in Agadez, as *"there are traditional jobs, like agriculture or manufacture, there are more modern ones, but both require skills and it is important that the youth realise that here"* (ANESJ, Director). However, when compared to the reality of Agadez, these aspirations present two difficulties from a programmatic perspective: firstly, they are centred around activities which, other than 'artisanal work', are generally related to the migrant economy, and therefore a) of questionable legality in some cases and b) given the economic impact measured here, limited in potential; secondly, they are centred around existing activities in the area – which struggle to provide sufficient income for those families currently engaging in them.

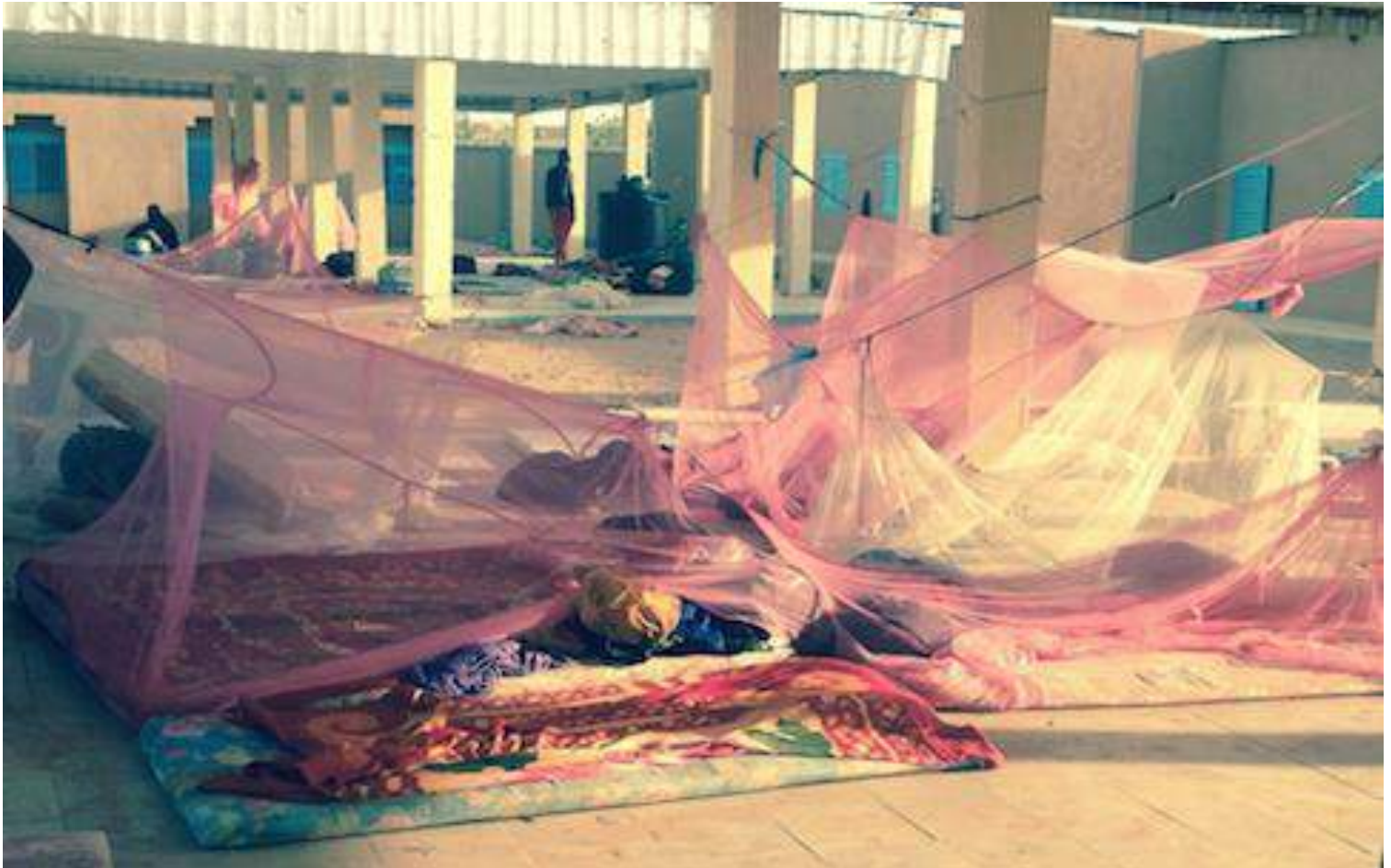
⁴⁵ Anita A. Davies et al., "The Dynamics of Health and Return Migration," *PLoS Med* 8, no. 6 (2011): e1001046.

⁴⁶ *ibid*

⁴⁷ COOPI interview

Given current efforts to curb irregular migration and support migrants in their country of origin, programming directed towards activities that depend on migration to be financially viable are not practical. The discrepancy between what beneficiaries perceive as the most appealing skills to learn and which sectors have the most potential in their locality is not new. Host community members have clear ambitions to learn new skills; the domains they wish to engage in are not, however, the most viable in the local context.

Picture 4: IOM transit center in Agadez





Picture 5: Former tourist information center at the Agadez airport, 2016

5. ECONOMIC EXCHANGES

*'Almost everyone admits it would be hard, if not impossible, to meaningfully curb smuggling in Agadez. In one of the world's poorest countries, and in a town that has no other substantial industries, smuggling is a vital financial lifeline for many local people.'*⁴⁸

The Guardian, 9 November 2015

Agadez' migrant-host economic relationships

The development of an economy of migration in Agadez has received attention from the media, academics and stakeholders who seek to understand transit migration flows and hubs on journeys from origin to destination countries. The risk is that a limited understanding of the situation in hubs like Agadez may lead to hasty conclusions. Adopting a local lens and surveying local and migrant communities, one finds that there are beneficial economic relationships that are sustaining a local economy. Yet this falls short of constituting a real, stable economy that can be expanded and projected upon for future growth, *unless* this migration is accepted and the nature of interventions is reconceptualised. This chapter dives into the economic role of migrants and locals in Agadez and opens the way to discuss necessary adjustments to the way stakeholders plan development interventions on the migration route, including in Agadez.

Articles and reports published recently tend to describe the economy of Agadez as being in a state of "re-conversion" to migration-related activities, signalling a structural economic change. The migrant economy, in a nutshell, is perceived to be replacing the shrinking tourism sector due to the insecurity prevalent in the area. Stakeholders highlight the need for more "granular" data (*Social Economy Officer, European Union*) to improve targeted programming and address specific challenges linked to the transitory nature of migration in Agadez.

Following extensive field research in Agadez, this chapter contributes to addressing this gap and understanding the economy of migration by providing three nuances to inform recommendations for future programming:

- First, the economic impact of migrants on the local economy is limited by the transitory nature of migration in Agadez. Many migrants move on from Agadez as quickly as possible and prioritise future expenses by saving money while in Agadez. While migration flows into Agadez bring in money, there is no investment into the local economy. Migrants' economic impact is primarily felt in sectors that sustain migration patterns, notably transportation, lodgings and banking/money transfers.
- Second, migrants themselves, particularly non-Nigeriens, have very limited direct involvement in the local labour market in Agadez.
- Third, locals benefit from the economic interaction and from migrants' presence – but in a temporary and limited capacity. Migration is of transitory and unstable nature, and the economy is vulnerable to the politicisation of this zone, thereby preventing a stronger economy.

This chapter provides a nuanced picture that goes back to the root of what economic impact means. In Agadez, whether migrants provide an economic added value or not is questionable. On the one hand, migrants sustain and create economic demand in specific sectors. On the other hand, although locals benefit from migrants' consumption in Agadez, it is at the expense of the development of a formal local economy. As a result, two key terms prevail to define the economy of migration in Agadez: transitory and temporary.

⁴⁸ Patrick Kingsley, "On the Road in Agadez: Desperation and Death along a Saharan Smuggling Route," *The Guardian*, November 9, 2015, sec. World news, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/nov/09/on-the-road-in-agadez-desperation-and-death-along-a-saharan-smuggling-route>.

Background and the textbook labour market model

According to the traditional textbook labour market model, migration affects the local economy through the increase in the supply of labour in different sectors of the economy.⁴⁹ As migrants enter the local economy, the wages in certain sectors drops, encouraging local workers to move away from those sectors and into other sectors in which they have a comparative advantage. For instance, mining is a key economic sector in the vicinity of Agadez.⁵⁰ If many migrants willing to work for a lower wage join the labour market in Agadez, more locals might then turn to mining, a sector for which they have skills, as a way to generate income.

Figure 9 – Traditional textbook labour market model



In this textbook model, the net impact of migration would ultimately depend on the degree of “substitutability” between migrants and local workers. If migrants and local workers have similar characteristics and skills, migration is likely to have a strong impact on the host labour market, leading to a decrease in wages in a more competitive job market. This could be the case in Agadez where both migrants and locals tend to have low levels of education. The analysis of demographic and socioeconomic characteristics from the survey conducted in Agadez for this chapter suggests that over one third of migrants and locals have no schooling (32% of migrants and 43% of locals) and just a few have tertiary education (4% of migrants and 2% of locals). Moreover, many of the migrants (29%) come from other parts of Niger and share a language and cultural background with locals.

However, this model is limited in the context of Agadez: most migrants in Agadez are ‘transitory’ – meaning that they use Agadez as a transit point on their way to another location. The city has been a key hub for transitory migration for many years. IOM estimates suggest that in 2016, a record of 320,000 migrants should pass through Agadez.⁵¹ These transitory migrants tend to stay in Agadez for just a brief period.

There is substantial evidence showing that temporariness has key implications for the economic choices of migrants.⁵² Indeed, the degree of involvement of migrants with the host community depends on the planned length of stay. Close to 70% of migrants interviewed for this project said that they planned to stay for a month or less in Agadez. As such, they have little incentive to integrate into the local labour market. Those who engage in work do so nearly always with the primary purpose of generating more income to support onward migration.

In this context, then, we would expect that most of the impact of transitory migration on the host economy is driven by the impact of that migration on the demand side. Transitory migrants can increase the demand for certain goods and services, which for simplicity we will refer to as ‘migration related goods and services.’ Examples of migration related goods and services in the context of Agadez include water, food, transportation, communications, money transfers and lodging, among others. The increase in demand for these particular goods and services should lead

⁴⁹ George J. Borjas, *Immigration Economics* (Harvard University Press, 2014), https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=YhtuAwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PP8&dq=Borjas+2014&ots=2zlyyTpV_X&sig=qSBIT7L5waGXAu0iUvF9Bkbgapl.

⁵⁰ Rasmus Kløcker Larsen and Christiane Alzouma Mamosso, “Aid with Blinkers: Environmental Governance of Uranium Mining in Niger,” *World Development* 56 (2014): 62–76. (2014)

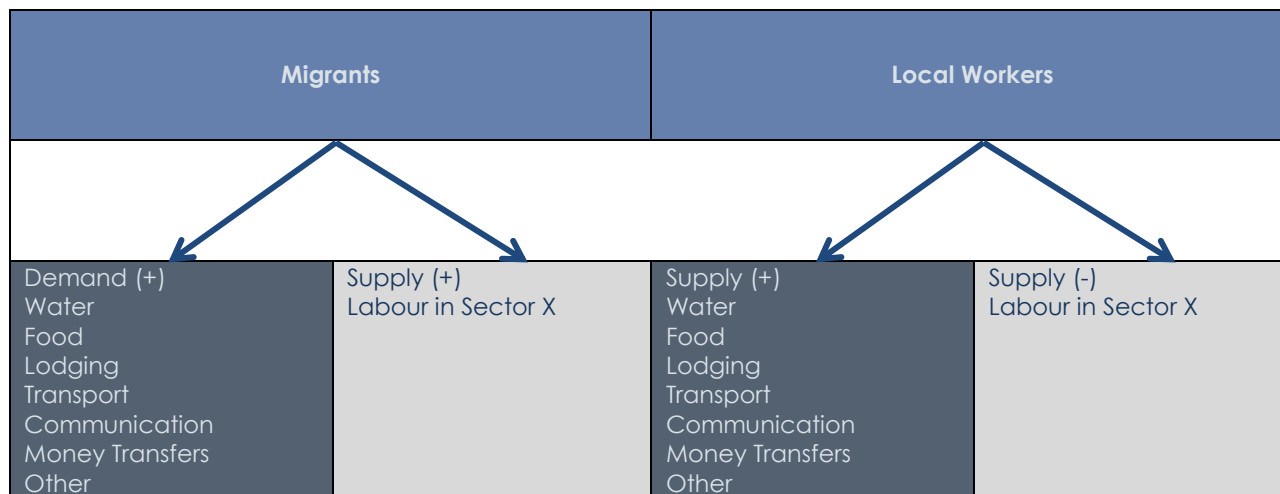
⁵¹ Samuel Hall estimate, based on IOM-DTM. See in particular: “IOM Records Over 60,000 Migrants Passing Through Agadez, Niger between February and April 2016,” *International Organization for Migration*, May 27, 2016, <http://www.iom.int/news/iom-records-over-60000-migrants-passing-through-agadez-niger-between-february-and-april-2016>.

⁵² Christian Dustmann and Joseph-Simon Görlach, “The Economics of Temporary Migrations,” *Journal of Economic Literature* 54, no. 1 (2016): 98–136.

to an increase in the price of those good and therefore encourage more locals to participate in the provision of these goods and services.

The discussion below explores each of these possible impacts of transitory migrants on the local economy. The sample is composed of local workers, defined as Nigerien long-term residents of Agadez, as well as migrants, defined as those who do not live permanently in Agadez and do not intend to settle there. Nigerien nationals passing by Agadez on their way to another location are considered transitory migrants for the purpose of this study.

Figure 10 – Possible impact of transitory migrants on the economy of Agadez



Given that the focus is exclusively on the impact of transitory migration, we expect the blue rectangles in Figure 10 to be the sectors where most of the impact actually occurs. The light blue rectangles represent the possible substitution in the labour market between local workers and migrants but, as explained above, this substitution is less likely with transitory migrants.

Self-limits on expenditures: demand of migration-related goods and services by migrants

The transitory migration in Agadez is primarily expected to affect the economy of Agadez via the demand side. That is, migrants increase the demand for certain goods and services. Respondents were asked to report expenditures in water, food, transportation, money transfers, communication, lodging and others in Agadez since arrival.

