

## Who Goes Where and How: Migration as An Adaptation Strategy in the West African Drylands

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### Abstract

Nigerien migrants flow into Nigeria everyday for several reasons with the hope of a better life. The ease of access into the porous Nigerian border allows the migrants free flow into the country. This research aims at investigating the purposes and patterns of migration in some parts of northern Nigeria with migrants from southern Niger Republic. Data on the migrants' demographics and migratory histories was collected through in-depth interviews, the Open Data Kit (ODK), Focus Group Discussions and field observations while the analysis was by the use of the Microsoft Excel. Findings indicate southward movement of the people for *bidā*; and *ci rani* especially during dry seasons. Other forms of migration include environmentally induced, health and educational. Migrants from remote parts of Niger come into Nigeria due to availability of jobs at the destination, good road networking and most importantly the presence of a network of family and friends that assists in securing these jobs. They use cars, lorries and beasts of burden while some simply trek across the border. In Nigeria, migrants lead a solitary life and engage in various new livelihoods. Patterns have been ascertained to be seasonal and circular and take the form of short-term movements which later lengthens to permanence. The seasonal migration (*ci rani*) has been historically traced to be an adaptive measure popularly practiced by agrarian communities in the drylands. It is recommended that an improved digitalized database system for the migrants be employed to manage their demographics, migration histories and means of livelihood. This will allow for proper accounting and management of both immigrants and emigrants where at a glance, a migrants profile would show their status as circular, returned or lifetime migrants.

**Keywords:** Migration; seasonal migration; adaptation

### Introduction

Migration is a common practice in Hausaland and dating pre-colonial times, a substantial proportion of the rural population travel for seasonal labour during the dry season. Common patterns of seasonal migration have been built up over hundreds of years and destinations and work vary by community. For example, Kano has been an important centre for commerce,

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also serving as a trade route linking the Hausaland to the Maghreb. During the pre-colonial era, migrants from Niger republic have been assimilated in Kano and their descendants today occupy parts of the inner city known as Agadasawa and Fagge (Adamu, 1999 in Adamu, 2008). Historically, different ethnic and regional communities have travelled to different areas like Agadasawa from Agadez, Ayagi from Yoruba descent, Fagge hosted people from Maiduguri...etc. These patterns are in part inherited from pre-colonial trade networks, cross border ethnic solidarities, colonial era industrial mining and harvest projects, and the attraction of areas with greater work potential combined with communities of immigrants from the source ethnic group. The volume of seasonal migration is wholly inestimable, all the evidence being that the propensity to migrate in this manner is very variable both within and between societies and from year to year.

Migration is caused by so many push and pull factors such as economic, social, political, cultural, health and education (Kainth, 2018) but climate change and variability are also important factors in the migration equation because of their impact on the environment and on livelihoods. Both have significant impacts on the African continent especially as it greatly affects agricultural systems causing loss or decrease in crop yield and animal production which can be attributed to changes in climatic variables such as increasing temperatures and uncertainties in precipitation (Kainth, 2018).

This paper is a contribution to migration literature where it seeks to highlight the types, nature and patterns of migration as an adaptation strategy that manifests in some parts of northern Nigeria with migrants from southern Niger Republic. It further identifies the populations that engage in the migration, their destinations, movement timeframe and what they engage in at the destination.

