



UvA-DARE (Digital Academic Repository)

'Migratising' mobility: Coloniality of knowledge and externally funded migration capacity building projects in Niger

Jegen, L.F.

DOI

[10.1016/j.geoforum.2023.103862](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2023.103862)

Publication date

2023

Document Version

Final published version

Published in

Geoforum

License

CC BY

[Link to publication](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Jegen, L. F. (2023). 'Migratising' mobility: Coloniality of knowledge and externally funded migration capacity building projects in Niger. *Geoforum*, 146, Article 103862. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2023.103862>

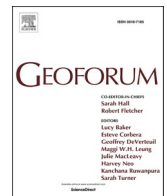
General rights

It is not permitted to download or to forward/distribute the text or part of it without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), other than for strictly personal, individual use, unless the work is under an open content license (like Creative Commons).

Disclaimer/Complaints regulations

If you believe that digital publication of certain material infringes any of your rights or (privacy) interests, please let the Library know, stating your reasons. In case of a legitimate complaint, the Library will make the material inaccessible and/or remove it from the website. Please Ask the Library: <https://uba.uva.nl/en/contact>, or a letter to: Library of the University of Amsterdam, Secretariat, Singel 425, 1012 WP Amsterdam, The Netherlands. You will be contacted as soon as possible.

UvA-DARE is a service provided by the library of the University of Amsterdam (<https://dare.uva.nl>)



'Migratising' mobility: Coloniality of knowledge and externally funded migration capacity building projects in Niger

Leonie Felicitas Jegen¹

Amsterdam Institute for Social Science Research (AISSR)/ University of Amsterdam, Postbus 15578, 1001 NB Amsterdam, the Netherlands

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Externalisation
Niger
Mobility
Colonial continuities
Capacity building
Colonial subject formation

ABSTRACT

This article explores coloniality of knowledge reproduced through EU funded Migration Capacity Building Programmes (MCBPs) in Niger, considering the period between 2015 and 2021. MCBPs are donor funded programmes aim to introduce EU-driven migration concerns and understandings into domestic policymaking, primarily in non-EU states. The article identifies two ways that MCBPs reproduce specific understandings of mobility as migration: firstly, by reproducing an understanding of mobility along the state/population/territory nexus and secondly, by categorising different types of migration and corresponding policy responses. It argues that the knowledge reproduced through MCBPs is historically embedded in colonial attempts at mobility governance and fails to take account of the pluriversal understandings of mobility in Niger. The article argues that historically and contemporarily, mobility governance in Niger is shaped by 'negotiated misalignment', which refers to the mismatch between MCBPs and pre- and co-existing knowledge systems on mobility in a context of strategic actor interaction. Finally, the article analyses the 'gaze' of MCBPs in its mutually constitutive material and discursive formation. Drawing on Fanon, it shows that MCBPs reproduce logics of colonial subject formation.

Vignette

Niamey, March 2019. A hot and dry summer night. I am having dinner with researchers, humanitarian, and development workers. The subject of conversation turns to a project that foresees to 'improve' migration governance of Nigerien government actors. One person shares their frustration that even though they had been 'explaining' what migration was to Nigerien stakeholders for a few years, their 'partners' had not yet 'understood' the essence of the concept of 'migration', rendering the achievement of the project's objectives difficult. I thought about the many interviews I had with stakeholders working on similar projects. I realised that a key component of these projects was to foster a specific understanding of mobility that centres the state as the main governance actor, and its borders as markers of belonging. An understanding which does not seem to neatly map onto the perspectives that Nigerien respondents had shared with me.

1. Introduction

Until recently Niger has been a key partner for the EU with a view to stopping so-called 'transit migration' (Frowd, 2020; Stambøl, 2019). Post-2015, a plethora of initiatives have been adopted which aim to alter the country's mobility governance along the tropes of migration management (Stambøl, 2019). The alignment of non-EUropean states' institutional frameworks with European standards has been a central element of externalized European migration control operating through 'capacity building' (Vives, 2017). This article explores colonial continuities in European funded Migration Capacity Building Programmes (MCBPs) in Niger, which form part of wider processes of externalized European² migration control. The object of analysis are the colonial continuities reproduced through MCBPs' attempts to shape Eurocentric understandings of *what* migration is and *how* it should be governed. The article focuses on MCBPs from 2015 until 2021 and does not account for the developments following the regime change in July 2023.

E-mail address: l.f.jegen@uva.nl.

¹ Alma Research Fellow at the Arnold Bergstraesser Institute.

² European is used here to designate the fact that the EU, both geographically as well as in regard to its Member States, does not neatly map onto the European geographic and political space.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2023.103862>

Received 31 January 2022; Received in revised form 31 August 2023; Accepted 11 September 2023

Available online 26 September 2023

0016-7185/© 2023 The Author. Published by Elsevier Ltd. This is an open access article under the CC BY license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

The notion of ‘capacity building’ in the context of migration derives from depoliticised policy language that obscures its highly political nature; the attempt to introduce EU-driven migration concerns and understandings into the domestic policymaking of non-EU states.³ MCBPs constitute material and discursive practices (Lundborg & Vaughan-Williams, 2015) and take the form of training and workshops, the construction and support of state institutions and infrastructure such as border posts, and the drafting of policies and legislation. MCBPs perpetuate the basic premises of what has been termed ‘migration management’, the dominant paradigm of migration policy (Geiger & Pécoud, 2010, Scheel & Squire 2014). Migration management arguably aims to provide universalised understandings of what migration is and how it should be governed, excludes non-Western intellectual traditions, and reinforces logics of migration control, by designating some types of migration as beneficial and others as undesirable along the spectrum of il/legality (Pecoud, 2010). Building on these considerations, this article considers the MCBPs’ aim to reproduce universalised Eurocentric (Quijano, 2000) migration understandings, in line with managerial approaches to mobility.⁴

MCBPs have been an element of the EU’s external dimension of migration governance since 2004, when the AEANAS I programme was adopted (Casas-Cortes et al., 2016; Frowd, 2018a; Vives, 2017), resulting in the so-called ‘routes approach’ of externalised European migration governance (Cobarrubias, 2020).⁵ Following the 2015 so-called migration crisis, the European Commission placed a renewed emphasis on altering non-EU countries’ migration governance frameworks. It highlighted the need to “work with key partners to improve the legislative and institutional framework on migration” (European Commission, 2015, p. 6). Niger, a priority country for the EU (Commission, 2016), has received the most financial support under the European Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF) adopted in 2016, which stressed the aim of enhancing the migration governance ‘capacities’ of so-called ‘third states’ (Raty & Shilhav, 2020).

To understand how MCBPs’ aim to universalise understandings of migration, this article draws on *radical intertextuality* (Lundborg & Vaughan-Williams, 2015), which builds on the work of the early linguistic turn in International Relations (Der Derian & Shapiro, 1989; Shapiro, 1981) and considers materiality, language and context as productive of meaning making (Shapiro, 1989, p. 17). Radical intertextuality enables “a folding of the language/materiality dichotomy and an expansive notion of discourse as encompassing the context in which the two are fundamentally inseparable” (Lundborg & Vaughan-Williams, 2015, p. 18). This article identifies and explores two ways that MCBPs reproduce specific understandings of migration through discursive and material practices. First, they reproduce mobility governance along the state/population/territory nexus. Relevant MCBPs at the time the research was conducted in 2019 included a project to ‘modernise’ Niger’s civil registries, as well as ongoing efforts to install biometric data information systems at border posts. Second, MCBPs attempt to order national mobility governance by defining different

categories of migration and corresponding governance responses. MCBPs identified at the time of research that reproduce policy categories include projects to implement the 2015–36 migrant smuggling law, as well as various projects to draft policies and build institutions to govern migration, including the setting up of the CCM (Cadre de Concertation sur la Migration, the National Coordination Platform on Migration), the development of the National Migration Policy (NMP) of Niger, as well as a project to improve migration governance by regional state officials.

To trace the colonial continuities of Eurocentric knowledge systems reproduced through MCBPs, this article unpacks the continuation of ‘negotiated misalignment’, the coexistence of diverging mobility understandings in an asymmetric yet often strategically negotiated power relationship, in which both Nigerien and European actors pursue their own interests. Foucauldian and Fanonian analysis of subject formation are a lens through which the colonial gaze of MCBPs can be understood. In Foucault’s understanding, categorisation has the power to result in “imposing a particular gaze or mode of seeing and saying” (Lundborg & Vaughan-Williams, 2015, p. 20). Meanwhile, Fanon (Fanon, 2014, 2008, 2004) has shown that the ontological and epistemological link between how the subject is seen and sees themselves, does not persist in the (always incomplete) process of colonial subject formation (Lorenzini & Tazzioli, 2018).

Following a methodological note, the subsequent section provides a literature review, followed by a section which traces ‘negotiated misalignment’ in colonial mobility governance in Niger. The final section considers the ordering ambitions of MCBPs, in regard to their role in defining what migration is and how it should be governed, through reproducing mobility governance along the state/population/territory nexus and categorisation. It continues by considering ‘negotiated misalignment’ in contemporary MCBPs and concludes with a discussion on the ‘gaze’ of MCBPs constituting colonial subject formation.