Migrants reported spending on average a total of CFA 18,993 in these categories during their stay in Agadez. The median expenditure is lower at CFA 12,950 with a range that goes from CFA 4,550 (25th percentile) to CFA 28,200 (75th percentile). CFA 18,993 is close to USD 32.29, which might not seem like a large sum, but it is a substantial amount in a country with an annual GDP per capita of just USD 427 for the 2011-2015 period.⁵³

The main category of expenditure for all migrants is food (41% of total) followed by communications (25%) and lodging (13%) (Table 4). This is expected, as food is an essential need, while communication is optional and many transit migrants sleep at the bus stations in Agadez. One would expect water to play a more central role in the expenditures of transitory migrants, but there are several charities providing free water to migrants in Agadez.

Qualitative interviews allow to deepen this analysis by highlighting another important parameter, reported twice by focus group participants – spending too much may be perceived as an external sign of wealth: *'I try not to spend too much in Agadez for two reasons: firstly, I have already spent much more than planned during my trip from Mali and we have to give money to checkpoints and transporters, so I need to save money, as this is not the end of my journey/ Secondly, I don't want other people [migrants and smuggler]] to think that I have money to spend on non-essential items'* (Ibrahim, 24, Mali).

⁵³ World Bank 2016

Table 4 – Expenditure of transit migrants in Agadez

	Total expenditures (CFA)	Percentage of total (%)	Migrants who plan to spend money on* (%)
Lodging	2,474	13	--
Communication	4,748	25	81
Water	1,106	6	83
Other drinks	1,049	6	62
Food	7,820	41	93
Non-food items	578	3	29
Transport	361	3	32
Money transfers	568	3	0
Other	289	2	--
Total	18,993	--	--

Note: Sample size is 264. * In Column 3, multiple answers are possible. Does not sum to 100%

Table 5 – Items bought by migrants while in Agadez

Variable	Percentage of migrants who bought these* (%)
Water	83
Rice	82
Bread	74
Millet	36
Corn	16
Sorghum	16
Onion	13

Note: Sample size is 400. * Multiple answers are possible, does not sum to 100%.

Gender differences in expenditures

Non-Nigerien females report slightly higher expenditures in Agadez than non-Nigerien males. However, the relative importance of spending categories is similar across genders. The main difference is money transfers, which seem to only be relevant for female migrants. Such a significant difference on money transfers can be attributed to two distinct factors, according to focus group discussions with migrants:

- Male migrants tend to under-report expenditures on money transfers, as they are reluctant to disclose this type of information.
- Female migrants are less likely to carry money with them, as they are perceived as more vulnerable to robbers and thefts by their community of origin. Therefore, money transfers are systematically used during their journey.

Table 6 - Expenditure of transitory non-Nigerien migrants by gender (CFA)

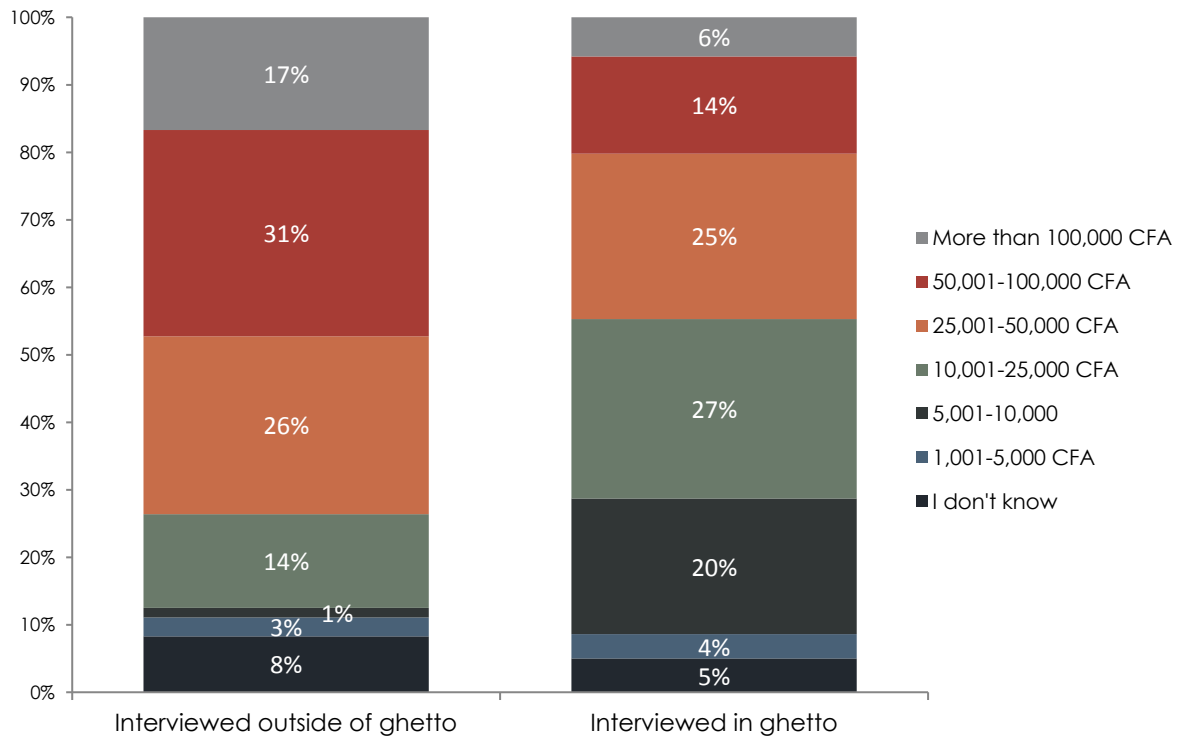
	Males	Females
Lodging	3,701	2,123
Communication	7,403	6,019
Water	1,157	970
Other drinks	1,334	2,117
Food	7,553	9,434
Non-food items	714	700
Transport	573	517
Money transfers	0	2,830
Other	337	551
Total	22,772	25,260
Sample	118	53

Food, housing, and transportation

When considering migrants' impact on the economy, and then income-generation they represent for host community members both their earning potential and their spending habits were examined. Migrants' spending habits are not as limited as their earning potential; however, these remain constrained to specific sectors and actors, in particular food, housing, and transportation.

One key factor seems to divide migrants' spending habits: whether or not they are staying in a ghetto while in Agadez. Of the non-Nigerien male migrants interviewed in Agadez, the expected expenditures – and therefore earn for the local community – were much higher for those migrants living outside the ghetto, as can be seen in Figure 11:

Figure 11 – Non-Nigerien male migrants' expected expenditures until departure from Agadez (excluding costs going towards)



Those who stay in the ghetto do pay at least a lump sum / daily sum to the ghetto chief for housing. They may also depend on them for the purchase of food.

'I do not leave the ghetto [...] so I do not have economic exchanges with the local population. [...] The other migrants and I join together to prepare food through the migrant "representative". Others who know the city go into the city to eat'. Mixed focus group discussion, migrants travelling North, Agadez.

'I have had several economic exchanges with storeowners nearby without any problems. I feel in security here but still fear the police. I do not know any area here apart from the ghetto'. Mixed focus group discussion, migrants travelling North, Agadez.

Others try to limit their spending in Agadez even further, by either (a) staying at the bus stations for housing (free) or (b) continuing straight through Agadez to northward destinations.

'I did not stay in Agadez, as I had paid my trip through Arlit, and I just had a small stop in Agadez during the night. I was so tired I did not leave the station'. Focus group discussion, migrants travelling North, Arlit

'I took the bus straight to Arlit. We arrived in Agadez around 10pm and left for Arlit at 4am so I have no idea of life in Agadez'. Focus group discussion, migrants travelling North, Arlit

Several migrants did note that they tend to be cited higher prices than non-migrants along the entire trip – making them potentially more attractive customers to the local businesses.

'The road was very difficult, everything we look for they double the price, even water in a bag that costs 25 CFA they sell it to us for 50 CFA'. Focus group discussion, migrants travelling North, Arlit

As with the food and housing, several patterns can be identified around transportation expenditures in Agadez: those who have paid through the end of their trip already and those paying this lump sum in Agadez. The final destination of this money – Agadez or elsewhere – is therefore not clear. Based on the migrants' responses, the bus companies and their owners stand to gain the most in the trip to Agadez: 92% of non-Nigeriens and 40% of Nigeriens had taken a bus at some point during their travels to Agadez. For the trip afterwards, the most frequently planned modes of transport are cars (67%) and boats (46%).

Certainly, some transporters – as detailed in the host community survey – are earning good money from this business. Others, who may be part of larger networks, make less income from transporting migrants. Therefore, although the migratory flows through Agadez have been increasing drastically over the past five years, it cannot be assumed that this will lead to a corresponding increase of income for the population of Agadez – and indeed, the results of this research suggest that it has not.

Waiting for gold: the money transfer business

The financial sector in Agadez, however, which has undergone a huge expansion with the increased number of migrants passing through, is not in this grey zone; migrants receive money through Western Union and banks.

While ten years ago there were no ATMs in Agadez, presently there are 14 bank agencies and hundreds of money-transfer agencies. Many of those migrants who do spend time in Agadez are simply waiting for money to come through one of these.⁵⁴ In 2000, Western Union opened its first agency in Agadez.⁵⁵ Today, the Western Union website lists eight agent locations in Agadez.

'I do not know how long I will stay – it depends on when my father will have money to send me as he too does not have this money on hand and must look for it'. Male focus group discussion, migrants heading northwards, Agadez

'I spent 48 hours at the train station waiting for my parents to send money to continue'. Male focus group discussion, migrants heading northwards, Agadez

'I plan to spend 600000 CFA to finance the remainder of my trip. At the moment I do not have this sum with me, but I am waiting on a brother who is abroad who has promised to send it to me'. Male focus group discussion, migrants heading northwards, Agadez

One further distinction should be made when discussing income-generating activities based on the migrants' presence and passage through Agadez: the legal nature of said activities. In an effort designed to combat human trafficking, the Government of Niger passed a law de facto making migration – and activities related to it – more or less illegal by criminalising activities around it. Transportation of migrants, for example, is punishable, but *'to my knowledge no one has ever been convicted for that'* (Governor, Air).

Supply of labour by migrants: joining the local economy?

Given the transitory nature of migrants, economic models would predict few migrants to be engaging in income generating activities in Agadez. The survey data confirms this dynamic. The large majority of transitory migrants are not engaged in income generating activities (71%) and from those not working, only around 4% would like to engage in an income generating activity.

Those who reported being employees are working for locals rather than other migrants: *'They often work for the people or families where they sleep and eat. It can be considered as a win-win economic exchange or a cynical exploitation'* (ICRC, Agadez).

⁵⁴ Drew Hinshaw and Joe Parkinson, "Agadez Traffickers Profit From Movement Through Niger to Libya," *Wall Street Journal*, July 19, 2015, sec. Page One, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/agadez-traffickers-profit-from-movement-through-niger-to-libya-1437002559>.

⁵⁵ Julien Brachet et al., *The Challenge of the Threshold: Border Closures and Migration Movements in Africa* (Lexington Books, 2011), [https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=i81yCrRvoucC&oi=fnd&pg=PP2&dq=++Brachet,+Julien,+in+Streiff-F%C3%A9nat,+Jocelyne+\(ed.\)+and+Wa+Kabwe+Segatti+A.+\(ed.\),+\(2011\),+The+Challenge+of+the+Threshold:+Border+Closures+and+Migration+Movements+in+Africa.+Lanham:+Lexington+Books,+p.+82&ots=po5Ecqpx9W&sig=m9vtRvwQP8YRD7sxEajB7gul9zM](https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=i81yCrRvoucC&oi=fnd&pg=PP2&dq=++Brachet,+Julien,+in+Streiff-F%C3%A9nat,+Jocelyne+(ed.)+and+Wa+Kabwe+Segatti+A.+(ed.),+(2011),+The+Challenge+of+the+Threshold:+Border+Closures+and+Migration+Movements+in+Africa.+Lanham:+Lexington+Books,+p.+82&ots=po5Ecqpx9W&sig=m9vtRvwQP8YRD7sxEajB7gul9zM).

Income generation by gender

While 92% of men are not generating any income, this is the case for just 46% of females (Table 6). This is unexpected in light of the evidence that men tend to have higher spending patterns than women. However, it makes sense when considering individual migration projects. While women (mostly Nigerien) are generally engaged in short-term (1 or 2 years) economic migration cycles to Niger, men almost systematically mention longer-term projects in Europe or Algeria: *'Either they flee persecution, or they look for a better economic situation; but in both cases, they want to settle permanently or semi-permanently in their country of destination, to generate an income and send it back to their home country'* (ILO, Niamey). Of those engaged in economic activities, 25% are working as domestic employees (all women), 17% as unskilled manual labourers and 8% are engaged in commercial activities. About 44% declared to be engaged in another activity (of which 90% are begging).

The case of Nigerien female migrants requires special attention. Generally originating from Kantche (Zinder), 92% of them reported frequently earning money, but in sectors with limited economic potential such as begging and domestic service (see the table below): *'Many female migrants simply cannot afford not having an income generating activity in Agadez. A lot of them, especially Nigerien women from Kantche (in the region of Zinder) are also involved in and victims of larger trafficking networks – which send them to Algeria and make them pay for the journey through begging, or even prostitution, in the outskirts of Agadez'* (Save the Children, Niamey).

Table 7 – Sectors of work of Nigerien migrant women earning money, Agadez (n=94)

Sector of work	%	Average daily pay (* indicates n<15)
Begging	48%	666 CFA
Domestic service	32%	584 CFA
Unskilled manual labour	13%	992* CFA
Commerce	5%	1100* CFA
Other	1%	500* CFA
Skilled manual labour	1%	2500* CFA

Table 8 – Participation in income generating activities of transitory migrants in Agadez

Activity	Percentage of migrants (%)	Percentage of Males (%)	Percentage of Females (%)
None	71	92	46
Active	29	8	54

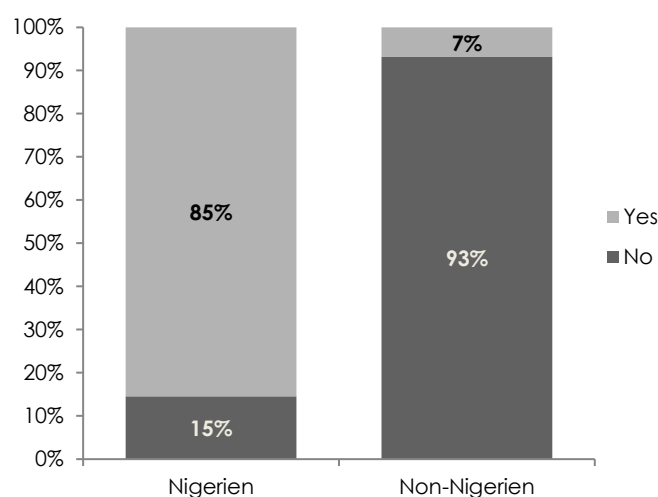
Note: sample size is 410.