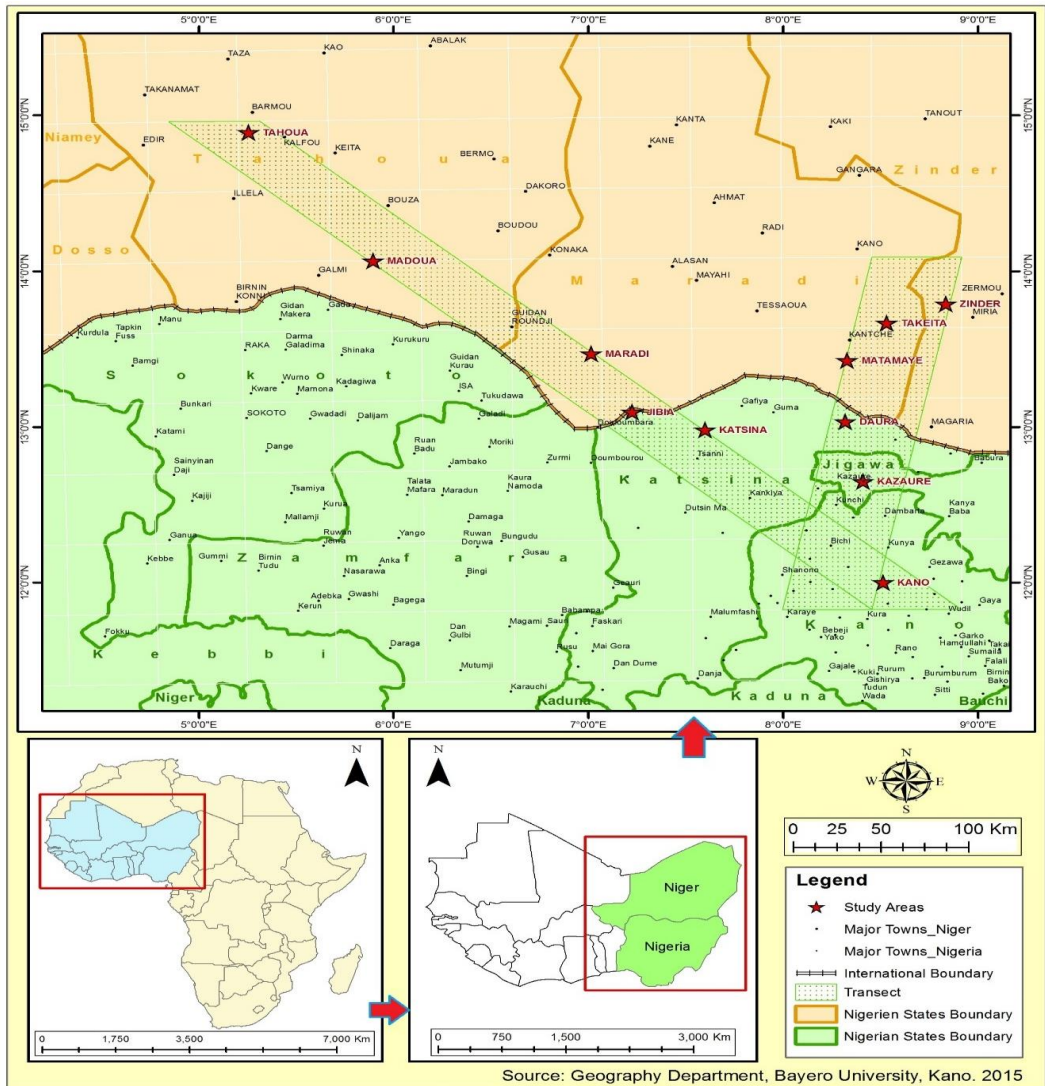
## **Materials and Methods**

Niger is a totally landlocked Sahelian country, three-quarters of which is deserted. Its population of 17,129,076 in 2012 has a growth rate of 3.9% (INS, 2013) and it has a mainly rural living on subsistence rainfed agriculture with millet and Sorghum as the staples. The study area consists of three regions of southern Niger Republic viz Zinder, Maradi and Tahoua and Kano, Katsina and Daura towns in northern Nigeria. Two transects of 50km width were drawn from Kano moving up into Niger Republic. The first transect (A) going in the northern direction covers a distance of about 202 Km (Kano – Zinder) while the second transect (B) going northwest wards covering 478 Km (Kano – Tahoua) – Figure 1. These towns were purposively sampled being the major towns along each route. This decision is informed by the findings of Halliru (2015) that these migrants would prefer to reside mainly in urban centres since they are basically seeking new and better livelihood opportunities.

A multi-strategy design was employed where mixed methods were used. A participatory approach was used in this multi-site research in order to have a true understanding of the multiple realities that predominate each site and the resultant effects. Snowballing sampling technique was employed to gather information by use of survey instruments.



**Figure 1.** Study Area Showing The Two Transects From Northern Nigeria To Southern Niger Republic



## Literature Review

### Ci Rani: The Concept Of Seasonal Migration In Hausaland

Seasonal migration is the periodic movement of a population from one region or climatic zone to another in accordance with yearly cycle of weather and climate. These systems of migration are normally undertaken to improve the economic status of the household. In West Africa seasonal migration is a rational response to uncertainty for many people (Rain, 1999).

Rao (1994) sees seasonal migration as characteristically short term repetitive or cyclical in nature and adjusted to the annual agricultural cycle. Some theories of migration state that people respond to various pull factors by migrating from their usual or permanent place of

residence to another due to factors which include favourable climates, better food supply, freedom, profitable employment, availability of water for fishing or wetland for cultivation during dry season while other factors such as unfavourable climates resulting to floods and droughts, poverty, lack of jobs in a particular season, that compel them to move out are the “Push” factors (Priya and Daniel, 2003). However, Olofson (1987) observes that social and cultural factors are satisfying to the circulators.

The concept of seasonal migration has been an integral part of the history of Hausaland. Locally called “*Ci Rami*” literally translated as ‘eating away the dry season’, plays an important part of the economic and cultural life of the Hausa people. It and other movements are partially determined by the climate and require a network of connections that spreads across space. It requires being quick and resourceful and also requires being a good navigator (Rain, 1999).

Hausaland contains three distinct ecological zones, defined by differences in the mean growing season (May – October), rainfall. From South to the North (and from sub humid to arid), these are the Guinean, Sudanean and Sahelian zones. Hausaland has a distinct rainy season that is limited to the migration of the equatorial trough which is the land segment of the inter-tropical convergence zone, towards the thermal equator. There is a pronounced unimodal rainfall, maximum in August (Buba, 2014), with a seasonal length of 4-5 months duration.

The 6 study areas (Fig.1) fall within the Hausaland as further testified by the artist Alhaji Adamu Dan Filinge in his song ‘*Nigeria da Niger duk dai suke!*’

## **Data Collection**

Qualitative methods were employed to source primary data by use of surveys such as interviews, focus group discussions (FGD) and participant observation. Some of the interviews were administered using paper and pencil where a checklist guided the conversation. This was to get demographic, socio-economic and migration histories. While some others were conducted using the computerized version known as the Open Data Kit (ODK). This is a mobile platform that renders complex application logic and supports the manipulation of data types that include text, location, images, audio, video, and barcodes. This was used to provide ease in collection, collation and analysis of data. This also provided the location latitude, location longitude and location altitude.

A total of 21 FGDs were conducted at different sites within northern Nigeria and southern Niger Republic. 11 FGDs took place in Nigeria at Kano, Katsina and Daura. The 10 FGDs conducted in Niger Republic included sites in Maradi, Zinder and Tahoua. Reason for choosing these areas was purposive- it depended on who the guide was able to reach out to. The FGD dwelled on migration histories such as origin, reason, duration and destination. Each FGD session lasted an average of ninety minutes.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Migrants Within The Kano-Zinder-Tahoua Axis**

The Kano-Zinder-Tahoua axis forms a triangle of the origin-destination of most of the respondents of this research. 352 migrants were interviewed from different areas of southern



Niger Republic that have migrated temporarily or permanently to different parts of northern Nigeria. Below is an insight into their characteristics and an overview of their shared features.

96.4% of the respondents were male meaning the females constitute a minority even though the International Labour Organization (ILO) estimate that women constitute half of the global migrant population (Fleury, 2016). This could be due to limited access to the females since most males were interviewed at their work place. Male dominance can be considered normal as similar studies in West Africa (Labo, 2000; Abuh, 2014) have recorded same in the migration stream. Oppong (2008) argued that when women migrate, they face a number of gender specific problems. These problems and other gender specific responsibilities reduce the flexibility and ability of women to migrate. Other norms, social and cultural perspectives, religious and legal restrictions still refer (Fleury, 2016). For example, the Islamic tradition on the permissibility of a woman to travel unaccompanied is a subject of great debate among Islamic Scholars. Under the Islamic law, the general position is that it is not permissible for a female to travel for whatever reason including for religious purposes as hajj without an authorized companion (*Mabram:Arabic*). Therefore, for her security and comfort, the movement/migration of women is always associational usually in the company of a brother, spouse, or trusted group (*Ayari: Hausa*) as fall majority of the women in this research.