2. Methodological note

The central observations of this article are based on fieldwork conducted in Niger between March and April 2019 and previous interviews conducted in Brussels and online between January and February 2019.⁶ Interviews were anonymized based on interviewees preferences in subsequent research outputs (Jegen, 2020; Jegen & Zanker, 2019). To ensure consistency, all interviews are anonymized in this publication. The choice of interview partners was primarily focused on actors who work through the MCBPs’ infrastructure, also in response to concerns of research fatigue of structurally excluded persons (Pascucci, 2017). From January to April a total of 41 semi-structured interviews were conducted with Nigerien and international civil society organisations, Nigerien civil servants, European government officials and EU representatives in Niger, representatives of international organisations, as well as scholars working on migration governance.

The initial research for which data collection was carried out considered interests of different actors in regard to migration governance. Co-existing understandings of mobility and the role of MCBPs as shaping migration understandings was a theme which continuously resurfaced in interviews. For the purpose of this article these were traced through inductive coding, using data analysis software and complemented by researching relevant policy documents. The analysis of documents with ‘fieldwork eyes’ (Wright, 2011) was crucial to gain additional understanding of discourses and knowledge on migration reproduced through MCBPs and constituted an extension of the interview data (Feldman, 2011; Wright, 2011).

Paying attention to the silenced existence of pluriversal (Mignolo,

³ Non-EU state is used here to avoid the term “third state” which reproduces a geopolitical imaginary of the EU at the center and the rest of the world constituting its periphery.

⁴ In line with De Genova (2017, p. 6) observation that borders produce migration, ‘mobility’ is used in this article to refer to an understanding of human movement that is not anchored in the state/population/territory nexus as a central ordering principle, while ‘migration’ is used to refer to conceptions of human movement along this nexus.

⁵ The AEANAS Programme focused on financing projects that develop legislation in the fields of legal immigration, international protection and illegal migration in non-EU countries. It proposed the financing of capacity building in the areas of diaspora policy, border control, identification and travel documents, data collection, reception, readmission, reintegration as well the development of regional and sub-regional dialogues on migration and asylum (European Union, 2004).

⁶ This work was carried out as part of the research project ‘The Political Economy of West African Migration’ (WAMIG), based at the Arnold Bergstraesser Insitut (ABI) and funded by the Mercator Foundation MEDAM Project.

2011) understandings of mobility among the various actors involved in MCBPs was instrumental in tackling the questions surrounding the coloniality of knowledge. The establishment of colonial continuities goes hand in hand with the challenge to identify and establish continuity between past and present (Lemberg-Pedersen et al., 2022). The aim is not to establish the equivalence, duality, or causality of past and present, but to identify recurring patterns and contingent parallels (Kundrus, 2005) and in this way map the “contemporary force of imperial remains” (Stoler, 2008, p. 196). This study draws on this open-ended understanding of continuity, in line with Mayblin’s (2017) approach, and thereby illustrates the dynamics over a longer time frame by taking a number of historical snapshots of colonial mobility management, contextualised in present day Niger. To place MCBPs in their historical context, I consulted secondary historical sources, focusing on two central elements: colonial attempts to shape understandings of mobility and their negotiated misalignment.

3. The coloniality of universalised understandings of migration and MCBPs

MCBPs are situated within a longer context of European funded state capacity building in the Sahel, which reflects a “view of state modernity as improving capacity to control borders, territory and population” (Frowd, 2018a, p. 55) and which is tied to questions of political order (ing) in a region where “different perceptions of legitimacy, justice, integrity, reform and effectiveness” co-exist (Boås & Strazzari, 2020, p. 6). MCBPs work to shape national and regional migration governance (Brachet, 2016; Dini, 2018; Landau, 2018). Despite being employed as an indirect response to illegalized migration by European actors in West Africa (Casas-Cortes et al., 2016; Vives, 2017), MCBPs have so far only received limited attention in their own right (Robinson, 2023). The emerging scholarly engagement with MCBPs has described them as ‘intervention lite’ (Micinski & Bourbeau, 2023) and found that they work to frame migration containment objectives as ‘technocratic efforts’ (Robinson, 2023). To Edmunds and Juncos (2020, p. 17) capacity building reproduces knowledge asymmetries by framing receiving states as “incapable” and in need of “external assistance and expertise.”

This article focuses on the mobility understandings which MCBPs reproduce, employing a historically informed analysis which links the research to a wider theoretical engagement with coloniality of knowledge (Lemberg-Pedersen et al., 2022; Mayblin & Turner, 2021). Quijano’s (2000) work is instructive in considering coloniality of knowledge, which he describes as intrinsic to the colonial matrix of power. To Quijano, colonialism operated partially as a process of ‘historical re-identification’: the attribution of new geocultural identity in line with Eurocentric definitions of regions and populations (Quijano, 2000, p. 540) – repressing pre-existing intersubjective knowledge systems. Similarly, Butt (2013, p. 893) stresses that colonialism operated through the imposition of the “colonial power’s culture and customs,” either because of Eurocentric beliefs in superiority or simply as a mechanism of political control. Moore (2016, 450) highlights that the imposition of Eurocentric modes of thinking and categorisation goes in hand with the “forcible denial, subjugation or repression of the concepts and beliefs of the group’s own original culture”. This imposition constitutes a manifestation of epistemic injustice, as the colonisers’ knowledge was treated with respect, while that of colonised populations was belittled and not taken seriously (Moore, 2016, p. 451). To Fanon, the imposition of colonial knowledge and ways of thinking constitutes one of the multiple acts of violence reproduced through colonial rule (Fanon, 2004).

Tracing the coloniality of the modern world system, Quijano (2000) finds that the subjugation of non-European knowledge continues today. To Quijano the intersubjective dimension of modernity extends to hegemonic institutions such as the nation state or Eurocentric rationality, becoming universal ‘intersubjective models’, which are applied to any population in the world (Quijano, 2000, p. 545). The inquiry into coloniality operating in today’s modern world system has given rise to a

growing body of work that has considered the reproduction of universalised understandings of migration in externalised migration control (Gross-Wyrtzen & Gazzotti, 2021; McNevin et al., 2016; Ould Moctar, 2020). Ould Moctar (2020) points to the colonial continuities of externalisation in Mauritania and their reproduction of specific socio-spatial orders. Gross-Wyrtzen and Gazzotti (2021) show how universal understandings of categories along Eurocentric notions have been exported through externalised migration governance. In their analysis, McNevin et al. (2016) consider Australia’s anti-migrant smuggling efforts in Indonesia; they locate coloniality in the essentialised difference between periphery and metropole, which constructs the former as an anomalous site in need of intervention along universalised global blueprints.

This article discusses two ways that MCBPs reproduce Eurocentric migration knowledge. First, MCBPs reproduce mobility governance along the state/population/territory nexus. By reproducing a link between the state, its population and a territory, MCBPs are part of a wider apparatus of migration governance that is constitutive of the internationalised world order (Sharma, 2020; Torpey, 1998; Walters, 2015, p. 201). They work to reproduce a sedentary bias, meaning the naturalised connection between a people and a specific place (Kotef, 2015; Malkki, 1992), with nationals imagined as “people of place” (Sharma, 2020, p. 4), while focusing on the state as the sole legitimate actor governing the movements of people (Torpey, 1998). In other words, citizenship and migration control work to “territorialize people’s relationship to space, to their labor, and to their ability to maintain themselves” (Anderson et al., 2009, p. 10). Migration and the sovereign nation state are hence co-constituted through the creation of territorially demarcated sovereign states, forging a link between a set territory and a population (Anderson et al., 2009; Sharma, 2020). Once a population has become “rooted” through citizenship, “the image of stability is established” (Kotef, 2015, p. 11).

Second, MCBPs order national mobility governance by defining different categories of migration and their corresponding governance responses. These policy categories serve as bureaucratic labels which shape the interaction between populations and the institutional actors destined to govern them. The use of categories in the policy sphere defines groups of people along assumed shared categories, which are set out as unchanging over time and space (Bakewell, 2008). These labels include the categorisation of mobility as il/legal (Landau, 2019; Scheel & Squire, 2014; Van Dessel, 2023) and forced/voluntary (Scheel & Squire, 2014). Van Dessel (2021, p. 18) has observed that projects adopted under the guise of EU externalisation aim to shape “ideas and representations intent upon guiding how third-country citizens should view irregular migration and those who choose this part” Van Dessel (2021, p. 18) while Landau (2019, p. 7) shows that a central aim of EU migration control in the African context is the attempt to “symbolically separate space and code populations.” Categories are often a-historical (Lemberg-Pedersen, 2019) and say more about the conjunctures of mobility politics than about the people labelled (Scheel & Squire, 2014).

While the emancipatory horizons of decoloniality are not extensively explored in this article, the reproduction of universalised Eurocentric understandings of migration and the exclusion of pre-existing conceptions of mobility through MCBPs is explored by tracing ‘negotiated misalignment’ in colonial and contemporary externalised migration governance. The analysis of the coloniality of knowledge, reproduced through MCBPs, also raises the question of how to conceptualise the ‘migrant subject’ reproduced through these programmes. According to Fanon, “the colonized subject is a subject incapable of truth” (Lorenzini & Tazzioli, 2018, p. 76), due to the divergence between the colonial regime of knowledge and the individual’s (subject’s) discourse of truth. The colonial subject’s identity is shaped in contrast to that of the coloniser (Fanon, 2008); their articulations of truth, e.g. pain, are considered unreal by the coloniser (Fanon, 2014, pp. 41–55).