Income generation by nationality

Nationality is another key differentiator in likelihood to work: Nigerien migrants are substantially more likely to be economically active than other migrants (Table 7), accounting for 83% of economically active interviewed migrants (and only 29% of respondents). *'When we left Zinder, we had already agreed on something with people here. I knew I would work as a maid for a couple of weeks before going to Arlit'* (Ramatou, 20, Niger).

As can be seen in Figure 12, few non-Nigerien migrants interviewed reported working – or planning to work – in Agadez to earn further money. This is consistent with their trip through Northern Niger more generally, as it was also noted that *"there is no work in Arlit"* (Male focus group discussion, returning migrants, Agadez). Indeed, the vast majority of migrants rated earning money in Agadez as either hard (13%) or very hard (68%).

Figure 12 - Are you earning money in Agadez?



Average earnings

The average earnings for those who reported being engaged in an income generating activity was around CFA 3,011 per day. However, this figure is inflated by a few individuals with very high incomes; those outliers distort the mean, while reflecting some actual disparities between migrants: *'The image of migrant flows as a homogenous group of extremely poor or vulnerable people is not accurate. Some of them are 'middle-class' urban students, with a stronger educational and economic background, or even small entrepreneurs, who perceive Algeria, Libya, and sometimes Europe, as the opportunity of a lifetime.'* (IOM, Niamey)⁵⁶

In terms of gender, male average earnings in Agadez are CFA 13,757 per day while females report CFA 969 per day. Such a stark difference should be taken with a pinch of salt, considering the small and non-representative sample size of male respondents (19); however, it does indicatively suggest that the few men engaged in income generating activities do make much more money than women. One hypothesis for that was shared by a local resident: *'Some migrants, especially from Mali, stay here for a few months, and sometimes longer, on their way to Europe. They quickly get involved in migration activities – not as coxers, but generally as drivers.'* (Ousmane, 34, Agadez resident)

Table 9 - Average income earned in Agadez per day by nationality (CFA)

	All	Males	Females
Average	3,011	13,757	969
Sample size	119	19	100

Prostitution is a sector of activity that must be mentioned, despite the small sample, because of the protection issues it implies. Two non-Nigerien female respondents to the survey reported engaging in prostitution. An additional few departing migrants reported planning on working in this sector in Agadez, while several returnees reported having done so during qualitative interviews. The existence of this industry was confirmed by key informant interviews and focus group participants. For some, it has even provided a reason to return to Agadez:

'I decided to leave [North Africa] because it was difficult to reach my objectives – even while sleeping with us most refuse to pay us so it is better to change country. I took this decision based on a proposition from my friend who is in Agadez: she confirmed to me that prostitutes in Agadez earned more money than where I was'. (Female case study, returning migrant, Arlit).

The number of survey respondents engaging in prostitution is too low for statistically significant analysis. Anecdotal, however, they both earn significantly more than other migrant women do in Agadez. In contrast to the averages

⁵⁶ Such a stark socio-economic heterogeneity also confirms Adepoju's (2011) statement: 'Youth unemployment of 18-50 and increasingly among graduates ready to do any work, anywhere and at any wage, creates the pools of potential, destitute and desperate migrants, whose numbers are set to double within 25 years.' (Aderanti Adepoju, "Reflections on International Migration and Development in Sub-Saharan Africa," 2013, <https://tspace.library.utoronto.ca/handle/1807/49269>.)

given in Table 8, these women earn 10,000 CFA and 12,000 CFA daily – more than ten times the average 723 CFA earned daily by the female Nigerien migrant working in Agadez.

Supplying migration related goods and services: involvement of the locals

Commerce is by far the most important source of income for locals (57% of individuals and 60% of households are engaged and earn money in commercial activities). This is followed by artisanal work, unskilled manual labour, raising livestock and agriculture (see Table 10). Host community respondents did not report a major change in the distribution of their economic activities in the past five years.

As explained above, if transitory migrants increased the demand of goods and services in the host location we would expect an increase in the compensation/payments of activities related to the provision of those goods and services. This increase in compensation should encourage more locals to get involved in these activities. Close to half of the local respondents confirmed that they are engaged in economic activities related to the presence of transitory migrants. This is mainly driven by locals selling food to the migrants (49%) followed by those selling other goods (35%) and water (19%) to the migrants (Table 11). While men are more likely to be in different types of migrant related activities, women concentrate mostly on selling food, water or other items. Only 5% of locals are employing migrants. Close to 11% of the locals are engaged in two or more economic activities related to the presence of transitory migrants.

Table 10 – Current and past economic activities of locals, as reported in 2016 (in %)

Sectors	Currently		5 years ago
	Individual	Household	Household
Agriculture	4	9	9
Artisanal	15	18	20
Raising livestock	6	8	9
Industry (factory work)	2	2	2
Commerce	57	60	55
Unskilled manual labour	8	11	12
Skilled manual labour	5	6	5
Mining	0	1	1
Transport of people	5	5	3
Transport of goods	1	1	1
Rental of lands / houses	1	2	1
Gold mining	1	1	1
Public sector/ Government	1	2	1
Medical profession	0	1	3

Note: Sample size 357. Multiple answers are possible. Does not sum to 100%

Table 11 - Locals engaged in economic activities related to the presence of migrants (in %)

Activity	Percentage among those involved		
	All	Males	Females
Sells food	49	31	79
Sells other goods	34	41	12
Sells water	19	16	28
Rents a place	6	7	2.3
Transport of people to the North	6	7	0
Employs them	5	6	0
Transports goods from the North	4	3	0
Sample size	197	154	43
	Percentage of those not involved		
None of the above	45	41	55

Note: Multiple answers are possible. Does not sum to 100%

Engagement in these migration related activities also seems to account for a substantial share of the income of those involved. Migration related economic activities account for over a quarter of household income for the majority of locals engaged in such activities (Table 12).

Table 12 - Share of household income coming from activities related to the presence of migrants

	Percentage (%)
None	1
Less than a quarter	38
A quarter to a half	37
Half to three quarters	18
More than three quarters	4
All of it	1
I don't know	2

Note: Sample size is 134.

Most reports suggest that the flow of transitory migrants passing by Agadez has increased substantially in recent years. As such, we would expect that individuals and households have become more involved in migration related activities over time. However, as shown in Table 13, the overall share of households engaged in any particular activity has remained relatively unchanged during the last five years. It is possible that the main shift in activities occurred more than five years ago. Agadez has been a key hub for transitory migration for many years. On the other hand, this question only measures participation in the activity, not the intensity (for example hours per day) or profit generated from that activity. These other factors could also have changed during the five-year period.

Table 13 - Household engaged in economic activities related to migrants (now and 5 years ago)

Activity	% of hosts involved in this activity (Households)	% of hosts involved in this activity 5 years ago (Households)
Sells water	16	16
Sells food	42	42
Sells other goods	37	41
Rents a place	7	4
Employs them	5	3
Transports them North	7	6
Transports goods from the North	2	2
None of the above	54	62

Note: Sample size is 166 and 134. Multiple answers are possible. Does not sum to 100%

Table 14 presents some of the characteristics of the transportation of migrants as reported by locals engaged in this activity (information is provided per trip from Agadez; transporters did not specify final destination). While this table is also based on small sample and estimates should be treated with caution, it provides interesting insights. The income per migrant is, on average, about CFA 78,300 and the average number of migrants per trip is about 28 which amounts to around CFA 2,193,324 per trip and a monthly net income of 6,053,900 (based on an average of 3 trips a month with a 175,000 payment in gas per trip).

Table 14 - Transportation of migrants

Regarding the Transportation of Migrants	
How much do you earn per migrant per trip? (in CFA)	78,300
How many migrants do you transport per trip?	28
How many trips do you make per month?	3
How much does the gas for one trip cost (in CFA)	175,000

Note: Sample size is 12.

In conclusion: Looking into the economic future of Agadez

The evidence presented above suggests that most of the impact of transitory migration on the economy of Agadez is driven by the demand of migrants for particular goods and services. It is selective, tightly linked to their migration journey forward, and curtailed locally through limits set by migrants on their own expenditures. Their economic focus is beyond Agadez, not in Agadez.

Looking towards the future this seems to indicate that, while more transitory immigration via Agadez is likely to lead to a higher supply of resources from locals to serve the extra demand for goods and services, it is unlikely to lead to different types of economic activities. The impact is on today's economy, not tomorrow's. Migrants have a set of goods and services that they need (namely food, water, lodging and transportation) and this is unlikely to change in the near future.

Table 15 – Skills of transitory migrants and locals (self-reported)

Skills	Migrants (%)			Locals (%)		
	All	Males	Females	All	Males	Females
Agriculture	25	17	34	9	12	1
Artisanal	10	12	8	18	12	34
Raising livestock	13	11	16	8	7	13
Factory work	11	17	3	2	3	0
Commerce	32	30	34	61	57	70
Unskilled manual	21	18	24	11	10	12
Skilled manual	11	16	5	6	7	5
Sample	410	226	184	357	260	97

Note: Multiple answers are possible. Does not sum to 100%.

One possible change in the future is the nature of migration in Agadez. As mentioned above, the skills of migrants and local residents overlap. This suggests that if transitory migration via Agadez ever becomes permanent (that is, migrants decide to settle in Agadez), there might be increasing labour market competition between migrants and locals. However, as indicated by Table 15, there are some differences in skills between the two groups; their skills may therefore complement each other rather than compete in the labour market. For example, migrants are more likely than locals to report skills in agriculture. This is especially true for women. The locals, on the other hand, seem to have an advantage in commerce and artisanal work (again, especially women).

As seen in this chapter, migrants themselves, particularly non-Nigeriens, do not constitute a significant portion of the labour force in Agadez and tend to remain relatively separate from the overall economy. Except for Nigeriens and specific professionals (for example, prostitution) who come to Agadez for planned opportunities, a limited number try to work there (only 7% of non-Nigerien migrants interviewed). Of the many Nigerien migrants interviewed who earn money in Agadez, most are women, who primarily do so through domestic service and begging.

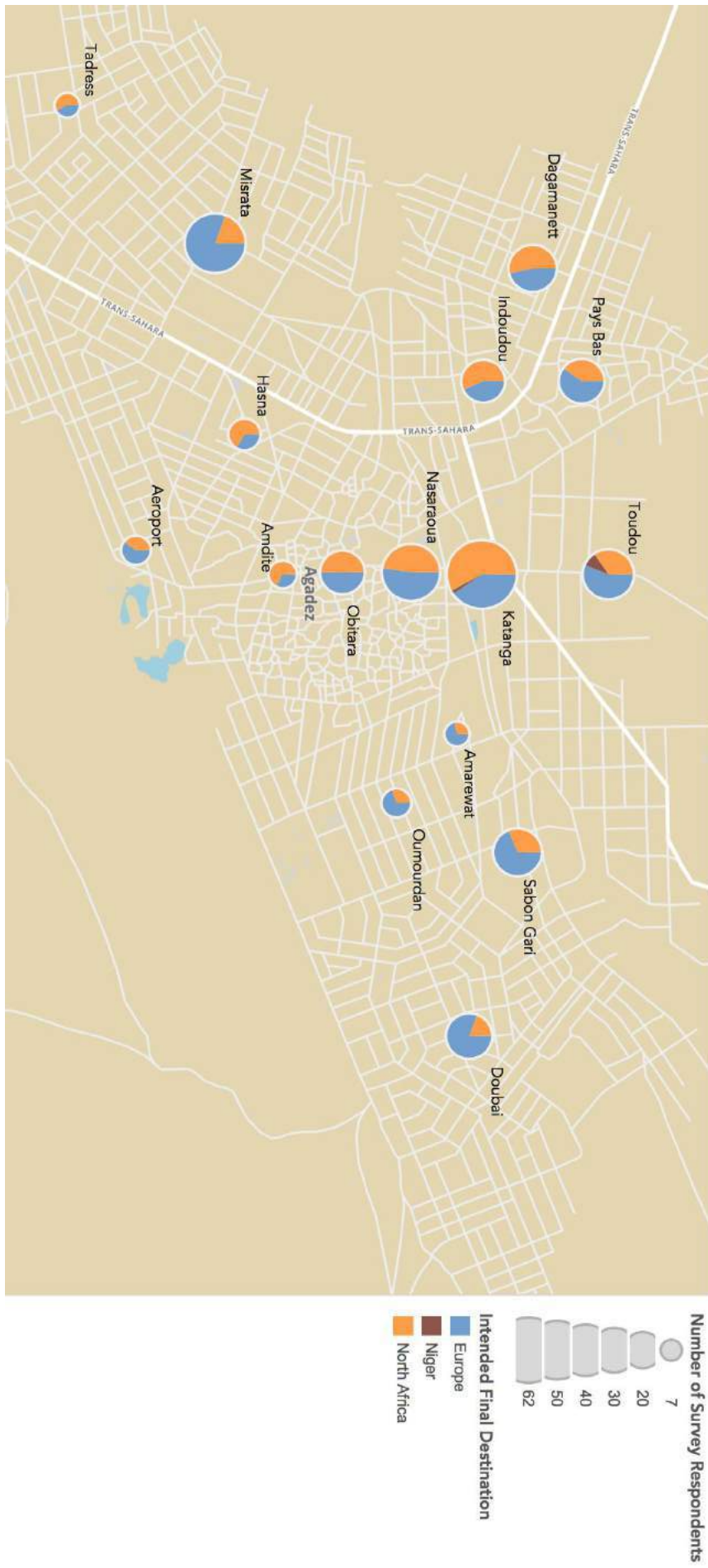
Nonetheless, host populations do benefit from the presence of migrants. For instance, one sector which has undergone great expansion due to the presence of migrants is Agadez' "financial" sector, with the number of ATMs, banks, and money transfer locations increasing significantly.⁵⁷ The majority of locals engaged in migration-related activities reported involvement in activities related to the provision of goods and services to migrants. Interestingly, it does not seem that this involvement of locals is something recent. In most cases, local respondents suggested that they have been involved in migration-related activities for several years. As such, the role of transitory migration in the economy of Agadez is not something new or recent. Transitory migration is fully embedded in the economy of the region. These nuances derived from the fieldwork inform the recommendations developed in the next chapter.

⁵⁷ According to the *Wall Street Journal*, "Fourteen banks and hundreds of money-transfer agencies now service a city that a decade ago had no ATMs," in Hinshaw and Parkinson, "Agadez Traffickers Profit From Movement Through Niger to Libya."



1. **Final destination:** The map below underlines both the diversity of locations within the city of Agadez where one can find migrants (as each circle corresponds to the neighbourhood where the migrants represented within it were interviewed) as well as the diversity of planned destinations. The ghettos on the outskirts of the city show anecdotally higher proportions of people planning to go to Europe rather than North Africa or other points in Niger.