In a sharp contrast to few women participation in Niger/Nigeria migration, Twum-Baah *et al* (1995) found that women dominate short distance emigration to nearby countries of Côte d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso and Togo in the mid 1990s. Also, Afolayan (2000) & Awumbila (2015) found same in their studies at Idi Iroko and Ghana respectively. This could be attributed to ethno-cultural differences that exists in comparison to this study area. Differences in ethnicity assure people will behave differently to situations around. Idi Iroko is a settlement situated in southwestern Nigeria where the dominant people are Yoruba and religion is Christianity while the people of the study area are Hausa and practice the Islamic faith.

Data suggests that the migrants are at the prime stages of their lives giving the preference of people between the ages of 16-55 years. Therefore, it is the vibrant and productive part of the society that migrates.

Niger Republic has about 21 ethnic groups and languages of which indigenes of the following were found to have migrated to northern Nigeria - Abzine, Bugaje, Buzu (Tuareg), Fulani, Hausa, Kanuri and Zarma. Hausa is found to be the dominant tribe (69.4%) and may even be the reason for the easy flow of migrants into Nigeria since it is also the dominant tribe at the destination. All migrants from other tribes could either communicate fluently or had a basic competence in Hausa. These findings confirm earlier ones from Asiwaju (1985), Afolayan (2000) and Labo (2000) on the affinity of the resident population with residents across the border. It is important to note that the dominance of the Hausa language could have stemmed from the fact that (but for the colonial border delineation of the 1880s) northern Nigeria and southern Niger would have been one entity so there is a common shared ethnicity. It is amazing how so many years after that demarcation, villages located south of Zinder are still referred to as Daurawa meaning people of the Daura emirates (*kasar Daura*).

The marital status of the migrants at the destination shows a majority are married but practice abstinence at the destination. However, when their status changes to lifetime migrants they send for their Nigerienne wives or marries a Nigerian. Most of the migrants were not in the company of their spouses for obvious reasons such as. First, it may prove difficult for a person

to uproot himself and his family from a close network of family and friends. Secondly, as a single migrant, it is easier to get a job and get accommodation, and switch in between jobs while saving any extras to send home as remittance (Liman, 2016). Married persons formed the highest percentage of this research. This is contrary to the findings of Afolayan (2000) that discovered single persons as a dominant group of trans-border movement at some settlements in southwestern Nigeria. Most married migrants had at least a Nigerienne wife but we were not opportuned to meet them all as most migrants were interviewed at their places of work while the women folk were home. However, among the women interviewed, about a half came to Nigeria to fulfill marital obligations. Hence, this study corroborates Adegbola (1972) and Adamu (2014) assertion that over time, wives or new brides joined their husbands at his destination.

The women came as wives or brides. They engage in economic activities such as hair braiding, selling of secondhand clothes and laundry services (*wankau*). However, when about a half of this population got divorced, they stayed back in Nigeria and engaged in businesses serving at restaurants, domestic servants and selling of traditional aphrodisiacs for women (*maganin mata*).

Education is an important asset to an individual because of its ability to increase opportunities and outlook to life. Majority of the migrants have the basic Islamic knowledge/belief which for most is believing in the oneness of Allah, attesting that Muhammad is his Prophet, the five daily prayers, knowing how to perform the ablution (*wudu':Arabic*), and memorization of a few chapters of the Qur'an.

Some came to Nigeria in pursuit of scholarship where most arrived as children and have gone through the rigors of the traditional Qur'anic education system. A minority has confessed to total illiteracy. One of them actually said "...I only perform the prayer without actually knowing the basics...", hence attesting to the fact that he did not know how to perform the five mandatory daily prayers for all Muslims.

**Table 1.3.** Educational Status of migrants from southern Niger Republic

| Educational Status            | Frequency | Percent |
|-------------------------------|-----------|---------|
| Islamic and Adult Education   | 3         | .9      |
| Islamic and Western Education | 54        | 15.6    |
| Islamic Education             | 286       | 81.3    |
| Not Learned at all            | 9         | 2.6     |
| Total                         | 352       | 100.0   |

Source: Fieldwork, 2016

About 16% have attended *l'ecole* meaning "the school" in French and commonly pronounced here by the migrants as *lakwal* while a substantial number do not have formal education.

The Tuareg commonly known as *Buzaye* constitute 5.4% of the respondents in this research and conform with the findings of Barau (2009) and Adamu (2014), who have established that about 97% of the interviewed Tuareg community living in Kano did not have formal education and only as low as 18% had Islamic knowledge.

Two interesting issues arose from the above scenarios. The first being that even though the respondents lacked formal education and their levels of Islamic education is quite low, one finds that all migrants that have settled in Kano have enrolled their children in either or both



Islamic schools (*Islamiyya*:Hausa) and the conventional schools. Some migrant children that were met at Bachirawa (a suburb of Kano) were university graduates having studied at Bayero University, Kano and Yusuf Maitama Sule University, Kano.

Secondly, some of the respondents that came to Nigeria for Islamic scholarship did very well to graduate, becoming teachers (*Malamai: Pl* Hausa) themselves. A success story in this category is of Alhaji Mallam at Bachirawa, who is a commodities businessman at Kwari market and an employer of labour. He owns a full-fledged Islamiyya school in the afternoon-a two story building with 12 classes and a very good curriculum. He also owns a number of land properties in that area of Bachirawa in Kano state.

## Migration Histories

### Regions of origin and destination

The migrants interviewed were from different parts of the Niger Republic mostly from rural areas. These migration patterns were as noted by Labo (2000) that rural areas were the main sources of migrant labor and urban areas are the final destinations regardless of whether there was an international border between the points of departure and destination.

The migrants' destination seemed influenced by three factors. The first factor is the purpose of migration where this research found environmental, economic, health and educational purposes as main reasons for migration. Here economic and environmental migrants moved to towns in northern Nigeria such as Kano, Katsina, Daura, Magama Jibia in search of greener pastures. The health migrants went to 'Yar shanya to seek medical assistance for their ailment (Leprosy).