In considering the coloniality of knowledge of MCBPs, this article aims to contribute to a wider body of work that has focused on questions of post- and decolonial approaches to externalised migration governance

(Gross-Wyrtzen and Gazzotti, 2021; Lemberg-Pedersen, 2019; Ould Moctar, 2020; Stambøl & Jegen, 2022), and to research that has critically engaged with (migration) capacity building projects (Edmunds & Juncos, 2020; Micinski & Bourbeau, 2023; Robinson, 2023). The following sections turn to the exploration of ‘negotiated misalignment’ as a marker of responses to colonial attempts to control mobility and the continued misalignment towards MCBPs’ ordering ambitions.

4. Colonial mobility governance in Niger and negotiated misalignment

French colonial administration and its logics of population governance in Niger can be broadly divided into two phases (Lefebvre, 2011). During the first phase, the period of colonial ‘conquest’, extractive logics resulted in an approach effectively focused on establishing governance over mobile populations for reasons of livestock taxation. This phase lasted until the end of World War I. In the second phase, notions of ‘belonging’ based on ethnic homogeneity become an important rationale for the colonial administration (ibid). Both phases are considered in this section with regard to the complex competition for power among local and colonial political stakeholders and the ensuing ‘negotiation’ of mobility governance and subjugation, often relying on indirect rule.

Occupation of the regions between the Niger river and Lake Chad started in 1898 (Lefebvre, 2021). From the beginning of colonial occupation, imposing territorial and population control was a key objective of French rule (Turner, 2017). The process of border demarcation often started with diplomatic accords between imperial colonial powers, drawing borders on maps, often with little knowledge of the prevailing socio-political context. These borders were then enforced through violent military missions (Lefebvre, 2011). One such mission was the Voulet Chanoine Mission that counted more than 1600 men (Kimba, 1981, pg. 84 in Painter, 1988) and is known for its horrific atrocities (Painter, 1985, pg. 244 in Painter, 1988; Turner, 2017). It followed a convention signed between the French and British Foreign Ministers in June 1898, which marked their respective zones of influence in West Africa. Subsequently, the two officers, Captains Voulet and Chanoine, were commissioned to enforce the demarcation line drawn between Niger and Lake Chad (Mathieu, 1995). Southwestern Niger was traced by the Mission in 1899, resulting in the plundering and forced labour of populations, the killing of resisting villagers and the destruction of several villages (Painter 1985: 244 f, in Painter 1988). Throughout the period of ‘conquest’, the principal reason to draw borders was to define colonial possessions and create administrative zones, which would facilitate colonial governance (Lefebvre, 2011, 2004). In practice, borders were not definitely fixed, but their definition was ongoing throughout the colonial period (Lefebvre, 2011). For example, colonial administrators governed the Southwestern borders of what is today Niger, by referring to specific points as either inside or outside their territory, rather than through reference to a border line per se (Turner, 2017).

From the outset, French attempts to govern mobility and belonging in the colonized territories were linked to their interests in tax collection. Systematic taxation was introduced everywhere in the colonies from 1900 (Oloruntimehin, 1974). In today’s southwestern Niger, taxation began between 1889 and 1899. Its introduction went hand in hand with population and livestock census. The principal taxes could initially be provided in grain, livestock, cloth, or currency, from 1906 onwards only in French currency or cowries, and by 1910 only in French currency (Turner 2017). The frequent and violent extortion of taxes and the importance of livestock as a source of rural wealth is illustrated in a 1899 political report from the Say Residence, which notes:

“At Lamordé, a village of Torodi not able to provide the millet stipulated (because there was none), Moussa the village chief was stripped of his gris-gris [amulets] and tied with hands behind his back for two days. In the end, the village provided their fine of 23

cattle [for not paying taxes], an enormous amount for a single village.” - Rapport politique, Février 1899, Résidence de Say’ (AOM 14MIOM855 in Turner 2017, 590)

Meanwhile, forced labour recruitment (Painter, 1985: 264–266 in Painter 1988) and forced conscription, especially in the context of the First World War (Oloruntimehin, 1974) continued alongside tax extraction. The vast majority of the population in French colonised West Africa was subject to the *indigenat*, the regime of administrative sanctions applicable to colonial subjects. This was adopted in 1889 and allowed for their arbitrary arrest without trial, depriving them of the possibility to protest or make labour demands (Ash, 2006).

With taxation being a key interest, borders quickly became a source of colonial anxiety: once a border was drawn, it could be crossed by colonial subjects, thereby avoiding tax extortion and moving livestock out of the colony (Painter, 1988; Turner, 2017, p. 597). Consequently, colonial administrators attempted to enhance territorial control over populations, for example through indirect rule, by granting authority to customary leaders who would best serve their interests, the temporary introduction of *laissez-passer* documents, and the moving of colonial posts (Turner, 2017).

In southwestern Niger, livestock mobility became a matter of inter-imperial and inter-administrative colonial competition (Turner, 2017). The heavy tax burden and drought led to people leaving southwestern Niger to move to British colonised Nigeria (Painter, 1988). A 1903 letter from Lord Lugard to the colonial offices captures the attitude of the British to the arrival of populations from French occupied territories: “The advent of fresh inhabitants possessed of flocks and herds will mean an added resource of wealth to the British territory and impoverish the French” (Thom 1971, 134 in Turner 2017, 593). A political report written in 1902 captures the political importance of the issue for the French, describing the interception of a group of Peuls (also known as Fulani or Fulbe), who were the key managers of livestock in southwestern Niger, along with their livestock:

“Emigration has reached disturbing levels during the month of November. A group of Kourteyes [from the village of Kourteye] from the Sansanne Haoussa [Hausa] canton with seventy-one head of cattle was surprised in the Fakara while headed for Sokoto ... A group of thirty-two Seetanga Fulbe, heading for Kollo, crossed the district near Bunelera. Four were stopped, the others fled when the group was confronted ... Two herds of thirty head of questionable origin were seized in Gaya. The detained emigrants state that the misery in their home region caused by drought has pushed them to seek to move south temporarily where life is easier and the soil more fertile. The tax question was not unimportant in their decision to leave ... It therefore seems necessary to reduce the tax in order to retain river populations within our authority since to the south the tax is much less and the soil more rich.” - Rapport politique, novembre 1902, Cercle du Djerma, III Territoire Militaire (AOM 14MIOM1625 in Turner 2017, 593)

At least one of the groups referred to in the above quote is likely to have moved along its seasonal transhumance route, rather than attempting to leave the colony (Turner, 2017). According to Turner (2017), archival sources indicate that French colonisers lacked full understanding of the motivations for livestock movements. French attempts to regulate the movements of livestock across colonial administrative borders resulted, among other things, in the temporary but finally failed introduction of *laissez-passer* documents (Rossi, 2015; Turner, 2017). With surveillance largely unsuccessful, another way in which the French colonial administration attempted to control livestock was to make the colony more attractive to Peuls, some of whom could gain land rights through cooperating with the colonisers (Turner, 2017).

The dominant paradigm of the nation state emerging after the First World War also impacted the state/territory/population nexus in colonised French Africa. In the period after the war, the flawed

assumption that a ‘congruence existed between language, ethnicity and territory’ guided territorial governance (Lefebvre, 2011, p. 192). This resulted in the redefinition of administrative divisions as well as borders within the same colonial administration, and also affected the processes of demarcation of borders in the context of inter-imperial competition. Attempts to redefine borders and administrative divisions were in line with a colonial determination of ethnic affiliations which did not mirror social realities. Colonial attempts to align borders and administrative zones to ethnic affiliations were guided by colonial ‘expertise’, which was deemed sufficient to define territorial configurations responding to European rationales of national belonging (Lefebvre, 2011). This resulted in the redefinition of colonial administrative entities, for example the division of the *cercle*⁷ of Maradi and Zinder in the south-central parts of Niger. These changes were made to ensure ethnic homogeneity by separating nomadic and sedentary populations and to build a “homogenous structure based on human unity” (Lefebvre, 2011, p. 195). However, in practice this re-organisation was unfeasible as it was based on a colonial misconception that nomadic and sedentary lifestyles were incompatible with each other. In fact, they were complementary (Lefebvre, 2011; Rossi, 2015).