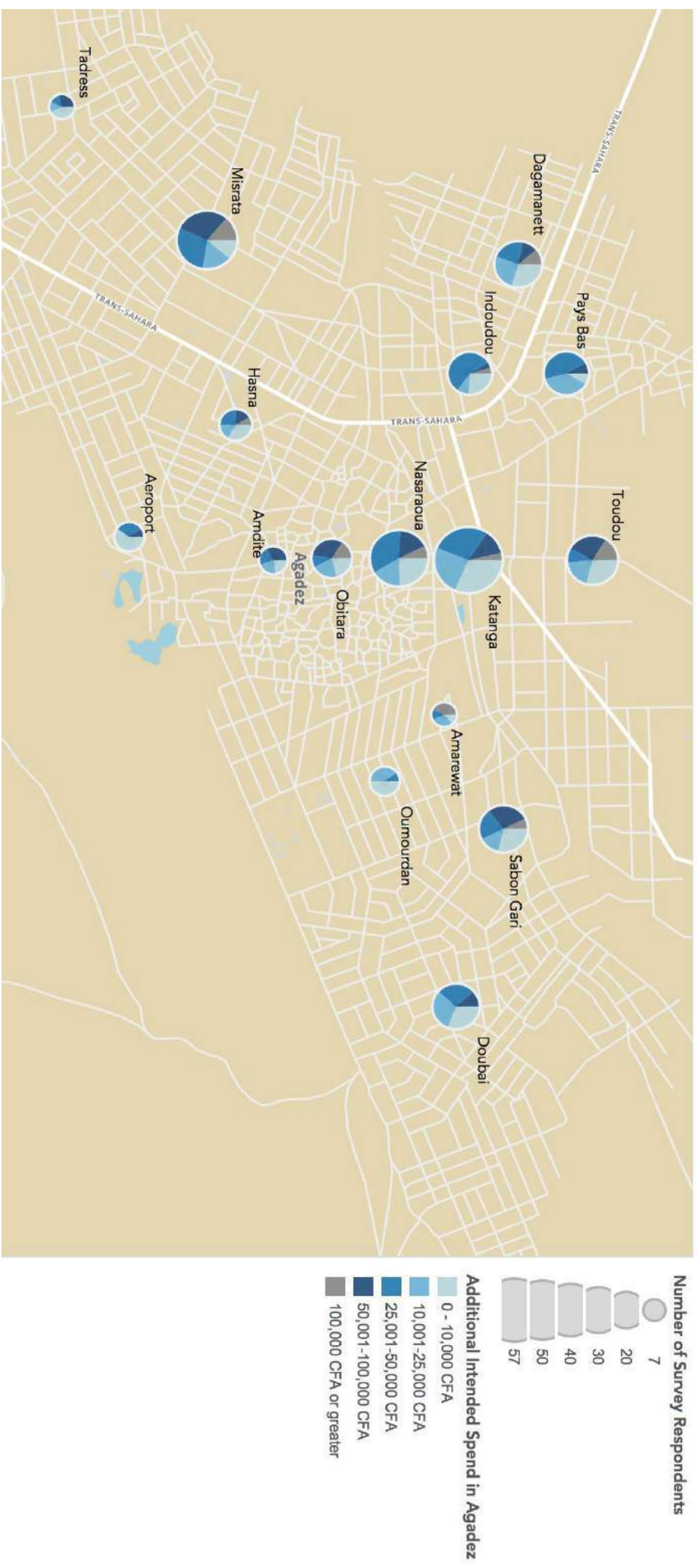
Intended Final Destination





II. Intended spend in Agadez: The crucial point highlighted by the map below is that across the board expected spend in Agadez is low, with few interviewed migrants planning on spending more than 50,000 CFA during their time in Agadez.

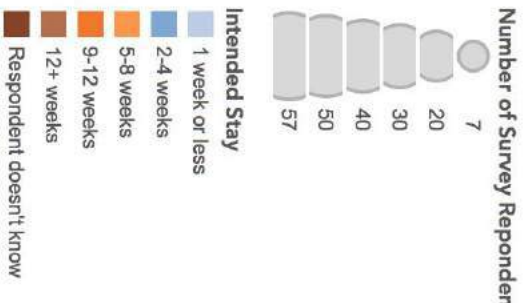
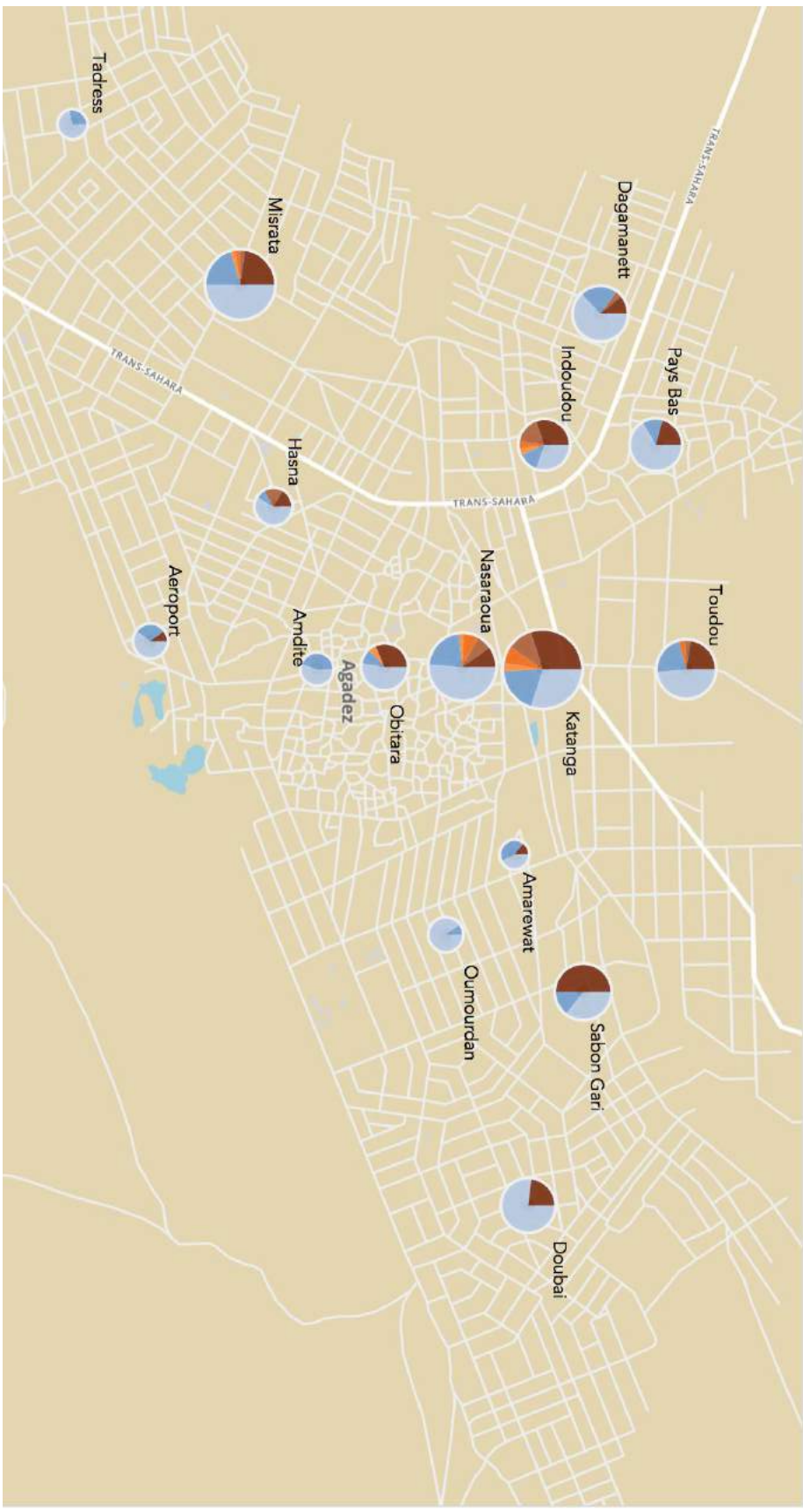
Intended Spend in Agadez





III. Intended Length of Stay in Agadez: Migration through Agadez is transient, with most respondents stating that they plan on spending less than one month there, or that they are not sure of exactly how long they will remain. As can be seen below, this trend is widespread across the city, with only respondents in Katanga and Nasaraoua being slightly more likely to plan on staying longer, possibly explained by the higher presence of women there. From an economic perspective, this means that across the city, most economic impact from the migrants will be felt from the money they spend on immediate needs rather than money earned through working or other types of spending.

Intended Length of Stay in Agadez





Picture 7: View of Agadez Grande Mosquée from the street

6. REFLECTIONS AND ROADMAPS

*"So now you'd better stop, and rebuild all your ruins.
For peace and trust can win the day, despite of all your losing."*

Led Zeppelin, *The Immigrant Song*

Drivers are not unique and simple. Migrants are not a homogenous group with well-defined and rational motivations and objectives; likewise, at the individual level, the migrants that were interviewed in Agadez or Arlit almost never mentioned one-way explanations when asked about the reasons that had led them to migrate. Stressful economic conditions, absence of sustainable livelihood opportunities, cyclical labour migration to Algeria, lack of social perspectives, perceived disparities in living standards, aspirations for a different life in European countries, etc. constitute the mix of subjective and objective factors fuelling the transit migration of approximately 350,000 individuals through Agadez for 2016.⁵⁸

Considering these drivers and the existing regional migration trends, what can IOM and other stakeholders do to promote "safe, orderly, and dignified human mobility"⁵⁹ while supporting the socio-economic development of host communities? According to the findings of this research, it is doubtful that the ongoing boom of the migration industry in Agadez leads to any structural and sustainable socio-economic development for host communities. If the extra demand for goods and services does generate some additional direct and indirect revenues for local community members, this impact will neither lead to diversified and sustainable economic activities, nor create employment opportunities, unless some structural decisions are made. This section delineates a roadmap for future economic integration by:

- 1) rethinking critically the underlying assumptions on migration in Agadez – *what are the prejudices on migration and migrants in Agadez?*
- 2) clearly distinguishing the different (and potentially competing) stakeholders' agendas – *why is it both necessary and pragmatic to avoid blurred lines between political and development agendas?*
- 3) identifying short- and long-term way forward – *how can IOM and other stakeholders actually protect the rights and promote the socio-economic integration of migrants and host communities?*

Reflections: Rethinking assumptions on migration in Agadez

Based on the literature from and interviews conducted with most organisations working with migrants in Niger, a certain number of assumptions have been identified by the research team and listed in the table below. These hypotheses strongly contribute to shaping the strategy, operations, and discourses on migration in West Africa of most stakeholders. They can be summarised as follows:

⁵⁸ In this regard, the findings of this survey would confirm Adepoju's judgment, when synthesising his research on Sub-Saharan Africa and pointing to the non-unilateral nature of drivers and solutions: 'emigration pressure is fuelled by unstable politics, ethno-religious conflicts, poverty and rapidly growing populations. Rapid population and labour force growth have combined with persistent economic decline, huge external debt, retrenchment of public sector workers in response to structural adjustment measures, and environmental deterioration to shape trends and patterns of international migration'. Adepoju, "Reflections on International Migration and Development in Sub-Saharan Africa."

⁵⁹ IOM, "Addressing Complex Migration Flows in the Mediterranean: IOM Response Plan."

- Socio-economic profile of migrants: "Migrants heading to Libya are the poor among the poor"

It is not the poorest of the poor who move. In reality "most migrants do not move from the poorest to the wealthiest countries, and the poorest countries tend to have lower levels of emigration than middle-income and wealthier countries"⁶⁰. Poor people tend to migrate to overall smaller distances, notably migrants from landlocked countries like Niger – an hypothesis that was empirically confirmed by our qualitative and quantitative assessments, as Nigeriens, who are notably poorer, migrate to Algeria or Libya on a seasonal basis to exploit economic opportunities in Tamanrasset or Alger before going back to their region of origin (see the example of Sahoura, from Kantché, in our case studies). By contrast, an increase in income and an overall improvement of development levels will increase people's aspirations and capabilities to migrate. This confirms the theory that poverty as a driver for migration may be, in some cases at least, a relative rather than absolute parameter. Purely economic approaches to decreasing migration by reducing poverty will not be fully successful in both the short and long term, unless other drivers are included in the equation.

- Decision-making process: "The decision to migrate is driven by rational choices (CBA model)"

Most international donors and organisations interviewed throughout this research process assume that individual migrants follow a rational path in determining their choices, by taking account of available information, analysing probabilities of events and associated risks, and conducting costs and benefit analyses in determining their choices. This assumption naturally favours the economic determinant over any other driver. By contrast, in-depth qualitative interviews and focus groups conducted with migrants in Agadez and Arlit show a more nuanced picture: 1) respondents have limited information; 2) this information is often controlled by smugglers; 3) the absence of interactions with local communities is also a limiting factor to accessing information; 4) even when migrants are aware of the violence they may endure in the Libyan desert or risks they take for those planning to travel by boat to Europe, they are *convinced* that they *will* make it. In this regard, interviews with migrants suggest a disconnect between:

1. Donors, international organisations, and the Nigerien Government, who mainly base their strategies and programmes on the rational-choice paradigm and the assumption that individuals weigh the pros and cons of migration *ex ante*. The logical consequence is that migration actors put a lot of efforts on awareness raising campaigns and income generating activities in countries/regions of origin; and
2. Migrants heading north to Libya and – to a lesser extent – Algeria, show a decision-making process 1) driven by a complex nexus of objective and subjective factors; 2) subject to a representation of their end goal that prevails over rational alternatives.

- Perception of mobility: "Migration and mobility are symptoms of development failure"

The approach to mobility seems to have a one-way relationship to development: with the assumption that development should stop unwanted migration. There is a tendency to perceive 'South-North' migration as symptomatic of the failure of development⁶¹. Here migration is an anomaly that needs to be corrected to restore the *status quo ante* between sending and receiving countries, closing the migration cycle⁶². In this one-way perspective on development, its practice becomes a tool to stop or prevent migration. However, people have always moved to look for opportunities. Therefore, as Skeldon (1998)⁶³ points out "policies that accept the wider mobility of the population are likely to accord with policies that will enhance the well-being of greater numbers of people". With this area-based approach in mind, recommendations of this study will go beyond migration categories to fit with the local context of Agadez, at the positive cross section between development and migration.