**Table 1.2.** Regions of origin and destinations of the migrants from southern Niger

|                  | Frequency n=352 | Cumulative Percent |
|------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| Region of Origin | Agadez          | 0.3                |
|                  | Dakwaro         | 0.6                |
|                  | Diffa           | 0.9                |
|                  | Dosso           | 3.4                |
|                  | Maradi          | 43.8               |
|                  | Niamey          | 44.6               |
|                  | Tahoua          | 46.3               |
|                  | Tanout          | 46.9               |
|                  | Zinder          | 100                |
| Destination      | Kano            | 39.8               |
|                  | Daura           | 67.0               |
|                  | Katsina         | 86.1               |
|                  | Magama Jibiya   | 100.0              |

Source: Interview, 2016

The second factor is the existence of a relationship with migrants at the destination of choice. Family members and friends serve as catalysts in attracting migrants to where they are domiciled. This happens whenever there is a job opening, word is sent back home and another

migrant joins the workforce. Adamu (2014) and Labo, (2000) noted that due to the structure of lifestyle in the traditional setting, people are bonded by relationships which could be familial, social or economic hence rely on each other especially when taking major decisions.

Thirdly, the availability of a major official road network and several un-official pathways (Labo, 2000) is also considered a very significant factor. This means there is ease of movement/ transportation from the source regions to the destination. Most of those from Zinder province were found in Daura and Kano, that is moving southward following the research transect whereas migrants from Maradi and Tahuoa provinces were mostly found in Magama Jibia, Katsina and environs and Kano.

Some Nigerien migrants have travelled far and wide the shores of Nigeria where they are found in places as far as Lagos, Onitsha and Port Harcourt in the southern part of Nigeria and also in Kaduna, Bauchi and Gombe States in the North (Figure 3). This trend may be linked to having a network of contacts in the chosen destination, availability of work for the migrant, or simply having the funds/opportunity of travelling to these destinations.

### **Means and Cost of transportation**

A majority came to Kano by road in taxis, buses and lorries. The cars used for this purpose include Peugeot 504 salon, the Peugeot 505 station wagon popularly known as jollof or *dafa duka*, Golf and Sharon. For the buses, it was the Toyota C20 while for the lorries it was the bilhodi and Canter. Some simply trekked across the border whereas others used the beasts of burden to get to their destination. Malam Ali submits

...in 1981, I left home without the consent of my parents so I was penniless. I sat for a long time at the motorpark then I saw Malam Idi who brings donkeys to sell in Nigeria and buys common medicines to take back to Niger. I asked to follow him and he affirmed, so we trekked for 4 days from Takalafiya, Maiyyi at Maradi to Dankama in Katsina state. At our destination, Malam Idi sold the donkeys then paid N1:50 for my ride to Kano...

Malam Hassan described his own journey

... I came to Kano with my friends. We trekked from Awiwi to Tashar Kirya where we paid CFR 150 to the border at Kongolam. Then we boarded a bus for Tashar Kuka, Kano at N1,000 ...

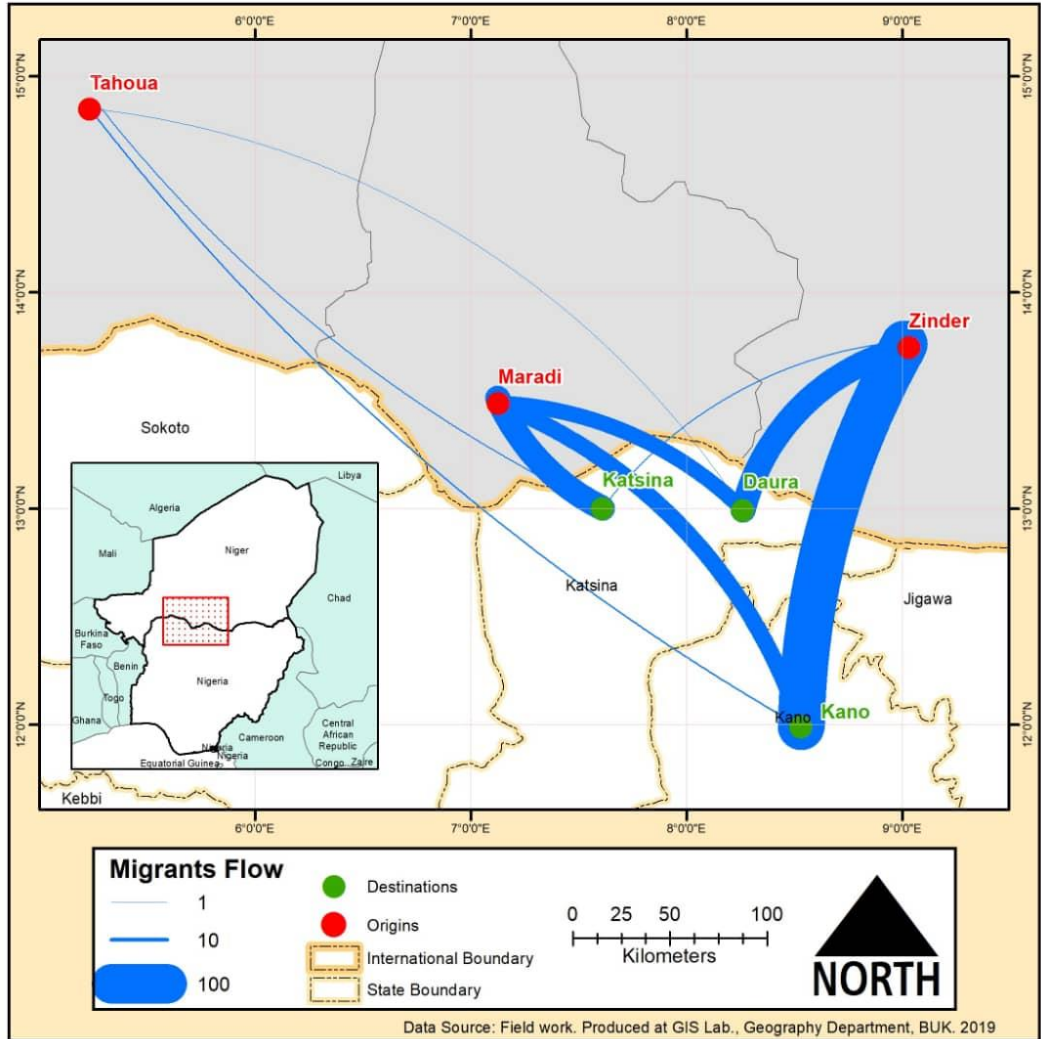
Malam Adamu recounts his own journey:

...our village, Mai Mujiya is a stones throw from Kongolam, the Nigerian border with Niger so together with my brother and our friends from Dan Barto and Kuri we simply trek into the border town or to Mai aduwa and Daura...