Another example, which highlights the artificiality of ‘belonging’ construed through colonial governance, as well as the political stakes involved for populations exposed to re-drawn boundaries, is the 1929 redefinition of territorial demarcations of what today constitutes the borders of Niger, Chad and Libya (Lefebvre, 2011; Musch, 2013); at the time this delineated L’Afrique-Équatoriale française (AEF); Afrique-Occidentale française (AOF) and Italian Fezzan, in current day Libya. Lefebvre (2011) describes how Capitain Rottier was recommended by Governor Brévié to the Governor General to trace the demarcation because of his expeditions to the region. Following a survey, Rottier wrote a report in which he outlined his suggested division of the area. The arguments brought forward in his report were based on geographic regions and his observation of the local population’s networks, yet they excluded any references to political or historical contexts. Lefebvre (2011, 194) finds: “Thus the definition of territory ceased to stem simply from investigations and enquiries with the local population (...) After the First World War, the expertise of the colonial administrations was sufficient.” Musch’s (2013) in-depth study of this border redefinition shows that the mobile population, the Guna, chose to ‘officially’ reside in the territory of the AOF. This meant that they de facto emancipated themselves from their weakness *vis-à-vis* rival Tomagra groups through their strategic cooperation with French colonial administrators, mirroring a process of ‘colonial construction of ethnicity’ (Tetzlaff and Jakobeit, 2005; Waldmann and Elwert; 1989 in Musch, 2013).

These historical ‘snapshots’ (Mayblin, 2017) show that the period of ‘conquest’ and the phase following the First World War have two elements in common. First, French governance in Niger resulted in some local groups strategically profiting from colonial interests. Turner (2017) describes the interaction between Peul herders and the colonial administration in southwest Niger during the period of ‘conquest’ as one based on ‘sticks and carrots’. In his words: “We can think of the actions of livestock herders and of French administrators as highly interactive, each responding to the other – a sort of negotiation without face-to-face interaction.” Equally, the border redefinition process between AOF and AEF highlights that an element of strategic interaction on the part of the Guna was present in this case as well. Second, despite these instances of strategic interaction, colonial understandings of mobility and belonging were often misaligned with the lived socio-political realities of the populations. This interaction was guided by what is called here ‘negotiated misalignment.’ Intersubjective knowledge systems along the state/territory/mobility nexus following the First World War can be read as an attempted ‘historical reidentification’, which remained detached from pre- and co-existing intersubjective knowledge systems and were

hence marked again by ‘negotiated misalignment’. The next section will consider how MCBPs work to order mobility as migration and continue to reproduce coloniality of knowledge. It traces continuous instances of ‘negotiated misalignment’ and turns to consider the ‘gaze’ of MCBPs.

5. The ordering ambitions of MCBPs: ‘Negotiated Misalignment’ and logics of colonial subject formation

5.1. ‘Migratizing mobility’: The reproduction of the state/population/territory nexus and categorization of migration

Before exploring how MCBPs reproduce specific migration understandings, it is important to note that the socio-spatial arrangement linked to mobility governed along the state/population/territory nexus does not stand in isolation, but rather permeates the current official legal migration framework in Niger. While migration had been a more peripheral issue in Nigerien politics prior to 2015 (Jegen, 2020), the country’s migration governance framework is spelled out in both national and regional legal frameworks. On the national level, the central legal migration framework is the 1981 Ordinance (Ordonnance N° 81 – 40) and its 1987 implementing decree (Décret d’Application N° 87–07). Both lay out the rules governing entry and stay of foreigners. At the regional level, Niger is a signatory to the Treaty of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and its subsequent protocols, as well as the Treaty on the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU). Both are regional organisations that safeguard the right of entry, residence, and establishment for the citizens of its Member States. With migration governance constituting an important state-making function for many African states (Quirk & Vigneswaran, 2015) and post-colonial states more broadly (Sadiq & Tsourapas, 2021), the aim here is not to re-institute a dichotomy between ‘external’ versus ‘internal’ notions of the state/territory/population nexus. The sedentary bias is not exclusively reproduced by MCBPs, as Sahelian state actors have also continuously reaffirmed the particular socio-spatial organisation emerging from the ‘colonial encounter’ (Frowd, 2022; Jegen, 2020; Ould Moctar, 2020). Two central logics of how MCBPs reproduce understandings of coloniality are considered here, drawing on a non-exhaustive list of MCBPs which were rolled out at the time of research and which evolves over time.

First, MCBPs foster the ability of the Nigerien state to ‘embrace’ and thereby define its citizens, through projects that enhance civil registration and ‘modernise’ border infrastructure. These projects have strengthened the capacity of the Nigerien state to define its population along the state/territory/population nexus which foresees a clearly defined populace within clearly demarcated borders. Since 2012, the EU and UNICEF have jointly funded the strengthening and modernisation of civil registries, with impressive ‘on paper’ results. Birth registrations have increased from 39% in 2011 to 65% in 2014 (Minault, 2016). At the time of research, UNICEF was working on a three-year project financed by the EU since 2017, which aims to further modernise the Nigerien birth registration system and led to the adoption of a revised civil status policy, civil status law and implementation decrees in early 2019 (European Commission, 2019). Studies on the creation of mobility regimes have highlighted the role of technologies, such as passports, in the process of inserting the individual in the state/territory/population nexus (McKeown, 2008; Mongia, 1999; Torpey, 1998). Through the modernised civil registries, the state can not only discern who is part of its population but can also define which country a (potentially) mobile body belongs to.

These efforts have been complemented by the establishment of an ever more complex border surveillance apparatus. Border capacity building entails the building, modernisation, refurbishment and renovation of border posts (Frowd, 2018b), including the building of mobile border posts (EEAS, 2019a, 2019b). It has resulted in the installation of different entry-exit systems that collect biometric data on individuals crossing the border (Zandonini, 2019a,b). The collection of biometric

⁷ The ‘cercle’ was the smallest colonial administrative unit.

data renders a mobile population traceable, identifiable, and most importantly, connectable to a specific location. Johnson et al. (2011, p. 64) highlight that these emerging border techniques which make it possible to 'read off the body' have led to the contemporary border being constructed "through movements itself." The body becomes located within the hierarchies of an international mobility regime, even before the exclusive European state border is reached. In line with what Cohn & Scott (1996, p. 5) call "investigative modality," modern technologies of mobility control constitute an ever evolving "definition of a body of information that is needed, the procedures by which appropriate knowledge is gathered, its ordering and classification, and then how it is transformed into usable forms." This leads to the second mode through which MCBPs work to define mobility: the reproduction of differentiated migration governance along differing migration types.

In the Nigerien context, MCBPs have allowed European actors to influence the definition of migration, to have a stake in what categories of migration should exist, and how they should be governed. One of these processes is carried out through the Interministerial Migration Committee or CIM (Comité Interministériel Chargé de l'Elaboration du Document de la Politique Nationale de Migration). This brings together various Nigerien ministries, UN agencies, the National Human Rights Council, and civil society actors. The CIM has received financial and technical support from the German Development Agency (GIZ) from 2017 onwards and was responsible for drafting the first comprehensive Nigerien migration policy (Jegen, 2020). This policy was adopted in 2020 (Niamey et Les 2 Jours 2020) and lays down political objectives for Nigerien migration governance until 2035 (Ministère de l'Intérieur et de la Décentralisation, 2021). It does not replace the current legislative framework, but recommends policy lines along three axes: management of migration flows, exploitation of economic opportunities linked to migration, and protection and assistance to migrants and host communities. Among the many proposed actions, it foresees a reform of the 1981 legislation on the rules of entry and stay. The policy document was formulated with input from six different sub-committees, which mirror a pre-supposed categorisation of different types of migration: governance of migration, employment, protection, security and migration, internal migration, circular and transit migration (Ministère de l'Intérieur, de la Sécurité Publique, de la Décentralisation et des Affaires Coutumières et Religieuses, 2020). Most notably, the formulation process included training sessions on migration, preparing Nigerien civil servants for their involvement in formulating the policy (Ministère de l'Intérieur, de la Sécurité Publique, de la Décentralisation et des Affaires Coutumières et Religieuses, 2020). In addition, the CIM funded and brought together networks of civil society organisations working in the field of human rights and migration,⁸ to contribute to the policy elaboration process at the time of research.⁹

Another important framework is the CCM (Cadre de Concertation sur la Migration), the National Coordination Platform on Migration, that meets bi-annually and brings together national and international stakeholders to coordinate their actions in the field of migration. The CCM was established following the visit of EU Commissioner Stylianides in 2016 (European Commission, 2016) and has received financial and technical support from the EU. It is coordinated via a permanent structure in the form of a Secretariat under the Nigerien Ministry of Interior's (MoI) Migration Unit. The CCM has sub-committees which divide up different migration governance fields: migration-security, migration-development, and migration and child protection (Sall,

2021).¹⁰ At the time of writing, a project funded by Denmark and implemented by the IOM aimed to ensure that the Permanent Secretariat (coordinating the CCM) will have harmonised its own and other migration stakeholders' approaches in line with the newly concluded National Migration Policy, as well as relevant international conventions (Sall, 2021),¹¹ de facto fostering a specific understanding of migration contained in these documents. Key elements of the project include the sensitisation of political stakeholders, public structures involved in migration, local authorities and civil society organisations, with the aim that these actors enhance their usage of the CCM (Sall, 2021).