⁶⁰ Marie-Laurence Flahaux and Hein De Haas, "African Migration: Trends, Patterns, Drivers," *Comparative Migration Studies* 4, no. 1 (December 2016), doi:10.1186/s40878-015-0015-6. p. 4

⁶¹ Oliver Bakewell, "Keeping Them in Their Place': The Ambivalent Relationship between Development and Migration in Africa," *Third World Quarterly* 29, no. 7 (2008): 1341–58.





⁶² Giulia Sinatti and Cindy Horst, "Migrants as Agents of Development: Diaspora Engagement Discourse and Practice in Europe," *Ethnicities*, 2014, 1468796814530120.p. 146

⁶³ Cited in Bakewell, "Keeping Them in Their Place." P.1355

- Solutions to curb irregular migration: “A stronger economic development in countries of origin will curb irregular migration”

Lastly, donors and states adopt models of development bound by national borders. Development is understood “to take place in given countries within the Global South, as opposed to across borders”⁶⁴. Development is often generated by development actors of the Global North, and directed at people in the Global South. The perspective of Agadez allows us to change this imbalance: seeing the potential of a transit hub, a transit economy and a local economy to the debate on migration and development. What are the win-win outcomes for developing transit economies? By mapping potential economic outcomes of migration in Agadez, Dirkou or Arlit, the present research suggests to build on the history of the region, take advantage of the regulatory framework (ECOWAS), optimise existing and past trans-Saharan economic exchanges, and finally focus on the long-term development of the region – beyond national borders and short-sighted agendas. As highlighted by Feyissa and Hoehne (2010), borders (and bordering regions, like Agadez) need to be seen as opportunities or conduits, hence shifting from a repressive and control-oriented approach to the promotion of their potential socio-economic vibrancy.⁶⁵

Table 16 – Assumptions on transit migration in Agadez (by organisation and adhesion)

	Socio-economic profile of migrants	Decision-making process	Perception of mobility	Solutions to curb irregular migration
ASSUMPTIONS ON TRANSIT MIGRATION IN AGADEZ	<i>Migrants heading to Libya are the poor among the poor</i> 	<i>The decision to migrate is driven by rational choices (CBA model)</i> 	<i>Migration and mobility are symptoms of development failure</i> 	<i>A stronger economic development in countries of origin will curb irregular migration</i> 
Donors	Underlying assumption	Underlying assumption	Positive	Underlying assumption
International organisations, UN	Underlying assumption	Underlying assumption	Nuanced	Underlying assumption
NGOs	Nuanced	Underlying assumption	Nuanced	Nuanced / Positive
Qualitative Survey	Nuanced / Negative	Negative	Not Relevant	Not Relevant
Quantitative Survey	Nuanced / Negative	Not Relevant	Not Relevant	Not Relevant
Academia	Negative	Nuanced / Negative	Negative	Nuanced

Finally, using the findings of this report and the desk literature review as touchstones to test the validity of most stakeholders' key hypotheses, this report comes to the following counter-intuitive conclusions:

- I. Migrants' decision making process is not a cost-benefit analysis but a more complex mix of rational factors, aspirations, and irrational determinants.
- II. It is not the poorest of the poor who move (to Europe), but poor and middle-income people.
- III. There is a sedentary bias in development models, which exclusively consider migration as a symptom of socio-economic failure (be it at the national or individual/household level).
- IV. There is a nation-state bias in development models, which often disregard the socio-economic opportunities arising from regional perspectives and mobility.

Beyond a call to focus on migrant rights, this research highlights the need to take a transnational approach to transformative economic interventions, with a clear development agenda:

‘Reducing migration flows to Europe requires a long-term and heterodox approach. It is counter-intuitive: European states assume that they control supposedly irregular and northbound African migration, through

⁶⁴ Sinatti and Horst, “Migrants as Agents of Development.” p. 139

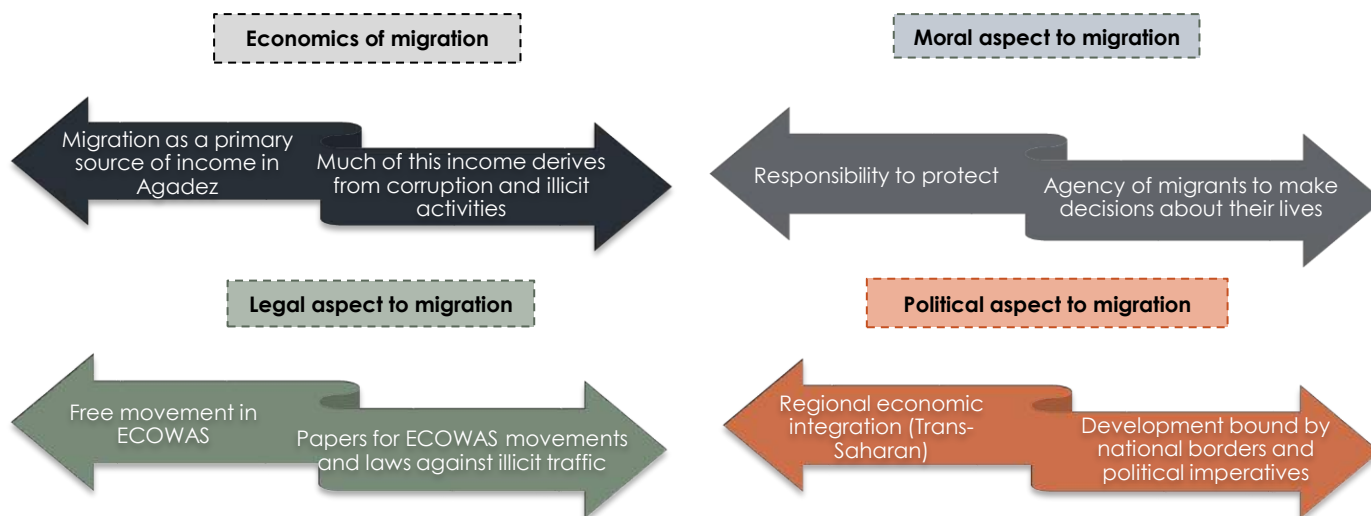
⁶⁵ Feyissa and Hoehne “Borders and Borderlands as Resources in the Horn of Africa.” p. 139

a strong focus on security and development initiatives in countries of origin and transit countries; but in reality, they should spend European taxpayers' money on roads and infrastructures. Building a highway in the desert may not be popular in Europe, but that is probably the best way to develop the zone, favour cross border economic exchanges, and mitigate the risk of endless tragedies in the desert or the Mediterranean.' (Donor, Agadez)

As explained in this report, the circulation of men, livestock and goods is historically at the heart of the socio-economic structuration of sub-Saharan regions. For many migrants, temporary labour migration to the Maghreb "has been an ordinary part of life for decades: everyone knows it to be difficult, but also mostly fruitful"⁶⁶. Circulation, mobility and migration are thus the most relevant lenses to understand the progressive development of Agadez, as the town has always been a hub or crossroad – regardless of political borders – between Sub-Saharan Africa, Niger and North Africa. Hence the Sahara is not a "security belt"⁶⁷ but rather a *continuum* linking two zones.⁶⁸ Agadez is a platform connecting Saharan commercial hubs and networks, ensuring the continuity between trans-Saharan zones. Migration through Agadez is nothing new: what is new is the will of European countries to control legal migration channels, reshaping regional dynamics.

In this regard, solutions have to be innovative and multi-staged, providing appropriate recommendations to the NGOs, international organisations, government actors and other stakeholders who face several challenges, most notably contradictory incentives of a financial, moral and legal nature. The duty of care owed by organisations to Nigeriens and non-Nigeriens also sets up some difficult choices, as what may prove beneficial to one nationality – say, supporting non-Nigeriens in decisions not to migrate – may cause problems for another – in this case, removing a source of income in a region with limited current income-generating activities. The following recommendations have therefore been designed to work in concert – addressing for example the impact that reducing the number of migrants via provision of economic alternatives in their country of origin with recommendations to broaden the scope of income generating activities in Agadez.

Figure 13 - Contradictory challenges in addressing migration-related questions in Agadez



Developing regional infrastructures through a cross-border agenda

Developing a trans-Saharan and cross-border development agenda. It is central to value transit in order to find the fluidity of the economy, having a long-term approach in mind and investing in roads and infrastructure. Opening up a space for informal and formal commerce to take place, to build the autonomy of the region's economy is probably the key to optimise the economic contribution of the migration economy in Agadez. A move from migration management to the development of economic exchanges is central to address more holistically development in transit countries. Future research should explore reviving business activities in long-standing historical regions of exchange, through for instance the development of infrastructures such as highways to reduce risk in the

⁶⁶ Julien Brachet, "Policing the Desert: The IOM in Libya Beyond War and Peace," *Antipode* 48, no. 2 (2016): 272–292. p.278

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 284

⁶⁸ Blin, "L'Algérie Du Sahara Au Sahel."

journey. Adjustments should be made to the way stakeholders think about planning infrastructure and a stronger economy on the migration route, not through their own lens, but through a local economy lens.

Supporting the development of electricity, water, telecommunications and other infrastructures in the short-term.

Traditionally, infrastructural developments are the responsibility of local governments. The current state in Agadez makes it clear that the government lacks the resources to do so. Currently, electricity and water access in Agadez are both intermittent, while the telecommunications network goes in and out – despite temperatures reaching 45 degrees or more on a regular basis. Both of these pose clear obstacles to the development of the economy in Agadez, both from a business perspective generally (difficult to run a business without computers, internet access, and so on), and in particular if there is to be any potential for ‘resurrecting’ the tourist industry. The local government should create a clear plan prioritizing the different infrastructural improvements: 1) in order of necessity and in association with other regional actors (national and supranational entities), 2) from a regional and cross-border perspective, and 3) with the technical and financial support of international donors.⁶⁹

Assuming protection responsibilities

Ensuring cooperation around migration with other governments is in line with migration-related protocols and legislation. The repatriation of Nigerien migrants for Libya and Algeria, who are rounded up on the streets with no chance to reclaim their goods, places the migrants at risk for human rights violations and limits their opportunities upon return by leaving them without assets. While these governments are under no obligation to allow illegal migration, the Nigerien government has leverage to push for these repatriation to be conducted in a more humane fashion.

Building the capacity of local actors. IOM has begun trainings on the key legal distinctions to be aware of when considering migrants and the applicable laws but these have not reached everyone. The following must be clarified to all staff to ensure they understand how and when to apply existing laws, as well as realise the penalisation that they themselves can incur by continuing to ask for bribes etc.: 1) the difference between trafficking and smuggling; 2) how, when and to whom to apply the 2015 law around migration; 3) when migration is legal and what conditions migrants must fulfil for it to be so; 4) the illegality of asking for bribes and threatening or hurting migrants.

Continuing awareness building on the legal framework around migration, both in the Nigerien laws and more broadly. *Trafficking in persons* is the ‘recruitment, transport or harbouring of individuals through coercive means for the purposes of exploitation’.⁷⁰ The key distinction between trafficking and smuggling is the question of coercion – the willingness of those participating to be transported, in this case. Admittedly, the distinction between the two is not always clear, especially as trips may begin as smuggling that end up as trafficking. However, many government representatives interviewed continued to confuse the two – which has severe potential implications for the treatment of the migrants involved. Building on existing conferences, IOM must provide documentation distinguishing the two that is easily understood by all government officials. More broadly, the government should be supported in ensuring that all legislation created around migration is in line with international conventions on the topic (such as the Palermo Protocol) and ECOWAS protocols.

Avoiding the amalgamation of migration with security. Currently, influenced by international discourse, there is a tendency towards assimilating questions of migration and questions of security. This gives negative connotations to migration and, as a result, can obscure the potential it offers and ‘criminalise’ migrants. Care must be taken to ensure these remain distinct questions, by, for example, avoiding the same departments handling both issues.

Providing counselling and physical and mental health resources at place of return. Migrants face many mental and physical health challenges during the journey. They require a strong support network upon return to make sure that the return is successful.

⁶⁹ Supporting the development of this infrastructure will have the additional benefit of reducing the potential for tension between the migrant and host communities: one of the recurring complaints heard about migrants is that it was due to them that the electricity and water networks were so overstretched.

⁷⁰ Samuel Hall, “Old Practice, New Chains: Modern Slavery in Afghanistan,” 2013, <https://www.iom.int/files/live/sites/iom/files/Country/docs/IOM-Afghanistan-CT-Report-2014.pdf>. p. 9, simplification of the definition in the UN Trafficking in Persons Protocol

Investigating prevalence of drug use in local community and provide support as necessary. Several key informant interviews suggested that drug use is prevalent among *passeurs*. Further research on the topic must be conducted to ascertain the truthfulness of these allegations, and if they are indeed accurate to build necessary clinics for treatment and public awareness campaigns around the negative effects of it.

Rethinking the labour market

Formalising the informal. Due to the fact that much of the local industry is informal, the government misses out on a) the possibility of taxes and b) the possibility of controlling these industries (to the benefit of those employed in them). The progressive formalization of informal activities should be paired with the concrete advantages that entrepreneurs, local traders, small- and medium-sized companies may get from it – such as a facilitated access to regional markets, quality standards, better prices, etc.

Proposing alternative income generating activities – and support for them – to the local population. These must fulfil several qualifications: 1) they must focus on what the local labour market in Agadez and beyond (the trans-Saharan region) may look like tomorrow *and* in 5 to 10 years; 2) they must be appealing to the local population, 3) they must be financially remunerative enough to remove any dependence on illicit trade and 4) they must be calculated not on the current state of the economy but by an in-depth market evaluation of the local area to identify existing and potential sectors with growth. This means that organisations cannot rely on intent surveys with local populations to determine the activities to support (as previous research has shown that individuals are most likely to choose activities which they are aware of and which are present in the local community – but this often leads to market oversaturation). The labour market overview conducted as part of this research has identified several potential sectors in which to invest:

Diversification of Agadez' agricultural production. Agadez is the least agriculturally diversified of Niger's regions, focused on millet and sorghum, with onions also a significant source of income. The 2012 crash in Agadez onion prices led to widespread food insecurity.⁷¹ Crop diversification is widely recognised to promote the resilience of those exposed to climate changes. It both diminishes the reliance of farmers on one crop and can actually promote more constant growth of crops and reduce the impact of temperature changes on agriculture.⁷²

Traditional handicrafts. After business / commerce, activities related to traditional handicrafts were some of the most frequently requested skills to learn by host community members interviewed. Currently, due to the lack of tourism in the area, it is difficult to find a market for all of the goods in Agadez itself. In Afghanistan, an NGO called Turquoise Mountain has successfully preserved knowledge of traditional Afghan handicrafts and taught these skills to youth, while cultivating a strong market abroad through partnerships with well-known British designers and the sale of goods in high-end shops. A similar model could be tested in Agadez, creating high-end versions of traditional crafts designed to appeal to an outside audience.⁷³

Small-scale mining opportunities. Mining represents one of the key resources in the North yet is currently illegal and massively under-developed, particularly the gold mines near Agadez. In light of governmental restrictions, those who work there do so illegally, increasing the likelihood of unsafe working conditions and eliminating the profit which the local and national governments would normally receive from the mining. Legalising and promoting this gold mining will allow for increased control and benefits from these mines.