**Figure 2.** Movement of migrants from Niger to Nigeria from data collected from migrants in Kano, Katsina, Daura, Magama Jibia and ‘Yar Shanya.



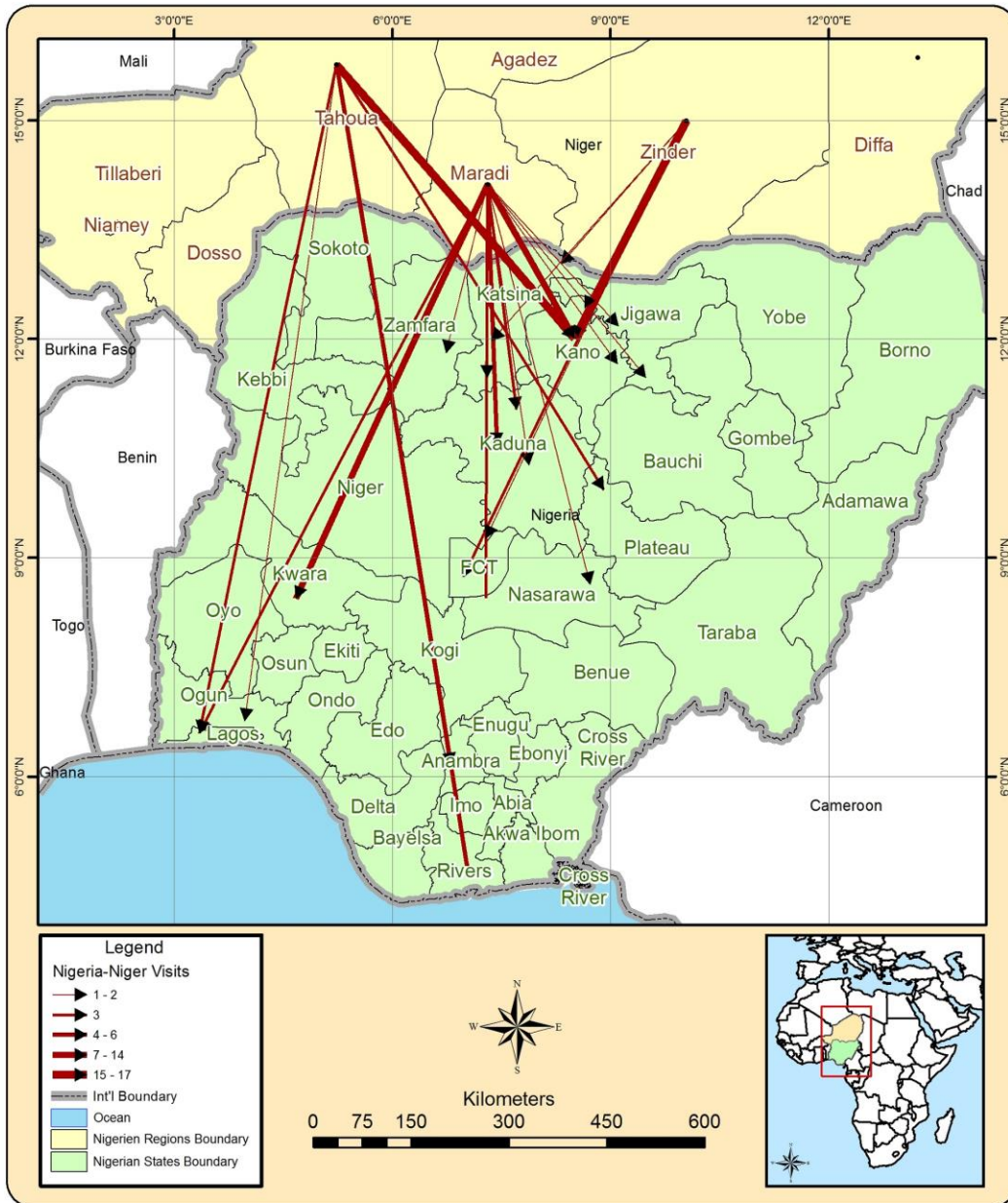
### Sojourns: Days in transit

Some migrants travelled directly to their destination while others spent some time in other places before finally arriving at their final destination. Stopovers were made at Matamei, Maiaduwa, Zango, Daura, Bachirawa, Tasawa, Magama and Katsina. They are hosted by family, relatives and friends and once in a while, a person finds himself being a lone ranger.

Malam Daudu recounts how he stayed at Daura:

...I stayed with my brother, Alh Jume at Shaiskawa, Daura for months waiting for an opening at Kano. I engaged in so many jobs. I was a water vendor (*mai garuwa*), a guard (*maigadi*), I did laundry services (*mai wanki da guga*) and a mason (*magini*)”When you are on a soujourn you have to work extra hard to make ends meet...