Finally, the EUTF-German funded project ProGEM, 'Managing Migration Challenges in Niger',¹² aims to foster a specific understanding of what migration constitutes at regional level, beyond the country's capital, in cooperation with communities and regions (in Agadez, Tahoua and Zinder). While the key task of the project is to enhance community and regional actors' capacity to deal with 'crises' resulting from the influx of migrants, it also has a role in shaping specific thinking about migration and is based on an assumption that local representatives lack the expertise to deal with mobility related questions. The project's description starts out with the assertion that "elected community representatives and administrative staff lack sufficient expertise. Information regarding the impacts of migration on the country is patchy" (GIZ, 2021). Based on this, the project's key objective is to provide these representatives with "robust information" in order "to adequately address the challenges that arise due to migration" (GIZ, 2021). This is done through training courses and coaching sessions. At the time of writing, the implementing agency, GIZ, states that "approximately 630 administrative officers, local councillors and members of civil society have also received training in more than 70 courses" (GIZ, 2021). In a similar vein, a development worker stressed that the project had a "pedagogical task" of familiarising regional leaders with the international migration vocabulary and enabling them to better express their regional 'migration' demands to national stakeholders.¹³ Further, so-called 'local observatories' have been set up, encompassing relevant state and non-state regional and national representatives, which through their analysis of the "impacts of migration in society", are supposed to support communities and regions in the development of migration relevant projects, which can then be financed under the project (GIZ, 2021).

The European support for the implementation of the 2015 migrant smuggling law (Loi n° 2015-36) is arguably the most prominent way that MCBPs have attempted to shape definitions of what constitutes legitimate and illegitimate forms of mobility facilitation in Niger. The law does not introduce penalisation of facilitation of illegalised migration, which is laid down in the hardly implemented 1981 legal framework (Ordonnance N° 81 - 40) (Mounkaila and Maga 2010). However, in 2015, the new anti-smuggling law increased these fines drastically and spelled out details of the criminal defences related to smuggling of migrants in more detail. Following the adoption of the 2015 migrant smuggling law, European actors strongly supported its implementation, through the financing and drafting of follow-up strategies (ICMPD, 2016)¹⁴ and by financially and materially supporting Niger's criminal justice system and security apparatus under the EUTF funded AJUSEN¹⁵ project. Enhanced criminalisation of previously *de facto* freely operating transportation businesses (Brachet, 2018; Molenaar, 2017) comprises an

¹⁰ Arrêté conjoint N°50316 portant création, attributions, composition et fonctionnement d'un Cadre de Concertation sur la Migration (CCM) - Article.

¹¹ Especially the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

¹² Améliorer la gestion de défis migratoires (ProGEM).

¹³ Interview, European development worker, Niamey, 15.03.2019.

¹⁴ The strategy has four axes: border management, prevention, investigation, prosecution and protection and return and reintegration.

¹⁵ Appui à la Justice, Sécurité et à la Gestion des Frontières au Niger (AJUSEN).

⁸ Réseaux Migration Développement et Droits Humains (REMIDDH).

⁹ Other policy documents pertaining to mobility governance drafted within the framework of MCBPs include the National Strategy on the Fight Against Irregular Migration, concluded in 2016, and the National Border Policy, adopted in 2019.

attempt to refine the logics of what constitutes il/legitimate mobility.

The MCBPs discussed here share the objective of enhancing the state's capacity to govern migration, following the idea that MCBPs transform what is perceived as a chaotic reality into an orderly process (see also Geiger & Pécout, 2010). This ordering process is linked to ordering migration governance along internationally agreed categories of different types of migration (Pécout, 2015; Poutignat and Streiff-Fénart, 2010), as is the case in the thematic groups of both the CIM and the CCM. On a more basic level, this ordering process reproduces a Eurocentric understanding of what constitutes an appropriate migration vocabulary. Further, MCBPs constitute attempts to raise migration as an issue among regional ECOWAS authorities and national public servants and aim to shape procedures of migration-related claim-making towards newly built state structures.

5.2. Continuities of "negotiated misalignment"

While statist logics of mobility governance are not foreign to Nigerien state institutions, the conditions of the desert, including environmental factors as well as sparse population density, have in the *longue durée* given rise to tensions between centralised states (kingdoms, empires, caliphates, the current state of Niger) and social and political structures of nomadic societies (Rossi, 2015). This is illustrated by Brachet (2018, p. 27): "In Niger, everybody knows that controlling the desert is even more difficult than controlling the sea, and that no police program can keep people from adapting to the new conditions."

The Sahara, making up large parts of Niger's territory, has been described as a space of *connectivity*. This is not in the sense of "unfettered freedom of movement", but rather a context where mobility is essential for survival and therefore, "the denial of the freedom to move is an important means of control and an expression of power" (McDougall & Scheele, 2012, p. 14). This, together with the relative absence of the Nigerien state (and Sahelian states more generally) in more remote and difficult to access desert-like environments, shapes the coexistence of particular understandings of territoriality and belonging, which historically and contemporarily differ from Eurocentric statist understandings of the population/state/territory nexus (Hüsken & Klute, 2010; Ould Moutar, 2020; Rossi, 2015). In this context, the Nigerien state has traditionally been only one among many actors competing for the responsibility to govern the mobility of populations (Rossi, 2015).

Equally, different types of mobility co-exist in Niger. Circular mobility, mostly from the country's rural areas to regional economic hubs, constitutes an important livelihood strategy (Boyer, 2007; Boyer & Mounkaila, 2010). Day-to-day cross-border mobility often takes place within the same communities that live on both sides of a border (Miles, 2015). Intercommunal cross-border mobility takes place, for example, at the border between Niger and Mali, which divides, among others, Tuareg and Songhaï/Zarma, or in the border zone between Niger and Nigeria, where Hausa, Peul, Songhaï, Tuareg and Tubus live across both countries (Lefebvre, 2004). Further, transhumance or nomadic societies are important in the Nigerien mobility context and have a long history of resisting state mobility control (Rossi, 2015).

In this context it is hardly surprising that pluriversal mobility understandings emerged repeatedly in the interviews conducted. Respondents observed that MCBPs were shaping the understanding of migration (mobility) among stakeholders directly involved in such projects, pointing to the existence of diverging prior intersubjective knowledge systems on mobility.¹⁶ One important shift highlighted by several interviewees is that prior to the launch of the respective projects, Nigerien civil servants often equated the notion of 'migration' with irregular migration.¹⁷ One Nigerien actor commented that "once we

spoke about migration, we spoke about irregular migration," explaining further that a person engaging in seasonal mobility from i.e. Ivory Coast would not have been considered a migrant, while a Senegalese on their way to Europe would be.¹⁸ The same respondent went on to highlight that this change of conceptions also went in hand with sensitisation efforts, stressing that this "n'était pas facile".¹⁹

The misalignment between socio-political realities on the ground and political narratives further fostered by MCBPs became visible in the interviews, when Nigerien civil servants made comments which seemed to contradict the state-centered logics of MCBPs. When asked whether mobility across the Niger-Nigeria border zone could be considered migration, interviewees stressed that people living on both sides of the border cannot be thought of as different people,²⁰ and that in some areas the border was not perceptible, given that it crosses villages, and in fact the same communities.²¹ According to one interviewee, cross-border integration also means that the Nigerian currency (Nira) is used in some Nigerien border towns, instead of the regional currency (Franc de la Communauté Financière Africaine, FCFA).²² Furthermore, interviewees stressed that mobile populations in the country's Northern regions navigate across borders easily, without necessarily using official border crossing points, as they know *their* terrain well.²³ Going beyond mobility in the border zone, one actor involved in the formulation of the NMP was asked whether Nigerian Hausas would be considered migrants. He answered "Ah- ben- on est pas encore à ce niveau,"²⁴ thereby pointing to the misalignment with the Eurocentric mobility understandings reproduced through MCBPs.

Crucially, interview data suggests that beyond Nigerien stakeholders involved in MCBPs, in the wider society, conceptions of migration and mobility have not changed to the same extent.²⁵ One Nigerien development worker commented that shifting public discourses and understandings of mobility are slower as "la migration, c'est une tradition, c'est une mode de vie."²⁶ Long-standing mobility patterns often lead to regional 'traditional' mobility not being considered as 'migration', a term which, as a European development worker explained, is usually reserved for a person going to Europe.²⁷

Further, regarding migrant smuggling, interview data indicate 'negotiated misalignment' among policy actors. Here, one example concerns the question of 'mobility' of people from northern Nigeria, who, according to a Nigerien working on anti-smuggling measures, could by *no means* be considered smuggled – in contradiction with the migrant smuggling law.²⁸ 'Negotiated misalignment' can also be seen in the implementation of the 2015 anti-smuggling law. Research has shown that implementation of the law remains partial (Raineri, 2018; Stambøl, 2019) and is entangled in relevant political economies (Molenaar, 2017; Tubiana et al., 2018). This points to a divergence between the claim to universality of externally induced intersubjective knowledge systems related to migration, and the more pluriversal knowledge systems of migration and mobility which co-exist in the Nigerien context.

¹⁸ Interview, European development worker, Niamey, 15.03.2019.

¹⁹ 'was not easy.' Interview, Nigerien humanitarian worker, Niamey, 13.03.2019.

²⁰ Interview, Nigerien working for an international organisation, Niamey, 08.03.2019.

²¹ Interview, Nigerien development worker, Niamey, 27.03.2019.

²² Ibid.

²³ Interview, Nigerien development worker, Niamey, 27.03.2019, Interview, humanitarian worker, Niamey, 13.03.2019.