Salt. Traditionally, salt caravans have left Agadez to go to Bilma, trade for the salt there, and return. As with handicrafts, there is a strong market abroad for high-quality salts (see for example *Sel de Guérande* and *Himalaya salt*). The quality of the salt produced in the area of Bilma should be analysed to see if it would be suitable for such exploitation, in which case a value chain with strengthened infrastructure passing through Agadez as a link to the wider world could be supported.

⁷¹ Laura Angela Bagnetto, "Agadez Onion Crisis Adds to Niger's Food Problems - Africa," *RFI*, September 6, 2012, <http://en.rfi.fr/africa/20120906-agadez-onion-crisis-adds-niger-s-food-issues>.

⁷² Brenda B. Lin, "Resilience in Agriculture through Crop Diversification: Adaptive Management for Environmental Change," *BioScience* 61, no. 3 (2011): 183–193. Lin cites the example of agroforestry systems where secondary crops keep the primary crop in optimal conditions and protects them from unexpected weather events.

⁷³ Several informants reported frustration at the idea of migrants being taught the traditional handicrafts of the Agadez area. They claimed that migrants lacked the background to understand them and that it would cheapen the value of those produced if you could find similar goods coming from across West Africa. Therefore, we recommend that those courses specifically on local handicrafts be limited to the host community.

Business / commerce designed to support the legal side of migration. Currently, returning migrants spend very little time in Agadez, generally returning home more quickly. Should programming be designed to support them in gaining the tools necessary to make their return a success, as detailed below, these stays should be extended. Rather than rely on existing centres for migrants – likely to become overburdened given the sheer scope of migratory flows – a system with guesthouses run by local Agadeziens and supervised by NGOs to ensure proper quality could be created, along with all the hospitality-related jobs these would require.

Alternative value chains for goods illegally sourced from the North. Key informants highlighted that many goods can be illegally sourced more cheaply from Algeria / Libya than legally. NGOs/IOs could work directly with the local government and existing industries to a) identify the goods which can be sourced in Niger and b) determine how the production of these could be improved to replace the appeal of goods from the North, thereby improving the local economy and reducing the traffic of goods.

Developing a vast low-investment / high-return training programme with migrants and host community members.

IOM has already begun conducting short trainings with migrants and host community members around, for example, brick-making activities. Such short-term trainings must be carefully targeted. Few skills can be taught in such short-term time-frames. However, they are an excellent opportunity to bring migrant and host community together. We therefore recommend that IOM continue and expand this programming, with several caveats:

Training duration: If possible, lengthen the trainings offered. This could work in conjunction with point IV above though providing hospitality industry opportunities to the local community, and it would make sure that migrants participating a) have more time to recover from their journey both mentally and physically, b) learn a skill more thoroughly and therefore c) can go back to their place of origin with more to contribute.

Beneficiary selection: Beneficiaries for this programming – particularly from the migrant side – should be chosen with regards not just to the desire to participate, but also due to whether or not the skills taught will be useful in their ultimate planned destination.

Types of courses: *Basic skills courses* – for example, the brick-making activities. Courses on painting of buildings or very basic mechanical repairs could also be provided. *Advanced level skilled manual labour courses* – currently, the time-scale of the courses offered is too short to allow for participants to fully learn a new skill. However, those with existing skills – such as plumbing, electricity, auto-mechanics, tailoring, etc. – could have their skills rated and be taught new techniques, resulting in a certificate they could use to validate these. *Career-planning courses* – many migrants are returning home with little idea of what to expect and few prospects in mind. Small group courses with counsellors to support migrants (and host community members) in identifying plans and realistic next steps to reach them will help them continue with a sense of purpose and increase the possibility of them reaching their goals.

Providing opportunities to the youth in the government. The various government levels present in Agadez could work with NGOs/IOs/Donors to sponsor internships within the government, providing participants with additional job skills and self-confidence and increasing the government's capacity. Such internship programmes have proven very successful in other socio-economically deprived contexts.

Supporting vocational trainings and income-generating activities in migrants' places of origin. As detailed earlier, the most frequently given reason for migration is economic pressure – 77% of migrants state that their ideal future would be to live and work in their place of origin, and 14% to stay home and take care of their family. Organisations have generally focused on dissuasion of migration through awareness-raising campaigns – and as the next recommendation confirms, these play an important role. However, it is also crucial to provide potential migrants with other opportunities, or no matter the challenges of the trip they will continue to migrate and risk their lives.

Promoting alternative investments for migration money in places of origin. Returning 'failed' migrants often repeat that they would have been better off investing the money used in their journey locally. However, they may lack opportunities to do so, financial tools and awareness of the potential this poses. Awareness campaigns and financial literacy campaigns which very bluntly compare the potential earned from migration versus local investment can help to counteract the images of financial success only being attainable through migration (which is promoted by the construction of new houses, purchases of vehicles, etc. by those with family members abroad).

Changing mindsets

Supporting education in the region of Agadez and provide adult-education opportunities. Self-reported literacy rates (generally higher than actual literacy rates) among the host community were of 47% for the women interviewed and 61% for the men interviewed. 60% of women rated their numeracy skills as either non-existent or basic, and 46% of men the same. This clearly limits the potential activities in which the host community can engage. Programming in other countries, such as UNICEF's Youth Education Packs, has tied literacy and numeracy trainings to vocational training programmes to ensure that those learning how to tailor, for example, can conduct all the necessary measurements. In addition, open classes to other community members would both provide an opportunity for socialisation. This is particularly important for women, whom the research has shown participate in a limited number of economic activities and frequently end up either begging or in prostitution when they migrate. Finally, higher-level education – such as efforts to create a branch university in Agadez – must also be emphasized. Specific emphasis should be given to courses providing the technical skills necessary in the area – such as mining, infrastructure-building and agronomy – to firstly ensure that graduates have local job opportunities and secondly ensure the presence of technical experts as necessary in Agadez.⁷⁴

Including a youth-specific focus to programming, promoting youth empowerment. As reported by the key informants interviewed, youth form the majority of those involved in illicit migration-related activities, particularly driving through the desert. The focus on youth in programming designed to support beneficiaries in moving away from migration-related activities – and promote their inclusion in decision-making bodies at the community level – will help to provide other areas in which they can feel relevant and in charge of their future.

Ensuring all community stakeholders are included in discussions on migration and preparations for alternative programming, most importantly those involved in migration. These stakeholders include 'passeurs', ghetto chiefs and more. They will be able to most accurately judge the appeal of potential programming, and involving them in the planning will increase their stake in its success.

Optimising knowledge and information management

Adding granularity to data gathered on migrants. The research conducted here highlighted the different trends and journeys of the migrants passing through Agadez, whether Nigeriens or non-Nigeriens, those intending to reach Europe or those planning to stay in North Africa, those planning short-term migrations or those planning long-term migrations, etc. Yet, much of the data gathered on the topic focuses solely on migrants' gender, country of origin and which leg of the journey they are on. Adding further details to the information gathered – and information presented (for example, on the IOM dashboard, which already successfully presents the results of awareness building activities in Niger) – will improve the government and NGOs' ability to support migrants.

Tapping into local associations and youth organisations. Local organisations are best placed to conduct research in Agadez in conjunction with the government or NGOs/IOs etc. Samuel Hall successfully collaborated with the ANESJ in collecting qualitative data for this study. These local connections make it possible to more easily gather information in sensitive context, such as the ghettos, and involve the community of Agadez itself in better understanding what is happening there.

Using returned migrants in awareness-raising campaigns. The most dissuasive stories of migration were those given directly by returned migrants. This should include both those who stopped during the journey and returned migrants from Europe and other "golden lands", to address the reality of life there beyond what is presented in social media.

Developing research on transit economies. There is no literature on transit economies. Further research should be conducted to fill in the gaps, notably in economic and historical studies on cross-border and circular movements.

⁷⁴ NB: the adult education courses could also be opened to migrants present, providing another opportunity for migrants and host community members to interact in order to minimise potential tensions.

Leveraging IOM's pivotal role in the sub-Saharan region

Critiques against the IOM have recently surfaced in academic circles. They are of two natures: the focus on 'migration management', and the removal of decision-making power from local stakeholders. In this regard, at a time when IOM is becoming directly related to the United Nations, its position will be – *de facto* and *de jure* – questioned:

*'IOM will be acting as the de facto "UN migration agency", and it will be assumed to be acting under the UN Charter. In reality, IOM's new status as a related organization of the UN means it is under no obligation to support the UN-based framework of human rights or labour standards, but rather can take its lead from the states that contract for its services.'*⁷⁵

IOM's current transition offers it a unique opportunity to question – and possibly rethink – its approach to migration in West Africa and the sub-Saharan region. In today's context, IOM should leverage and rethink its role as a 'migration manager' as its work and unique position in Niger clearly gives the organisation the opportunity to do so:

Long-term cross-border agenda: IOM's supra-national **identity** should neither mean that Niger is destitute from its capacity to take decisions nor that socio-economic agendas are bound by national borders; on the long-run, it is only by developing dynamic cross-border economic exchanges between trans-Saharan hubs and by promoting the economic ecosystem of a city like Agadez, that IOM and other stakeholders will help local actors optimise existing patterns of exchange and territorial ordering. IOM does have a pivotal role to play in this regard.

Short-term 'band aid' interventions: IOM's **practices** can be adjusted to not just fit donors' political priorities or short-term agendas, but rather to help them refocus on longer-term development agendas in the trans-Saharan region, while supporting migrants to travel in safety and dignity, and promoting the UN-based approach towards human rights, labour, and protection standards.

In a recent interview with Reuters, Richard Danziger, IOM regional director for West and Central Africa, noted that *'pretty much the whole population of Agadez now lives of providing services to migrants in transit'*. He then added: *'what we can't do right now is offer real alternatives. A mixture of development aid and job creation is the only way forward.'*⁷⁶ This report would agree with these conclusions, providing that IOM uses its unique position, expertise, and legitimacy in the region to call for an ambitious long-term and cross-border socio-economic development plan while also implementing more traditional short-term and rapid impact interventions (job creation, capacity building, awareness campaigns, etc.).

⁷⁵ <https://www.irinnews.org/opinion/2016/09/28/un-summit-s-hidden-cost-migrant-rights>

⁷⁶ See Reuters, October 13, 2016. Available at <http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-europe-migrants-africa-idUKKCN12D1N9>



Photo 8: Departure of migrants in Agadez

Additional methodological details

Further details on tools

- **Migrant survey. 410 surveys completed.** This survey was conducted with migrants currently in Agadez, providing a representative picture of economic interactions from their perspective, and included a section on intentions to understand the agency and preferences of migration, crucial to supporting transitional and durable solutions to irregular migration. Migrants were defined as people not originally from Agadez, who did not live in Agadez permanently, and were on their way to another destination.
- **Host community survey. 357 surveys completed.** This survey was conducted with members of the local community, defined as Nigeriens who live in Agadez permanently and are not on their way to another destination or in the process of returning from another destination.
- **Focus Group Discussions (10)** – Two sets of focus group discussion guidelines were created, one for migrants on their initial trip northwards, and one for migrants on the return. Four of each type were conducted in Agadez (including, in both cases, one with just women), and two focus group discussions were conducted with migrants on the return in Arlit. The guidelines included a cartography component for migrants on their initial trip, asking them to map where they had been in Agadez itself, as well as an image component, asking them to choose which images best represented their trip moving forward and their life on destination. Guidelines were designed to address migration drivers, experiences on the trip, economic interactions, and migrant aspirations. Focus group discussions with migrants on the return were conducted in the city of Agadez as well as at the IOM centre.
- **Case Studies (4)** - Two case studies were conducted in Agadez, and two in Arlit, in both cases with migrants on the return, one man and one woman.
- **Key Informant Interviews (40)** – A range of KIIs were conducted in both Agadez and Niamey, representing stakeholders at the national and local level. These included representatives from UN organisations, NGOs, the government and the municipality, as well as IOM staff in each location.

Sampling

Migrants were selected for the survey using a purposeful-then-random selection for the first ten days of fieldwork, with the addition of a half-day of fieldwork at the end specifically targeting non-Nigerien female migrants to ensure they would be represented in sufficient number to draw statistically significant conclusions about their experiences. Areas of the cities where migrants were likely to be present were identified and targeted for the research. These included bus stations and ghettos, but also restaurants and other public spaces. Randomised door-to-door sampling was discouraged to a) ensure sufficient sample of migrants and b) avoid security issues, as access to ghettos required pre-survey agreements with the people running them. The sampling plan was designed to ensure research would cover different parts of the city.

Host community member surveys were conducted at random in the areas where migrants were being targeted for the first half of the fieldwork. Subsequently, neighbourhoods which had not been identified as migrant-heavy were added to the sample for host community interviews to avoid over-representing the impact of migration by focusing only on areas where migrants are present. Overall, few areas of the city did not have migrants present to interview.

Limitations of this study

- The surveyed migration dynamics are clandestine, which makes the work of the research team more difficult and can introduce some biases during the interview process.
- The migration phenomenon is fast-changing and complex, which negatively impacts the accuracy and timeliness of quantitative data (unless they are collected frequently, using a longitudinal approach).

Niger employment data

Table 17 - Salaried workers, Niger, by Sector

	2009	2010	2011	2012
Agriculture, hunting, growing/cultivation of trees, fishing	1,456	1855	2369	2,893
Extractive industries	5,109	5,209	5,706	10,896
Manufacturing industries	5,400	5,324	5,950	16,057
Electricity, water and gaz	3,863	6,995	6,080	7,766
Construction and public works	8,979	6,711	7,506	12,339
Trade, restaurants, hotels	4,056	9,744	10,828	5,319
Transportation, warehouses, communications	7,355	10,112	11,857	11,793
Banks, insurance, real estate, corporate services	3,551	4,783	5,163	3,863
Social services	21,284	19,875	26,862	24,066
Total	61,053	70,608	82,321	94,992

Source 1 - Agence Nationale pour la Promotion de l'Emploi, Niger

The informal sector accounts for approximately 70% of the GDP of Niger.⁷⁷

Current and former key sectors of the economy of the Agadez region

Mining

The Agadez region, for a long time, depended on two primary resources: uranium mining, exploited by Compagnie Minière d'Akouta (COMINAK) and the Société des Mines de l'Aïr (SOMAIR), and tourism. Despite recent challenges – notably, the kidnapping of seven SOMAIR employees in Arlit in 2010, and renegotiations for contract renewals of the mine operators in early 2014, the mines continue to be a significant producer of uranium (see below), responsible for 7.5% of the world's uranium production.