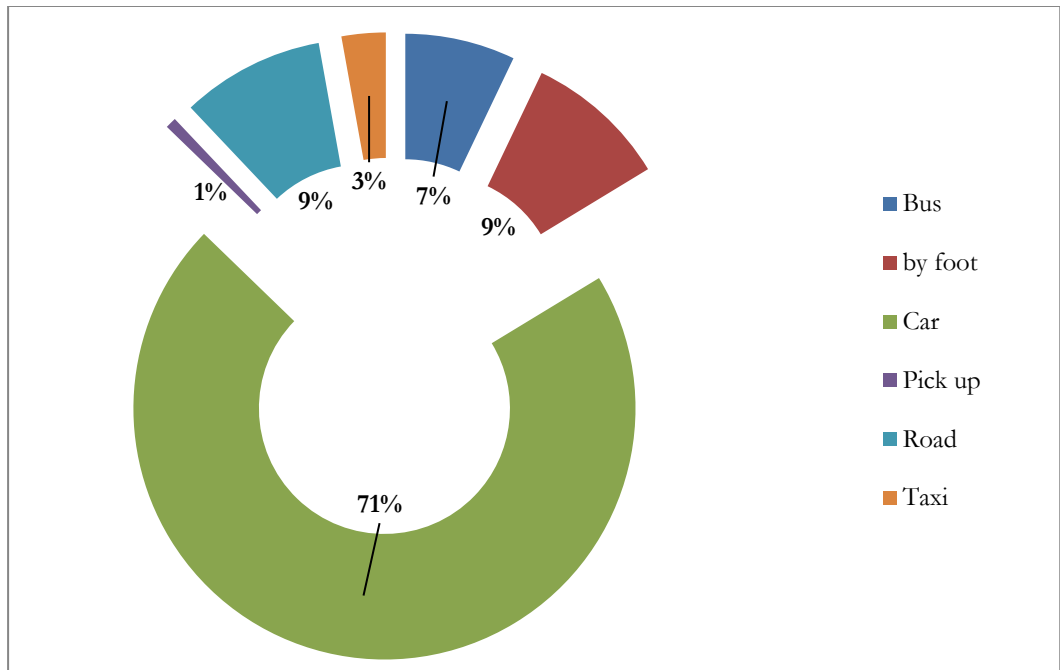
**Figure 3.** Nigerien Migrant Destinations in Nigeria. It showed that Nigerien nationals travel as far as Port Harcourt, Onitsha, Ijebu Ode and Lagos in southern Nigeria.



Malam Sade, popularly known as Shugaba narrated:

...I came to Nigeria by foot, I trekked alongside our guide and a host of others to Maigatari town in Jigawa state. We sojourned at Maigatari for ten (10) days- just enough time to get me some money to proceed on the next phase of my journey. For our trek to Kano, one required a snack- a large loaf of bread which was tucked under the armpit and pinched at intervals, a bottle (*gora*) of water serving the dual purpose of drinking and for cleaning after passing urine or defecating. By the time one finishes the bread, Kano would have been reached...

**Figure 4.** Means of Travel of migrants from southern Niger Republic



Source: Fieldwork, 2016

### Purpose of Migration

Several factors have been identified as reasons for migration. People move due to an attraction be it social, economic, educational or health. It could also be as a consequence of variability of climatic and environmental factors termed in some literature as environmentally induced factor. So many factors could be responsible for migration so a single cause may not be pointed at. The environment, as explained by Jaeger (2009) can be an important push factor for migration and in some cases is the sole driving factor, often closely interwoven with other social, economic and political triggers for migration decisions. He further explained that other push factors include lack of infrastructure (social and educational services) and the withdrawal of the state from rural areas.

Other significant pull factors refer, especially more promising economic opportunities and the supposed attractions of urban areas. Once migration has started, it reinforces further migration, by networks that facilitate migration and migration systems (de Haas, 2010).

Accordingly, migrants from Niger Republic moved to northern Nigeria for a number of reasons including seeking education or disseminating it; movement to adapt to environmental changes, seeking better economic livelihoods and accessing medical assistance hence the different classes of migrants below.

### Economic Migrants

A majority (60%) of the respondents acknowledge being economic migrants. An economic migrant is a person who leaves his home country to live and seek sustenance in another with better working or living conditions. Different categories of this type of migration are present in the study area. It includes those that partake in *Ci rani* (*Tabiradi* or *Kadar raba*), *bida* and the transient migrants.

Malam Laminu stated clearly

...I came to Kano specifically to get wealthy and Alhamdulillah 44years after I first left my village, I am a successful baker...

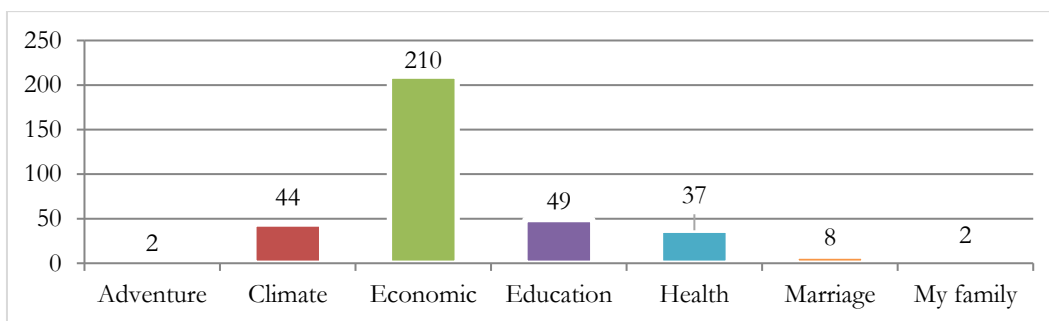
Malam Zubairu recounted

...I came in a lorry and it took us 9 hours to get to Kano. I came on my late brothers request. He wanted me to watch over one of his new businesses. 2016 marks my 20year in Kano and with praises to the Almighty I now have my provision store...

Malam Yahaya narrated

...when I came 33 years back, I was on scholarship at Mai adua, after becoming an adult I decide to sell tea at Mashi (Katsina state). After some years I moved to Katsina, the capital city where I am really doing good...

**Figure 5.** Purpose of migration



Source: Analysis 2016

### Bida

The term *bida* in Hausa language means “in search of”. This is an economic migrant in search of sustenance or having a goal in mind that needs fulfillment hence his journey is goal oriented. He may spend as much time as he wants until his target is achieved. For some, it may be a blind outing where there are no set goals or location in mind while for others there



may be a job/destination and/or a certain monetary objective to be achieved. He however can decide to remain at his destination when his business flourishes.

Malam Laminu stated clearly

...I came to Kano specifically to get wealthy and Alhamdulillah 44years after I first left my village, I am a successful baker...

Malam Yusuf mentioned

...I came back to Nigeria a second time to find money to build a good room for my bride. I worked tirelessly for eighteen months at a bakery where I rose from a manual laborer to the bakery manager. When I got enough to build my rooms, I retired and went back home. After 2years I came back to Nigeria where I'm now settled with my family...

Malam Zubairu recounted

... I came in a lorry and it took us 9 hours to get to Kano. I came on my late brothers request. He wanted me to watch over one of his new businesses. 2016 marks my 20<sup>th</sup> year in Kano and with praises to the Almighty I now have my provision store...