²⁴ 'Oh well, we are not yet at this level', interview, Nigerien development worker, Niamey 13.03.2019.

²⁵ Interview, Nigerian academic, 25.03.2019.

²⁶ 'Migration is a tradition, it is a way of life.' Interview, Niamey, Nigerien development worker, 13.03.2019.

²⁷ Interview, European development worker, Niamey, 15.03.2019.

²⁸ Interview, international organisation, Niamey, 08.03.2019.

¹⁶ Interview, European development worker, Niamey, 15.03.2019, Nigerien development worker, Niamey, 15.03.2019.

¹⁷ Interview, Nigerien humanitarian worker, Niamey, 13.03.2019.

While capacity building projects seem to contribute to shifting the narratives of what constitutes migration among the stakeholders directly involved, this section has illustrated that this shift occurred through ‘negotiated misalignment’. Nigerien actors are interacting with the universalised Eurocentric migration definitions, yet interviews suggest that these remain detached from pre- and co-existing mobility conceptualisations.

5.3. MCBPs and logics of colonial subject formation

This leads to the question of how to conceptualise the ‘gaze’ of MCBPs, which defines the ‘migrant subject’ without taking account of pre- and co-existing mobility understandings. Lorenzini & Tazzioli (2018) interpretations of Fanon’s work on subject formation are instructive to explore this question. Their analysis of Fanon’s work centres on the divergence between the colonial regime of knowledge and the individual’s (subject’s) discourse of truth. The colonial subject’s articulations of truth are deemed irrelevant by the coloniser (Fanon, 2014, pp. 41–55) and his/her identity prescribed in contrast to the coloniser (Fanon, 2008). Two angles from which to scrutinise the regime of truth according to Fanon have been suggested by Lorenzini & Tazzioli (2018), who differentiate between, first, being ‘subject to’, and second, being a ‘subject of’. The second mode is central to the analysis of the mismatch between MCBPs and diverging understandings of mobility in the Nigerien context.

This mode draws on Fanon’s work on ethnopsychiatry (Fanon, 2014), termed ‘pathologized conduct’ (Lorenzini & Tazzioli, 2018, p. 80). Here, the subject is understood by the coloniser as incapable of telling the truth. Yet, the colonised subject is still required to ‘speak’ in order to be ‘classified’ and to become a governable subject. Following Fanon’s analysis, this act of speech constitutes a ‘confession without truth’ which reproduces the pre-defined image of the coloniser (Tazzioli, 2015, p. 16). The ‘colonial subjects’ then remain exterior to the regime of truth and are not required to embrace the diagnostic categories used to define them. Since the pathologised conducts do not correspond to the ‘reality’ of the colonised, Fanon finds that the postcolonial subject has an impossible ontology and faces an objectivity that is ‘always directed against him’ (Fanon, 2004, p. 37). When considering the disjunctions between what seems to point to diverging knowledge systems on mobility and the resulting political discourse, two parallels to what Fanon describes as the *pathologisation of conduct* can be discerned.

First, the full scope of mobility understandings of the Nigerien stakeholders is not the starting point of political categorisation. Consequently, many existing understandings of mobility remain disconnected from the political discourse reproduced in MCBPs. This goes in hand in hand with Fanon’s argument that the colonised subject was regarded as ineligible to produce truth about themselves. This ineligibility was pointed out by the comments of one development worker: “If the people feel like they are crossing the border into a different country, it is actually completely irrelevant [to our project].”²⁹ This points to the development of a political migratory discourse which in the end is based on mutual ‘non-recognition’ between the ‘gaze’ of MCBPs and lived mobility practices. Further, the fact that ‘sensitisation,’ understood as an educational measure of the correct migration definitions, constitutes an important element of MCBPs, geared at both populations and civil servants,³⁰ is another indicator of their misalignment with socio-political realities in Niger.

Second, Fanon highlights that even though the conduct of the colonised is considered ‘untruthful’, colonial subjects are still required to speak in order for their practices – in Fanon’s case ‘illness’ – to be

²⁹ ‘If the people feel like they are crossing the border into a different country, it is actually completely irrelevant’ [to our project]. Interview, European actor, Niamey, 15.03.2019.

³⁰ Interview, civil servant, Niamey 08.03.2019.

classified along pre-defined categories. In the case of MCBPs, these categories are then reproduced in policy documents and national strategy papers, which often form the outcome of MCBPs, as well as the basis for further donor support. Further, in the case of the NMP, one interviewee stressed that in contrast to standard operating procedures, a national consultant, rather than an international/foreign one, was hired to draft a policy so that Nigerien stakeholders could ‘identify’ with the new document.³¹ Regarding another project, it was highlighted that the aim was not to impose a European migration vocabulary, but rather to stimulate Nigerien stakeholders to evolve their ‘own’ categories to manage migration along pre-defined categories. One respondent highlighted that in some Nigerien languages, up to four different words exist to describe ‘migrant’.³² Despite apparent efforts to enhance Nigerien ‘ownership’ of the document, these pre- and co-existing mobility understandings were not mentioned in the resulting policy document.

Hence, Fanon’s thinking on ‘pathologised conducts’ offers a way to make sense of the ‘gaze’ employed by MCBPs. This reading along with the interview data suggests that they constitute a “confession without truth – a discourse about truth that does not postulate any hidden truth to unfold but, rather, posits an already-there reality” (Tazzioli, 2015, p. 16). The subject, therefore, is not required to embrace the categories which define them. Social practices remain outside “the regime of truth through which the coloniser wants to codify (...) his or her act and undisciplined conduct” (Lorenzini & Tazzioli, 2018, p. 81). The universalised Eurocentric understandings of migration, as reproduced in MCBPs, aim to render other conceptions of mobility that pre-and co-exist in Niger void of the possibility of an ontology, not only vis-a-vis external actors, but also towards the political discourse and practices in their own context.

6. Conclusion

This article has investigated how MCBPs aim to define *what* migration is and *how* it should be governed. It finds that MCBPs play an important role in reproducing specific understandings of mobility through perpetuating the statist bias in mobility governance and categorizing different types of mobilities along predefined categories. The article has further shown that the reproduction of migration understandings through MCBPs maps onto colonial histories of mobility governance. Resulting questions regarding the coloniality of knowledge have been explored by tracing historical and contemporary moments of ‘negotiated misalignment’ between Eurocentric and co-existing mobility understandings. By reproducing a ‘migrant subjectivity’ which is not anchored in co-existing pluriverse mobility understandings, MCBPs are arguably employing logics of colonial subject formation. It is in this context that the consideration of the coloniality of knowledge in European funded MCBPs remains crucial as it repoliticises the evolution and genealogy of border externalization beyond presentism (Cobarrubias et al., 2023). MCBPs are both reminiscent of a colonial past as well as deeply anchored within projections of European migration governance of the future – indicative by the earmarking of ten percent of the EU’s development funding for migration related projects since 2021 (Jegen et al., 2020).

Meanwhile, ‘negotiated misalignment’ points to Nigerien actors not merely being passive receivers of Eurocentric intersubjective models. Instead, both the historical and contemporary analysis suggests that Nigerien stakeholders interact with these understandings within an asymmetric yet negotiated relationship. These misalignments are productive in itself – they render Eurocentric knowledge systems negotiated and perpetually incomplete. The capacity of ‘negotiated misalignment’ to challenge the material and discursive formations of MCBPs at different scales deserves future research, alongside questions of

³¹ Interview, European development worker Niamey, 13.03.2019.

³² Interview, European development worker, Niamey, 15.03.2019.

'everyday resistance' of non-European actors directly working through the infrastructures of MCBPs (Kumi & Kamruzzaman, 2021; Sou, 2022). Paying attention to how diverging governance rationales and the deliberate ignorance of European rationales challenge logics of MCBPs beyond direct and open contestation, is relevant to understand the reproduction of coloniality of knowledge at the heart of these programmes, the in/direct contestation that exists towards it, and answers recurrent calls to avoid unidirectional readings in studies of externalised migration control (Cobarrubias et al., 2023; İşleyen, 2018).

Authorship:

All persons who meet authorship criteria are listed as authors, and all authors certify that they have participated sufficiently in the work to take public responsibility for the content, including participation in the concept, design, analysis, writing, or revision of the manuscript. Furthermore, each author certifies that this material or similar material has not been and will not be submitted to or published in any other publication before its appearance in the Geoforum.

Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Data availability

The data that has been used is confidential.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the editors of this special issue for their invaluable and generous feedback throughout the editing process. I am further indebted to Aino Emilia Korvensyrjä, Franzisca Zanker, Katia Golovko, and Polly Pallister-Wilkins who provided valuable feedback on various stages of this article. I am also grateful to feedback on an early draft of this paper from the participants, especially Eva Magdalena Stambøl, at a workshop, organized by Martin Lemberg-Pedersen at Aalborg University, on postcoloniality and forced migration. I also thank the anonymous reviewers for their comments. Finally, my sincere gratitude goes to all interview partners who shared their time and insights with me.

Funding

This work was supported by the Mercator Foundation as part of the "Mercator Dialogue on Migration and Asylum in Europe".