Table 18 - Niger Uranium Production (tons)

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
SOMAIR	1,808		2,726	3,065	2,730	2,331	2,509
COMINAK	1,435		1,075	1,506	1,508	1,501	1,607
SOMINA ⁷⁸			64 est	96 est	290 est	225 est	0
Total			3,865	4,667	4,528	4,057	4,116

Source 2 - World Nuclear Association

Tourism

The tourism industry revolved around several key points:

- Tourism in the desert and the Aïr Mountains
- The Paris-Dakar race

The Tuareg rebellions in the late 2000s and the kidnapping of mining staff in 2010 put an end to a tourist industry already diminished by the loss of the Paris-Dakar road race, which until 2001 still went through Agadez. The table below illustrates the corresponding decrease in hotel capacity in Agadez – highlighting also the fact that the upswing in migration has not replaced the tourist industry directly but rather requires reconversion of facilities and activities.

⁷⁷ I"Enquête Nationale Sur l'Emploi et Le Secteur Informel Au Niger," 2012, http://fsp-uam.refer.ne/files/Ressources%20num%C3%A9riques/ENSI_2014_2.pdf.

⁷⁸ Société des Mines d'Azelik SA, established much later than its two competitors, in 2007, with significant Chinese equity

Table 19 - Main Hotel Capacity in Agadez Region⁷⁹

	2009			2012		
	# Hotels	# Rooms	# Beds	# Hotels	# Rooms	# Beds
4* hotels	1	48	78	1	48	78
3* hotels	1	19	34	1	25	41
2* hotels	1	17	30	1	17	30
1* hotels	2	33	45	1	15	33
Unranked	7	91	202	4	61	81
Total	12	208	389	8	166	263

Migration

The town of Agadez, in Niger, has been a traditional location for migration for hundreds of years, a key stop on the caravan trails going through the Sahara. The numbers of those passing through have been slowly increasing since the early nineties, but in recent years have undergone a substantial increase: In 2015, more than 150,000 migrants were estimated to pass through Agadez – four times more than in 2011.⁸⁰

A foreign diplomat in Agadez noted in 2014 that “Dismantling the network of intermediaries, drivers, guides, migrant ‘welcome centres’, and clandestine migration consultants would place the regional economy of Agadez under considerable stress.”⁸¹

Migration has had at least one clear impact on Agadez: whereas 10 years ago, there were no ATMs in Agadez, there are now 14 bank agencies, along with hundreds of money-transfer agencies (WSJ). The BCEAO (www.bceao.int) does track some financial statistics and makes these available on their site.

Smuggling of goods

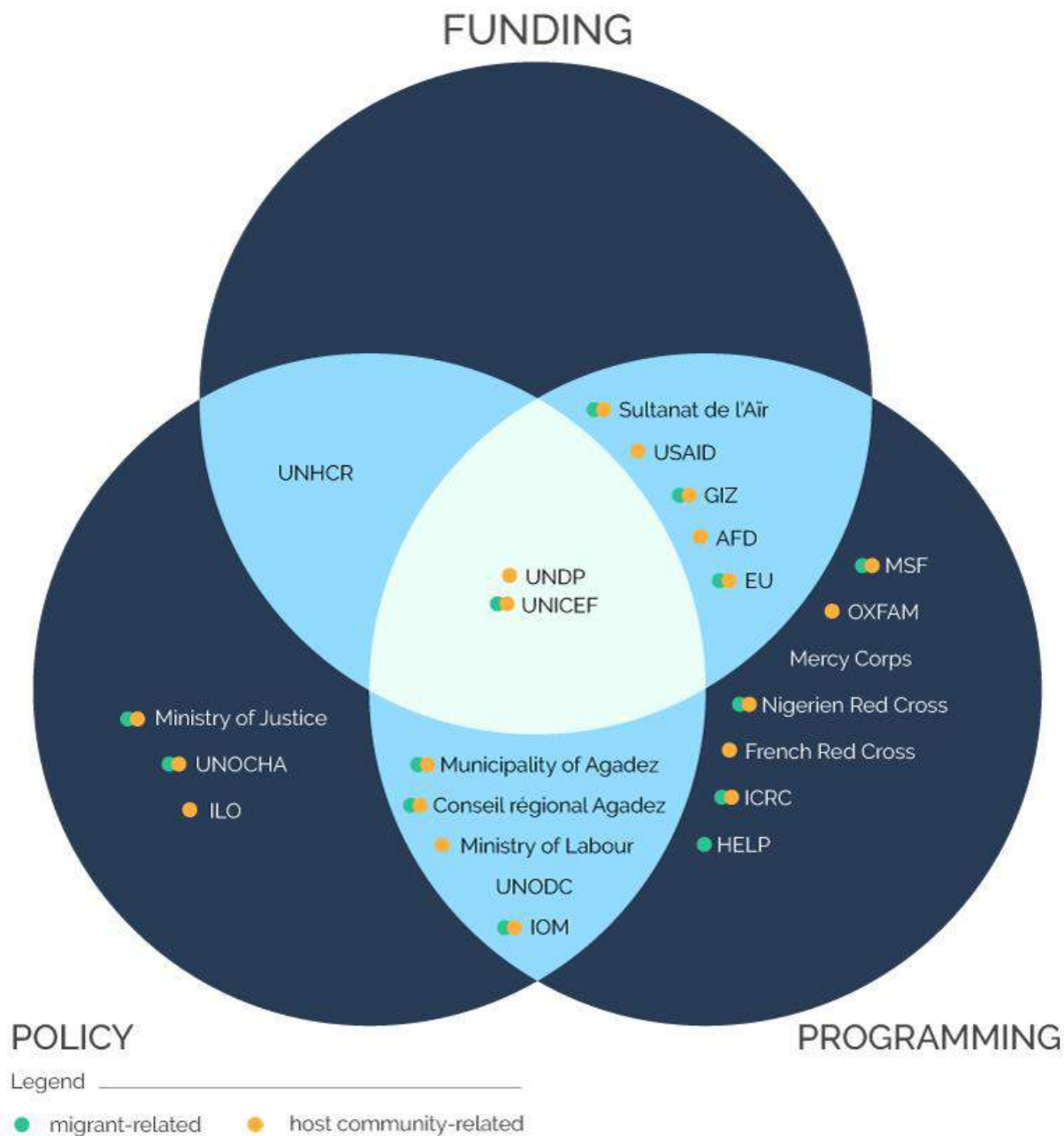
The smuggling of goods through the Sahara has been ongoing for generations. More recently, many involved in migration bring back goods from the North on their return trips. These have included weapons.

⁷⁹ Region D'Agadez, Direction Regionale de l'Institut National de la Statistique, *Agadez en Chiffres 2010, Agadez en Chiffres 2013*

⁸⁰ Hinshaw and Parkinson, “Agadez Traffickers Profit From Movement Through Niger to Libya.”

⁸¹ “Smuggled Futures: The Dangerous Path of a Migrant from Africa to Europe,” *Global Initiative*, accessed October 10, 2016, <http://globalinitiative.net/smuggled-futures/>, p. 15

Figure 14 – Mapping of stakeholders working on migrant- and host community-related issues



Macro-level: beyond Agadez

Euro-African Dialogue(s): tackling irregular migration and strengthening economic development

The existing dialogue between the EU and Niger on security, stability and migration-related issues is based on common dialogues and platforms: Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel adopted in March 2011, Valletta Summit on Migration in November 2015, Rabat process, ECOWAS, G5 Sahel, as well as the Lake Chad Basin Commission. In today's context, the Sahel and Lake Chad Window of the EU Emergency Trust Fund includes Niger, as a key transit country, along with Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Gambia, Mali, Mauritania, Nigeria, and Senegal. Among other concrete action plans, the EU Trust Fund launched a 25 Million € programme to 'strengthen the sustainable management of the consequences of migratory flows in Niger' with GIZ as technical and operational implementing partner and in coordination with other existing projects (PromAP, ProDEC, PADEL, EUCAP) and collaboration with other relevant actors (UNDP, UNICEF IOM, GIZ, AFD, Governments of Japan and Spain).

More broadly, the inter-regional dialogue on migration is still limited to non-binding consultations that have not been accompanied by clear commitments from either countries of origin or transit (in Sub-Saharan Africa) or destination (in Europe) to support regulated avenues for legal migration. However, two platforms lead to continuous discussions between European and West-African actors on migration issues:

- Euro-African Dialogue on Migration and Development, known as the Rabat Process, launched in 2006 to discuss (1) the organisation of legal migration (2) the fight against irregular migration and (3) migration and development between Sub-Saharan Africa and Europe;
- Africa-EU Partnership on Migration, Mobility and Employment (MME), launched in 2007 to improve employment prospects in Africa and the management of migration flows between the two regions.

African Union: promoting regular labour migration

Symmetrically, the African Union (AU) has initiated large-scale programmes to tackle some of the structural causes of irregular migration and trafficking in Niger. The first initiative is the Joint Labour Migration Programme (JLMP) – ‘a ten-year continental programme which overall objective is to strengthen good governance and promote the regular internal migration of labour on the continent.’ As highlighted by a AU political analyst, the JLMP, which is supposed to start in 2016 for an initial duration of two years, assumes that ‘both aspects are closely linked, as people will not actually benefit from the free movement protocols if laws and regulations are not enforced in Niger, Mali, Senegal, etc. in countries of transit and destination’ (AU, Senior Political Officer, Addis Ababa HQ). Further, AU Heads of State and Government 25th Ordinary Session declaration on migration, committed to speed up the realization of the international standards on labour migration under the Africa-EU Strategy for 2014-2017 and the SDGs.

Local level: Governmental and traditional institutions, donors, UN agencies, IOs, and NGOs

Table 20 – Mapping of institutions present in Agadez

Stakeholder name	Type	Activities in Niger			Presence in Agadez	
		Funding	Policy	Programming	Migrant-related	Host community-related
Ministry of Justice	Gov't		✓		✓	✓
Ministry of Labour	Gov't		✓	✓		✓
Conseil Régional d'Agadez	Gov't		✓	✓	✓	✓
Municipality of Agadez	Gov't		✓	✓	✓	✓
Sultanat de l'Aïr	Traditional	✓		✓	✓	✓
European Union	Int'l Gov't	✓		✓	✓	✓
Stakeholder name	Type	Activities in Niger			Presence in Agadez	
		Funding	Policy	Programming	Migrant-related	Host community-related
GIZ	Aid	✓		✓	✓	✓
AFD	Aid	✓		✓		✓
USAID	Aid	✓		✓		✓
UNDP	UN	✓	✓	✓		✓
UNHCR	UN	✓	✓			
UNOCHA	UN		✓		✓	✓
UNODC	UN		✓	✓		
UNICEF	UN					✓
ILO	Int'l Org		✓			
IOM	Int'l Org		✓	✓	✓	✓
ICRC	Int'l Org			✓	✓	✓
Nigerien Red Cross	NGO			✓	✓	✓
French Red Cross	NGO			✓		✓
Mercy Corps	NGO			✓		
HELP	NGO			✓	✓	
Oxfam	NGO			✓		✓
MSF	NGO			✓	✓	✓

Key governmental stakeholders

- Ministry of Justice

The Ministry of Justice is responsible for the existing legislation around migration. In 2010, Niger adopted legislation against human trafficking. To date, Niger is the only country in the Sahel to have issued legislation criminalising migrant smuggling. The Nigerien parliament adopted this law on 11 May 2015. The law criminalises human rights violations faced by migrants victim of trafficking.

- Ministry of Labour

The Ministry of Labour has developed a potential strategy for cooperation with Algeria around migration of the regions of Agadez and Tawa. Additionally, from a host community perspective, the ministry is developing an employment programme for youth in the municipalities, proposing to have them work in each department on public interest projects, with the goal of eventually allowing them to set up or work in small enterprises. By providing work opportunities to youth, they hope to reduce the appeal of migration abroad. The logistical structure for this programme has been put in place but the programme itself not yet implemented.

- Conseil Régional d'Agadez

Regional councils in Niger are responsible for the conception, programming and implementation of actions supporting the economic, educational, social, and cultural development of their region, as well as environmental protection and natural resources. In Agadez Conseil Régional (regional council) of Agadez has addressed the economy of migration in Agadez through two primary actions. Firstly, the Conseil has developed a *Plan de développement Régional d'Agadez 2016-2020* – a regional development plan for Agadez. This plan provides an overview of the current situation in Agadez with regards to a number of key sectors (energy, agriculture, mining, commerce, etc.), presents the Conseil Régional's general vision through 2035, and finally offers a concrete operational plan moving forward, with key strategic axes on which to advance and a logframe with key indicators and target outputs. Secondly, the Conseil is putting in place a coordination mechanism financed by Germany to allow all organisations present in Agadez to share their activities.

- Municipality of Agadez

The Agadez municipality closed all the migrant ghettos in Agadez. Currently, it must address the infrastructure challenges placed by increased demand on those networks in Agadez.

Donors and associated aid agencies

- European Union

The European Union has a keen interest in questions of migration going through Agadez in Niger, especially as these impact the EU. They will be funding a number of projects on the topic through the EU Trust Fund, and have already funded the current research.

The EU also launched **EUCAP Sahel** in 2012, a EUAA (European Union External Action Service) CDSP (Common Security and Defense Policy) mission to Niger. The mission's goal was to "contribute to the development of an integrated, coherent, sustainable and human rights-based approach among the various Nigerien security agencies in the fight against terrorism and organised crime."⁸²

⁸² "The EUCAP Sahel Niger Civilian Mission."

More recently, EUCAP has opened a permanent branch in Agadez to support security forces there and build capacity in fighting terrorism and organised crime.

- GIZ

GIZ has an office in Agadez and has been involved in programming touching the Agadez region on two fronts: local government capacity building (supporting the decentralisation process) and agricultural programming. They are currently preparing an EU-funded project specifically designed to reinforce governmental capacity at a local level to react rapidly to migratory flows.

- AFD

The AFD's work in Niger concentrates on three major pillars: contributing to sustainable development, developing human capital, and strengthening food security and rural development. In the context of this work, it has funded research and programming in the Agadez region to support agriculture and the development of rural activities. For example, in 2013 it supported the digging of wells north of Agadez to develop local economic activities.

- USAID

USAID in Niger works through the Niger Community Cohesion Initiative (NCCI) which works in three regions, including Agadez, on civic engagement, decreasing interest in extremist activities and stabilisation.