Mallam Musa elaborates further

...I left our village to specifically go to Kano because I was impressed by the way people returning home from that destination looked, they always dressed elegantly, wearing the long flowing gowns *kaftan* (Arabic) and a cap *kube* (Hausa) showing signs of good living. Back then (even of today) we Nigeriens wear simple trousers (Jeans, Chinos) and shirts...

Malam Ali explains

...I had to come to Kano to see for myself. The people coming from Kano wear beautiful flowing gowns (Kaftans) and seem to live comfortably. Stories out of Kano were always full of hope and prosperity and after a few visits where I served as a labourer in a bakery, I knew Kano was where to be. I now own a bakery myself...

Malam Dalhatu narrated

...I used to bring dried camel lard (*chukenni*) to kurmi market as a young boy. I then decided to engage in business in Kano. My first business was hawking lime juice (*lamurje*), then I graduated to selling flour at Singer market. After a while, I returned to Damagaram where I got married, raised capital then came back to Kano to engage in a new trade of selling sacks at Sabon Gari market. We were relocated from there to Dawanau in 1985 and I have been here since then...

Malam Ashiru added

....I came to marry a lady whose parents had migrated to Nigeria. I found a job as cart pusher then later engaged in buying and selling of ruminants...

Malam Yahaya narrated

...when I came 33 years back, I was on scholarship at Mai adua, after becoming an adult I decide to sell tea at Mashi (Katsina state). After some years I moved to Katsina town, the capital city where I am really doing good...

## **Ci rani**

*Dan Ci rani* (a person practicing ci rani) is a seasonal and circular migrant. That goes to any of the destinations yearly. Also known as '*Dan tabiradi*' (*Hausa*: Nigerien dialect for Ci rani). This migrant is one who sets out "to eat away the dry season". These are the practitioners of traditional dry-season circular movements, which is an economic activity where seasonal or sub seasonal movements occur across rainfall gradients serving as livelihood strategies to maximize investments of time and other resources (Rain, 1999). In the migrants' opinion, it is better to while away the dry season in search of sustenance than idly. He hopes to spend a period of time normally from some weeks to several months (up to seven months) depending on the time and purpose of leaving home hence movement of this group of migrants is deciduous.

Another form of *Ci rani* is *Kadar raba* literally meaning "dusting off the dew". This is undertaken between the time that the crops starts producing grains to the time the grains mature and are ready for harvest.

Malam Dayyabu explains

...we engage in this type of *Ci rani* to while away the time doing something worthwhile. One can make as much as N30,000 before returning home ...

People engaging in this form of *Ci rani* have varied times of coming. This always depends on how many farms one is working on at home. Some spend as long as three months at destination, others spend a month or less as narrated by brothers Malam Ya'u and Adam

...we spent 24 and 35 days respectively in Kano because we had to work on our family farm (*Gandu*) then we worked on our fathers farm then worked on our personal farms. So by the time we were through much time had elapsed...

## **Transient Migrants**

These respondents are transporters, proud owners of large trucks and vans. They come to Nigeria to conduct business and then leave. Their travels extend not only to Nigeria but to other west African countries and to places as far as the Central African Republic. Exports include food grains, fruits, clothing and furniture. Some of them have residences in Nigeria hence having families in both Niger and Nigeria. One of them said

...having two homes is of advantage, wherever you find yourself between Nigeria and Niger it's home...

## **Environmental Migrants**

The term 'environmental migration' is used in preference to other vocabulary such as climate migrants and is taken to represent population that moves either directly or indirectly or may have been triggered (at least in part) by 'physical' environmental change (Findlay, 2011). So, environmental migrants as defined by International Organisation on Migration, 2007:



are persons or groups of persons who, for compelling reasons of sudden or progressive changes in the environment that adversely affect their lives or living conditions, are obliged to leave their habitual homes, or choose to do so, either temporarily or permanently, and who move either within their country or abroad.

Evidently, a considerable number migrated due to changes in their immediate environs caused mainly by variability of climatic factors. The resultant effect being decline in agricultural yields, drought, pests and diseases that led to hunger, sickness and even death. Therefore, one of the adaptation strategies to this vulnerable society is to move. This strategy has been documented since the colonial era around the early 1900. It included mass movement of people due to droughts from different tribes such as the Tuaregs, Adarawa and Gobirawa from the French territories into northern Nigeria (Weiss, 2014). A good number of these migrants attested to this fact including Malam Yau

...the year we experienced the low rainfall/low yield was when my father advised me to go to Kano to find other means of sustenance. Our family friends from the neighbouring village had gone and seemed to be doing very well...

Malam Salau said

...the concept of *ci rani* is quite simple and can be seen in two ways-one, after harvest, a person leaves home for a city in search of other forms of work instead of waiting home doing nothing. Then two, he has reduced the number of mouths feeding on his silo-he goes elsewhere to find food while his family feeds at home...so at times when the weather does not favour us, the food at home will not be enough for those at home so you the man has to migrate somewhere to 'eat the dry season away'...

Malam Sidi said

...these days there is fluctuation in rainfall but it has not caused the type of drought experienced in the 1980s during Shagaris time...

Migration often is a response to climatic or environmental changes however, other forms have been found to exist in this study.

## **Health Migrants**

Whereas a large number of the migrants came for other purposes and went to several destinations within the study area, nearly one-tenth came for health reasons and Babbar Ruga Hospital in Katsina State was their destination where all have settled in the satellite villages around. 'Yar Shanya is one such satellite villages sheltering lepers that have been treated or under going rehabilitation. .

These are migrants coming to certain destination, in this case 'Yar Shanya, Katsina state, in search of a health. The ailment here is leprosy and they seek medicals at the lepararium at Babbar Ruga in Katsina state. All the migrants in this category have not returned home since their first arrival. They, after their consultation, stay back to be rehabilitated as part of the treatment plan so they settle in one of the several satellite towns around the lepararium. Mal Abu and Mal Bala recollect

... I left my village in 1969 and have not returned there since then. I have married here in Nigeria and cultivate the farms given to us by the government under a usufruct arrangement...

...I came from Niger but after my treatment at the hospital, I was asked to stay at one of the satellite towns because of the rehabilitation treatment plan...by the time I was leprosy free, I had already married a lady with same ailment and we were taking care of each other, so I stayed back in Nigeria...