References

- Anderson, B., Sharma, N., Wright, C., 2009. Editorial: Why No Borders? Canada's J. Refugees 26 (2), 5–18. <https://doi.org/10.25071/1920-7336.3207>.
- Ash, C.B., 2006. Forced labor in colonial West Africa. *History Compass* 4, 402–406. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1478-0542.2006.00327.x>.
- Bakewell, O., 2008. Research beyond the categories: the importance of policy irrelevant research into forced migration. *J. Refug. Stud.* 21, 432–453. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/fen042>.
- Boyer, F., Mounkaila, H., 2010. Partir pour aider ceux qui restent ou la dépendance face aux migrations. L'exemple des paysans sahéliens. *Hommes & migrations. Revue française de référence sur les dynamiques migratoires* 212–220. <https://doi.org/10.4000/hommesmigrations.1752>.
- Boyer, F., 2007. Echelle locale et mouvement: de la porosité spatiale et sociale dans les migrations circulaires. In: Beosen, L., Marfaing, E. (Eds.), *Les Nouveaux Urbains Dans L'espace Sahara-Sahel - Un Cosmopolitisme Par Le Bas*. KARTHALA Editions, Paris.
- Brachet, J., 2016. Policing the desert: The IOM in Libya beyond war and peace: Policing the desert. *Antipode* 48, 272–292. <https://doi.org/10.1111/anti.12176>.
- Brachet, J., 2018. Manufacturing smugglers: From irregular to clandestine mobility in the Sahara. *Ann. Am. Acad. Political Soc. Sci.* 676, 16–35. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716217744529>.

- Butt, D., 2013. Colonialism and Postcolonialism. In: LaFollette, H. (Ed.), *The International Encyclopedia of Ethics*. John Wiley & Sons Ltd, Hoboken, NJ, pp. 892–898.
- Boås, M., Strazzari, F., 2020. Governance, fragility and insurgency in the Sahel: A hybrid political order in the making. *Int. Spect.* 55, 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03932729.2020.1835324>.
- Casas-Cortes, M., Cobarrubias, S., Pickles, J., 2016. 'Good neighbours make good fences': Seahorse operations, border externalization and extra-territoriality. *Eur. Urban Reg. Stud.* 23, 231–251. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0969776414541136>.
- Cobarrubias, S., Cuttitta, P., Casas-Cortés, M., Lemberg-Pedersen, M., El Qadim, N., İşleyen, B., Fine, S., Giusa, C., Heller, C., 2023. Interventions on the concept of externalisation in migration and border studies. *Polit. Geogr.* 105, 102911.
- Cobarrubias, S., 2020. Scale in motion? Rethinking scalar production and border externalization. *Polit. Geogr.* 80, 102184 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2020.102184>.
- Cohn, B.S., Scott, D., 1996. *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India*. Princeton University Press, Princeton.
- De Genova, N., 2017. Introduction. The Borders of "Europe" and the European Question. In: De Genova, N. (Ed.), *The Borders of "Europe": Autonomy of Migration, Tactics of Bordering*. Duke University Press, Durham.
- Der Derian, J., Shapiro, M.J. (Eds.), 1989. *International/intertextual Relations: Postmodern Readings of World Politics, Issues in World Politics Series*. Lexington Books, Lexington, Mass.
- Dini, S., 2018. Migration management, capacity building and the sovereignty of an African State: International Organization for Migration in Djibouti. *J. Ethn. Migr. Stud.* 44, 1691–1705. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2017.1354058>.
- Edmunds, T., Juncos, A.E., 2020. Constructing the capable state: Contested discourses and practices in EU capacity building. *Coop. Confl.* 55, 3–21. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0010836719860885>.
- EEAS, 2019a. *Compagnie mobile pour la gestion intégrée de frontières [WWW Document]*. EEAS - European External Action Service - European Commission. URL https://eeas.europa.eu/csdp-missions-operations/eucap-sahel-niger/60268/compagnie-mobile-pour-la-gestion-int%C3%A9gr%C3%A9e-de-fronti%C3%A8res_en (accessed 9.13.19).
- EEAS, 2019b. *EUCAP Sahel Niger - Partnership for Security in the Sahel (Fact Sheet)*. EUCAP Sahel Niger, Niamey.
- European Commission, 2015. *European Agenda on Migration*. European Commission.
- European Commission, 2016. *First Progress Report on the Partnership Framework with third countries under the European Agenda on Migration*.
- European Commission, 2019. *Support programme for strengthening the civil registration system in Niger*. International Cooperation and Development - European Commission. URL https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/projects/support-programme-strengthening-civil-registration-system-niger_en (accessed 6.25.19).
- European Union, 2004. Regulation (EC) No 491/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 March 2004 establishing a programme for financial and technical assistance to third countries in the areas of migration and asylum (AENEAS), CELEX1.
- Fanon, F., 2004. *The Wretched of the Earth*. Grove Press, New York.
- Fanon, F., 2008. *Black Skin*. Grove Press, New York, *White Masks*.
- Fanon, F., 2014. *Decolonizing madness: the psychiatric writings of Frantz Fanon*. Palgrave Macmillan, New York.
- Feldman, G., 2011. Illuminating the Apparatus: Steps toward a Nonlocal Ethnography of Global Governance. In: Shore, C., Wright, S., Però, D. (Eds.), *Policy Worlds: Anthropology and the Analysis of Contemporary Power*, EASA Series. Berghahn Books, New York.
- Frowd, P.M., 2018a. Developmental borderwork and the International Organization for Migration. *J. Ethn. Migr. Stud.* 44, 1656–1672. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2017.1354046>.
- Frowd, P.M., 2018b. *Security at the Borders: Transnational practices and technologies in West Africa*, 1st ed. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Frowd, P.M., 2020. Producing the 'transit' migration state: international security intervention in Niger. *Third World Q* 41 (2), 340–358. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2019.1660633>.
- Frowd, P.M., 2022. Borderwork Creep in West Africa's Sahel. *Geopolitics* 27, 1331–1351. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2021.1901082>.
- Geiger, M., Pécoud, A., 2010. The Politics of International Migration Management. In: Geiger, M., Pécoud, A. (Eds.), *The Politics of International Migration Management, Migration, Minorities and Citizenship*. Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, UK, pp. 1–20.
- GIZ, 2021. *Supporting communities and regions in managing the challenges of migration*. giz (Deutsche Gesellschaft für internationale Zusammenarbeit) GmbH. URL <https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/43838.html> (accessed 11.10.21).
- Gross-Wyrtzen, L., Gazzotti, L., 2021. Telling histories of the present: postcolonial perspectives on Morocco's 'radically new' migration policy. *The Journal of North African Studies* 26, 827–843. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13629387.2020.1800204>.
- Ministère de l'Intérieur, de la Sécurité Publique, de la Décentralisation et des Affaires Coutumières et Religieuses, 2020. *Politique Nationale de la Migration (2020 -2035) avec son Plan d'Actions Quinquennal*. URL <https://www.migration-spcmc.ne/sites/default/files/2021-07/POLITIQUE%20NATIONALE%20DE%20MIGRATION%20.pdf> (accessed 4.10.21).
- Hüsken, T., Klute, G., 2010. Emerging forms of power in two African borderlands a theoretical and empirical research outline. *Journal of Borderlands Studies* 25, 107–121. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08865655.2010.9695765>.
- ICMPD, 2016. *Niger: Irregular Migration*. MIEUX Initiative. URL <https://www.mieux-initiative.eu/en/actions/95-niger-irregular-migration> (accessed 6.18.19).