Most relevant UN Organisations

- UNDP

UNDP's areas of focus in Niger including supporting the state in developing its economic and social development plans, resilience (with FAO as the lead), human development (with UNICEF as the lead) and governance. In terms of Agadez, they have supported decentralisation through the capacity building of local governmental entities. Additionally, they have conducted short-term livelihoods trainings and managed centres for professional insertion in order to support the reinsertion of youth within the community.

- UNHCR

UNHCR has had limited involvement in Niger. The office was set up in 2012. As the focus of the organisation is on refugees, its work has locally focused on Malian refugees and the Diffa region. The question of mixed migration is one which they have only recently started addressing in the Nigerien context. In Niger, they have primarily addressed cases where people are in need of international protection – which is not relevant to the majority of the migration in there.

- UNOCHA

UNOCHA has an office in Agadez. The team there holds organisational meetings. Their primary role is of advocacy for migrants and their needs. Across Niger, UNOCHA coordinates cluster meetings in food security, nutrition health, water, hygiene and sanitation, protection, logistics, and emergency education and telecommunication across the country.

- UNODC

UNODC's actions in Niger come in the context of the organisations Sahel Programme, which has as primary goal to protect the region against crime and terrorism. As such, it supported the government in its

establishment of the 2015 law criminalising smuggling, built capacity amongst law enforcement agencies through the teaching of UNODC modules against terrorism, drug trafficking, migrant smuggling and trafficking in persons, amongst others.

- UNICEF

UNICEF has a field office in Agadez, from which it coordinates emergency responses in the area as necessary as well as health-related activities.

- ILO

The ILO plays primarily a policy role in Niger, and does not conduct programming directly in Agadez.

Other international organisations and NGOs

- IOM

IOM is one of the most active stakeholders in Agadez, with both migrants and the host community targeted through its activities. The migrant centre run by IOM in Agadez supports migrants passing through Agadez, the vast majority of whom are returning home and often in need of medical, psychosocial and other care.

IOM has also conducted short-term trainings with migrants and host community to support them in accessing income-generating activities, as well as a number of awareness-raising campaigns.

At the Flow Monitoring Points (FMPs) IOM has also been collecting data on the scope and type of migration passing through these.

- Nigerien Red Cross

The Nigerien Red Cross operates a migrant centre funded by ICRC in Agadez. Additionally they have collaborated with ICRC on a number of projects in the Agadez region detailed below:

- ICRC

ICRC's sub-delegation in Agadez conducts programming to both benefit host community members and migrants, in the areas of livestock raising, cash for work, support in income generating activities, health, water and habitat, protection (helping migrants contact their families for example) and capacity building with the Niger Red Cross.

- French Red Cross

They have conducted programming in Agadez to reinforce the capacities of the Ministry of Public Health to ensure malnourished children under five are taken care of.

- Mercy Corps

Mercy Corps closed its Agadez office in 2013 after eight years of work in agriculture, governance, and credit organisations due to lack of funding. However, it continues to work in Niger and most recently has begun to focus on migration as it factors as a coping strategy for the resilience of households.

- HELP

HELP conducted a two-and-a-half year project with returnee Nigeriens to support them in developing income-generating activities, as well as with their basic food needs. This included training around business and in forming cooperatives, as well as financial support.

- Oxfam

Oxfam works in 7 Nigerien provinces (6 on a regular basis) including Agadez. Programming has included emergency response as well as livelihoods, social services, governance and gender-related work. Migrants are not specifically targeted

- MSF

MSF provides health facilities in Agadez, as well as medical care to displaced persons and migrants who are in Agadez.

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VENDRE DU RÊVE DANS LE DÉSERT

L'impact économique de la migration à Agadez

L'étude de l'impact économique du phénomène migratoire sur la ville d'Agadez a été conduite par les équipes de *Samuel Hall*, en collaboration technique avec des chercheurs de l'Université d'Oxford (COMPAS). Commanditée par l'Organisation Internationale pour les Migrations (OIM), elle a été financée par l'Union Européenne. Ce document de synthèse en présente les conclusions et recommandations principales.

Depuis la chute du régime de Kadhafi en 2011, on observe un renforcement du rôle historique de plaque tournante de la migration dans la région subsaharienne de la ville d'Agadez. Celle-ci est progressivement devenue un haut lieu de la migration depuis l'Afrique de l'Ouest et les pays de la zone CEDEAO, à destination de l'Algérie, de la Libye et – pour un nombre croissant de migrants – vers l'Europe, autant témoin que participant dans ces flux migratoires.

La présente étude évalue la nature des échanges économiques entre migrants et communautés d'accueil tout en identifiant des voies concrètes d'amélioration de leurs conditions de vie et de réalisation de leurs aspirations. Trois questions essentielles sont posées par cette étude : quels sont les raisons de la migration vers et depuis Agadez ? Quels sont les déterminants de l'économie de la migration et qui sont les acteurs de cette industrie ? Que peuvent faire l'Organisation Internationale pour les Migrations (OIM) et les autres acteurs de la migration au Niger pour promouvoir à la fois le développement économique local et la protection des migrants ?

Les équipes de *Samuel Hall* ont conduit une recherche de terrain à la fois qualitative et quantitative entre le 13 mai et le 16 juin 2016. Deux outils ont été utilisés pour la recherche quantitative : un questionnaire pour les migrants (410 entretiens) et un questionnaire pour les membres de la communauté hôte (357 entretiens). Des entretiens qualitatifs complètent les informations recueillies par ceux-ci : 40 interviews d'acteurs du développement socio-économique local et international ; 10 groupes de discussion, ainsi que 4 études de cas individuelles.

La première section discute des réalités concrètes de la migration et du séjour à Agadez. Les liens entre communautés locales et migrants sont généralement limités à des échanges commerciaux ; 62% des habitants d'Agadez interviewés considèrent les activités liées à la migration comme identiques aux autres activités économiques, formelles ou informelles. D'importantes différences peuvent néanmoins être identifiées entre les voyages des Nigériens (moins coûteux, et dépendants de leurs réseaux personnels) et des non Nigériens (plus introduits aux réseaux de passeurs et aux voyages organisés). Le voyage lui-même, une fois Agadez quittée, pose de réels dangers, tant sur la route qu'à l'arrivée. Enfin,

les parties prenantes à Agadez elles aussi font face à des motivations financières contradictoires, entre l'argent à gagner par la suppression de la migration et celui provenant de sa facilitation.

La deuxième section confirme les conclusions les plus récentes de la littérature académique sur les raisons de la migration en Afrique de l'Ouest. Si une large majorité de migrants évoque des mobiles économiques pour expliquer leur décision, d'autres facteurs entrent en compte, au-delà du simple choix rationnel, en particulier pour les migrants en route vers l'Europe : aspirations individuelles, attrait d'une vie radicalement autre, fantasmes relayés par les réseaux sociaux, ainsi qu'une forme de « mystique de la migration » qui balaye souvent les messages de prévention des organisations internationales.

La troisième section approfondit cette recherche en la centrant sur l'analyse économique. L'impact économique des migrants sur l'économie locale est limité en raison de la brièveté du séjour des migrants dans la ville ou ses environs : 70% des migrants interviewés pensent rester moins d'un mois et ne cherchent dès lors pas nécessairement un travail. Ensuite, si l'équipe de recherche a bien rencontré des migrants désireux de travailler dans la mine d'or de Djado avant de rallier la Libye, l'énorme majorité des migrants ne cherche pas à travailler à Agadez. Les migrants nigériens, dont la migration est plus cyclique, ont en revanche accès à des réseaux de placement et collaboration plus anciens, notamment les femmes dans la domesticité, la mendicité, et la prostitution.

Il faut enfin retenir que la population locale bénéficie de la présence des migrants, qui dépensent en moyenne et individuellement 18,990 CFA dans la nourriture, l'hébergement, le transport, la communication ou les transactions financières, durant leur séjour à Agadez.

Figure 1 - Gagnez-vous de l'argent à Agadez ?

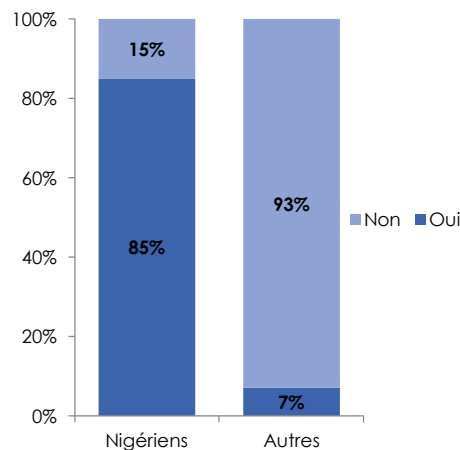
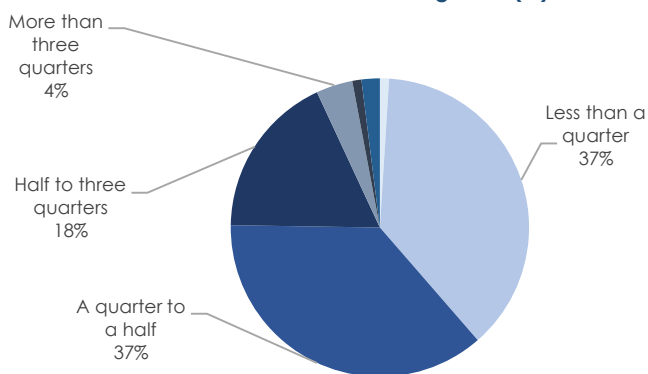


Figure 2 - Part des revenus du ménage provenant d'activités liées à la migration (%)



La quatrième et dernière section établit un lien entre les données récoltées sur le terrain et les recherches académiques à ce sujet. Une des principales conclusions de cette recherche est que les hypothèses sur lesquelles se fonde stratégies et programmes touchant à la migration dans la région sont à nuancer ou à réviser : les migrants en route vers l'Afrique du Nord et l'Europe ne sont pas nécessairement les plus vulnérables ou les moins éduqués ; leur processus de décision ne saurait être réduit au simple modèle du choix économique rationnel ('*cost-benefit analysis*'), mêlant habitus socio-culturel, espérance économique, mystique de l'ailleurs et aspirations irrationnelles.

Table 1 – Vérification des hypothèses sur la migration

	Socio-economic profile of migrants	Decision-making process	Solutions to curb irregular migration
ASSUMPTIONS ON TRANSIT MIGRATION IN AGADEZ	Migrants heading to Libya are the poor among the poor 	The decision to migrate is driven by rational choices (CBA model) 	A stronger economic development in countries of origin will curb irregular migration
Donors	Underlying assumption	Underlying assumption	Underlying assumption
International organisations, UN	Underlying assumption	Underlying assumption	Underlying assumption
NGOs	Nuanced	Underlying assumption	Nuanced / Positive
Qualitative Survey	Nuanced / Negative	Negative	Not Relevant
Quantitative Survey	Nuanced / Negative	Nuanced / Negative	Not Relevant
Academia	Negative	Nuanced / Negative	Nuanced

Au-delà d'un appel au respect des droits des migrants, cette recherche souligne finalement la nécessité d'une approche transfrontalière et transsaharienne aux interventions économiques dans la région, avec une priorité appuyée donnée au développement structurel à long-terme. Pour une organisation comme l'OIM – mais aussi pour les gouvernements de la région, les bailleurs internationaux ou les ONGs – il convient donc de passer d'une approche *gestionnaire* du phénomène migratoire, centrée sur les priorités politiques de court-terme et les périmètres frontaliers nationaux, à un développement volontariste des échanges économiques à l'échelle transsaharienne. Les recommandations détaillées dans l'étude vont dans ce sens, tout en soulignant la nécessité de renforcer la sécurité des migrants, la protection de leurs droits, ainsi que leur inclusion socio-économique tout au long de leur parcours de mobilité.

Développer des infrastructures à travers un programme régional

1. Mettre en œuvre un programme de développement économique transsaharien et transfrontalier.
2. Soutenir le développement d'infrastructures électriques, hydrauliques, de télécommunications et autres sur le court terme.
3. Continuer le travail de sensibilisation sur le cadre juridique de la migration, y compris les lois nigériennes et autres.
4. Eviter l'amalgame sécurité – migration, qui restent des problématiques séparées.
5. Offrir des services de soutien et de suivi physique et psychologique sur les lieux de retour.
6. Enquêter sur l'utilisation de drogues tout au long du trajet migratoire et fournir un soutien si nécessaire.

Repenser le marché du travail local

7. Formaliser les activités informelles au Niger.
8. Proposer des activités génératrices de revenus alternatives à l'échelon local (Agadez et sa région).
9. Développer un programme de formations professionnelles à faible investissement et fort rendement ciblant migrants et membres de la communauté hôte.
10. Proposer des possibilités d'apprentissage et de travail aux jeunes dans les organismes gouvernementaux.
11. Soutenir les formations professionnelles et les activités génératrices de revenus dans les zones d'origine des migrants.
12. Se concentrer sur les aspects financiers de la migration, et promouvoir des investissements possibles de l'argent « migratoire » dans les lieux d'origine.

Changer les mentalités

13. Soutenir l'éducation dans la région d'Agadez y compris pour les adultes.
14. Inclure une composante jeunesse dans toute programmation, et toute collecte de données, soutenant l'autonomisation des jeunes.

Optimiser la gestion des connaissances et des données

15. Recueillir des données plus granulaires sur les migrants.
16. Exploiter le potentiel qu'offrent les associations locales et de jeunes.
17. Laisser parler les migrants de retour de leurs expériences dans des campagnes de sensibilisation.

Exploiter le rôle central de l'OIM en Afrique subsaharienne

Les milieux académiques critiquent actuellement l'OIM sur deux points: l'accent mis sur la gestion de la migration et la prise de décisions à un niveau national ou supranational plutôt qu'incluant les parties prenantes locales. A cet effet, alors que l'OIM est en train de devenir directement liée aux Nations Unies, sa position sera – *de facto* et *de jure* – remise en question.

La transition qui est actuellement en cours offre à l'OIM une opportunité unique de remettre en question – et potentiellement d'ajuster – son approche actuelle vis-à-vis de la migration en Afrique de l'Ouest et la région subsaharienne.

Dans le contexte actuel, l'OIM doit repenser son rôle de gestionnaire de la migration. Son travail et sa position unique au Niger permettent à l'organisation de le faire en adoptant un programme transfrontalier et en aidant les donateurs à se réorienter sur des programmations plus long termes de développement dans la région subsaharienne, tout en permettant aux migrants de voyager dans des conditions de sécurité et de dignité et en appliquant le mandat UN envers les droits de l'homme, le travail et les normes de protection.



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