However, due to influx from so many areas within Nigeria and from neighbouring Niger, the facility became congested, hence the springing of satellite towns near the hospital. 'Yar shanya is one such satellite towns where people from both countries have settled for rehabilitation after seeking medicals.

### **Educational Migrants**

These are migrants that came into Nigeria for educational purposes. They came either in pursuit of or to disseminate it. Thus can be categorized into two: The first group constituting about 9.9% of this research, were those who were sent out from Niger Republic for Qur'anic scholarship to Nigeria at very tender ages normally below 10 years. They are commonly referred to as *almajirai* (*s.almajiri: Hausa*). They stayed through adolescence to adulthood learning the Qur'an and relevant Islamic books of *Tamheed* (Monotheism), *Fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) and sometimes with a diversion into astrology and soothsaying. Most of them continue as teachers at the school they graduated from and end up becoming experienced teachers (2.6%) and/or may become astrologers/soothsayers engaging the womenfolk, politicians and any one that may be seeking spiritual help. Malam Garba lives in Daura but was interviewed at Baboul mai ruwa where he had gone visiting his family. He says

...being a Mallam is a lucrative business. One assists people by solving their everyday problems through prayers and provision of 'help'...

This class of migrants do not engage in agriculture at source regions except at times of visit. However, at destination, some have tilled the farms of their *malamai* (pl for *malami: Hausa*) under whose tutelage they were. Mallam Harisu explains

...at the onset of the rains, as children and even at teenage (*Gardi: Hausa*), we used to go to Zaria to farm for our Mallams friends. I don't know if we were used as cheap labor or if our Mallam benefited from the proceeds but that was the norm...

Malam Abdurrahman confirms

...our school (*Kaula: Hausa*) was situated at Nguru, and we use to partake in rainfed agricultural activities. We clear the land, till it, plant, harvest and tie the stalks in one place...

Even though constituting a small percentage of about 4%, this second category came as adults to teach the French language but stayed back in Nigeria after their contract had expired. They spoke the native Hausa language to their children and did not speak French or their local languages. Malama explained





...my husband and I were both employed by the Katsina state government to teach the French language. So we met and courted here in Nigeria. We are from different regions of Niger and only returned home for the wedding ceremony. We both have different languages so we decided to speak Hausa to our kids...

On enquiry as to whether they speak French to their kids, Malama answered in the negative, shrugged and said

... they will learn in school...

### **Other Migrants...**

Other migrants that came to Kano include those coming in pursuit of love, family and adventure.

Yaron Mallam mentioned

...my heart throb and family relocated to Kano so I came after her. As I had to fend for myself, I took a job at a nearby bakery. After some time we got married and I then stayed back here in Nigeria...

Baban Zayya said he came to see for himself what Kano looked like and also to be part of the storytelling back home. He mentioned of times when arguments would breakout at joints and someone would sarcastically say that a person that has not been to Kano is yet to see the world.

Bintu, one of the few females interviewed in Kano said

...I got married to my husband who was already in business in Kano. Some months into the marriage he asked me to join him. So I was accompanied to Kano by his brother...

### **Children of migrants**

Even though born and bred in Nigeria, some migrant children still refer to themselves as Nigerien (*Hausa: 'yan Nijjar*). At Naibawa, Rijiyar lemu and Sabon garin doka, they came promptly when summoned to be part of the Focus Group Discussions. They are part of the Nigerien associations with some holding executive positions and one could see pride, enthusiasm and dedication to the Nigerien cause. They were quick to attend the FGD and eager to ask questions even more challenging than their elders as to whether we were undercover agents. Here, one of them explained

...that is one advantage of being educated. We can read, verify and ask questions lest our parents be tricked into giving out information that would lead to their deportation...

Another added:

...They are legal migrants, most of them have legitimate papers from the Niger Consul here in Kano and have been living and conducting businesses peacefully in Nigeria...

## Lifetime Migrants

Most respondents started as temporary migrants practicing *ci rani* or *bida* then after some years, mostly between 5-12 years, the decision to settle at their destination is taken. This shows that the jobs migrants engaged in are sustainable therefore, signifies comfort to settle down. At that point, the Nigerian wife joins the migrant at destination as posited Adegbola (1972), alternatively a Nigerian wife is married. Migrants commented on having a cordial relationship with their host communities that is why assimilation is easy. They described the Nigerians as friendly. Mal Ya'u lamented

... they (Nigerians) are very accommodating after all we were one and same before the coming of the colonial masters...

... We have been returning to Nigeria for years as we indulge in circular migration and the Nigerians have always welcomed us. We sometimes give our belongings for safe keeping then travel home with some few things and still come back to meet our belongings intact... Mal Rabe comments

## Conclusion

100% of the respondents migrated of their own volition and migration is a rural-urban movement where people moved from remote villages of Niger republic to urban areas in northern Nigeria. Three factors have been found to be enhancers of migration they include availability of a good road network (Labo, 2000), availability of a network of family and friends (de Haas, 2010) and the availability of work at the destination. Movement include for economic reasons those coming for all forms of *ci rani*, *bida* and the transient migrant. They are found in all major cities in the study area. Women came as wives. The health migrants were found at 'Yar shanya village where medical assistance is sought at the nearby Babbar Ruga hospital. These have permanently migrated with no hope of returning home. The environmentally induced migrants are found mostly in cities and their movement is as a form of adaptation to the climatic variability in their homeland. The educational migrants either came as children (*almajirai*) to seek knowledge or as adults to teach the French language in schools in Katsina state.

The porous borders shared by Nigeria and Niger allow an easy flow of migrants between the two countries where some can easily trek across the border, and there is no documentation at the borders.

Significantly, different types of migration exist in the study area but seasonal migration (*ci rani*) has been historically traced to be an adaptive measure popularly practiced by agrarian communities in the drylands.

The Ministries of Interiors of both Nigeria and Niger Republic and indeed their immigration services should have a computer-based system for capturing migration movements thereby providing an improved database system for the migrants. It should give a detailed account of the migrants' demographics, origins, destinations, movement timeframe and type of occupations engaged. This will allow for proper accounting and management of both immigrants and emigrants where at a glance, a migrants profile would show their status as circular, returned or lifetime migrants.



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