- İşleyen, B., 2018. Transit mobility governance in Turkey. *Polit. Geogr.* 62, 23–32. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2017.09.017>.
- Jegen, L., Zanker, F., 2019. European dominance of migration policy in Niger “On a fait les filles avant la mère” (Medam Policy Brief). MEDAM & ABL.
- Jegen, L., Claes, J., Cham, O., 2020. Towards mutually beneficial EU-West African migration cooperation? Assessing EU policy trends and their implication for migration cooperation (CRU Policy Brief). Clingendael, The Hague, Netherlands.
- Jegen, L., 2020. The Political Economy of Migration Governance in Niger. MEDAM & ABL, Freiburg.
- Johnson, C., Jones, R., Paasi, A., Amoo, L., Mountz, A., Salter, M., Rumford, C., 2011. Interventions on rethinking ‘the border’ in border studies. *Polit. Geogr.* 30, 61–69. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2011.01.002>.
- Kotef, H., 2015. Movement and the Ordering of Freedom: On Liberal Governances of Mobility. Duke University Press.
- Kumi, E., Kamruzzaman, P., 2021. Understanding the motivations and roles of national development experts in Ghana: ‘We do all the donkey work and they take the glory’. *Third World Q.* 42, 1157–1175. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2021.1877127>.
- Kundrus, B., 2005. From the Herero to the Holocaust? Some Remarks on the Current Debate. *Afr. Spectr.* 40, 299–308.
- Landau, L.B., 2018. A chronotope of containment development: Europe’s migrant crisis and Africa’s reterritorialisation. *Antipode* 51, 169–186. <https://doi.org/10.1111/anti.12420>.
- Landau, L.B., 2019. A chronotope of containment development: Europe’s migrant crisis and Africa’s reterritorialisation. *Antipode* 51, 169–186. <https://doi.org/10.1111/anti.12420>.
- Lefebvre, C., 2004. Histoire des frontières du Niger: De la nécessité d’une relecture critique d’un tabou historiographique. *La Contemporaine* 73 (1), 18–24. <https://doi.org/10.3406/mat.2004.963>.
- Lefebvre, C., 2011. We have tailored Africa: French colonialism and the “artificiality” of Africa’s borders in the interwar period. *J. Hist. Geogr.* 37 (2), 191–202. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhg.2010.11.004>.
- Lefebvre, C., 2021. Des pays au crépuscule. Fayard, Paris.
- Lemberg-Pedersen, M., Flett, S., Mayblin, L., Sahraoui, N., Stambøl, E.M., 2022. Introduction. In: Lemberg-Pedersen, M., Flett, S., Mayblin, L., Sahraoui, N., Stambøl, E.M. (Eds.), *Postcoloniality and Forced Migration: Mobility, Control*. Bristol University Press, Agency.
- Lemberg-Pedersen, M., 2019. Manufacturing displacement. Externalisation and postcoloniality in European migration control. *Global Affairs, The Externalization of EU’s migration policies: contestation and critique* 5, 247–271. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23340460.2019.1683463>.
- Lorenzini, D., Tazzioli, M., 2018. Confessional subjects and conducts of non-truth: Foucault, fashion and the making of the subject. *Theory Cult. Soc.* 35, 71–90. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02632764166678>.
- Lundborg, T., Vaughan-Williams, N., 2015. New Materialisms, discourse analysis, and International Relations: a radical intertextual approach. *Rev. Int. Stud.* 41, 3–25. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210514000163>.
- Malkki, L., 1992. National geographic: The rooting of peoples and the territorialization of national identity among scholars and refugees. *Cult. Anthropol.* 7, 24–44. <https://doi.org/10.1525/can.1992.7.1.02a00030>.
- Mathieu, M., 1995. *La Mission Afrique centrale*. Collection Racines du présent, Harmattan, Paris.
- Mayblin, L., Turner, J.B., 2021. *Migration studies and colonialism*. Polity Press, Cambridge, UK, Medford, MA.
- Mayblin, L., 2017. *Asylum after empire: colonial legacies in the politics of asylum seeking*. Kilombo: international relations and colonial questions. Rowman & Littlefield International, London; New York.
- McDougall, J., Scheele, J., 2012. *Saharan Frontiers : Space and Mobility in Northwest Africa*. Public Cultures of the Middle East and North Africa, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, IN.
- McKeown, A., 2008. *Melancholy order: Asian migration and the globalization of borders*. Columbia studies in international and global history. Columbia University Press, New York.
- McNevin, A., Missbach, A., Mulyana, D., 2016. The rationalities of migration management: control and subversion in an Indonesia-based counter-smuggling campaign. *Int. Political Sociol.* 10, 223–240. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ips/olw009>.
- Micinski, N.R., Bourbeau, P., 2023. Capacity building as intervention-lite: migration management and the global compacts. *Geopolitics* 1–25. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2023.2170789>.
- Mignolo, W., 2011. *The darker side of Western modernity: global futures, decolonial options*. Duke University Press, Durham.
- Miles, W.F.S., 2015. Postcolonial Borderland Legacies of Anglo-French Partition in West Africa. *Afr. Stud. Rev.* 58, 191–213. <https://doi.org/10.1017/asr.2015.71>.
- Minault, S., 2016. 2016 Niger: Evaluation du programme d’Appui au Système d’Etat Civil au Niger | Evaluation database (Evaluation). UNICEF.
- Ministère de l’Intérieur et de la Décentralisation, 2021. Accueil | Secrétariat Permanent du Cadre De Concertation Sur La Migration (SP/CCM) . Secrétariat Permanent du Cadre de Concertation sur la Migration (SP/CCM). URL <https://www.migration-sp.ccm.ne/fr> (accessed 8.26.21).
- Molenaar, F., 2017. Irregular migration and human smuggling networks in Niger.
- Mongia, R.V., 1999. Race, Nationality, Mobility: A History of the Passport. *Publ. Cult.* 11, 527–555. <https://doi.org/10.1215/08992363-11-3-527>.
- Moore, M., 2016. ‘Justice and Colonialism’: Justice and Colonialism. *Philos Compass* 11, 447–461. <https://doi.org/10.1111/phc3.12337>.
- Musch, T., 2013. Territoriality through migration: Cases among the Tubu Teda Guna (Niger). *Nomadic Peoples* 17 (2), 68–81. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43123936>.
- Niamey Et Les 2 Jours, 2020. Le Niger valide son document de politique migratoire. URL <https://www.niameyetles2jours.com/1-uemoa/gestion-publique/3009-5977-le-niger-valide-son-document-de-politique-migratoire> (accessed 26.9.21).
- Olurtimehin, B.O., 1974. The French Estate in West Africa, 1890–1918. *J. Hist. Soc. Nigeria* 7, 447–463. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41857031>.
- Ould Moctar, H., 2020. The proximity of the past in Mauritania. *EU border externalisation and its colonial antecedents*. *anthropodev*, pp. 51–67. Doi: 10.4000/anthropodev.951.
- Painter, T.M., 1988. From warriors to migrants: Critical perspectives on early migrations among the Zarma of Niger. *Africa: J. Int. African Inst.* 58, 87–100. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1159872>.
- Pascucci, E., 2017. The humanitarian infrastructure and the question of over-research: reflections on fieldwork in the refugee crises in the Middle East and North Africa. *Area* 49, 249–255. <https://doi.org/10.1111/area.12312>.
- Philippe Poutignat, Jocelyne Streiff-Fénart, 2010. Migration Policy Development in Mauretania: Process, Issues and Actors, in: *The Politics of International Migration Management*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Pécoud, A. (Ed.), 2015. *Depoliticising Migration*. Palgrave Macmillan UK, London.
- Quijano, A., 2000. Coloniality of power and eurocentrism in Latin America. *Int. Sociol.* 15, 215–232. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0268580900015002005>.
- Quirk, J., Vigneswaran, D., 2015. Chapter 1: Mobility makes states. In: Vigneswaran, D., Quirk, J. (Eds.), *Mobility Makes States: Migration and Power in Africa*. University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, pp. 1–36.
- Raineri, L., 2018. Human smuggling across Niger: state-sponsored protection rackets and contradictory security imperatives. *J. Mod. Afr. Stud.* 56, 63–86. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022278X17000520>.
- Raty, T., Shilhav, R., 2020. The EU Trust Fund for Africa: Trapped between aid policy and migration politics (Oxfam Briefing Paper). Oxfam, Brussels.
- Robinson, C., 2023. Offshoring and outsourcing anti-smuggling policy: capacity building and the geopolitics of migrant smuggling. *Geopolitics* 1–26. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2022.2159385>.
- Rossi, B., 2015. Kinetocracy: The Government of Mobility at the Desert’s Edge. In: Quirk, J., Vigneswaran, D. (Eds.), *Mobility Makes States: Migration and Power in Africa*. University of Pennsylvania Press, Pennsylvania, pp. 149–168.
- Sadiq, K., Tsourapas, G., 2021. The postcolonial migration state. *Eur. J. Int. Rel.* 27, 884–912. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13540661211000114>.
- Sall, B., 2021. Document de Strategie de Coordination des Acteurs Intervenant dans le Domaine de la Migration au Niger & Plan d’Action (2022-2026). Republique du Niger, Ministère de l’Intérieur et de la Décentralisation, Secrétariat Permanent du Cadre de Concertation sur la Migration (SP/CCM). URL https://www.migration-sp.ccm.ne/sites/default/files/2021-10/DOCUMENT%20DE%20STRATEGIE%20DE%20COORDINATION%20DES%20ACTEURS%20DU%20DOMAINE%20DE%20LA%20MIGRATION%20AU%20NIGER_0.pdf (accessed: 10.11.21).
- Scheel, S., Squire, V., 2014. Forced Migrants as “Illegal” Migrants, in: Fiddian-Qasimiyeh, E., Loescher, G., Long, K., Sigona, N. (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Refugee and Forced Migration Studies*. Oxford University Press. Doi: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199652433.001.0001.
- Shapiro, M.J., 1989. Textualizing Global Politics, in: Der Derian, J., Shapiro, M.J. (Eds.), *International/Intertextual Relations: Postmodern Readings of World Politics*, Issues in World Politics Series. Lexington Books, Lexington, Mass, pp. 11–24.
- Shapiro, M.J., 1981. *Language and political understanding: the politics of discursive practices*. Yale University Press, New Haven.
- Sharma, N.R., 2020. *Home rule: national sovereignty and the separation of natives and migrants*. Duke University Press, Durham.
- Sou, G., 2022. Aid micropolitics: Everyday southern resistance to racialized and geographical assumptions of expertise. *Environ. Plan. C: Polit. Space* 40, 876–894. <https://doi.org/10.1177/23996544211048196>.
- Stambøl, E.M., Jegen, L., 2022. Colonial Continuities and the Commodification of Mobility Policing: The Case of French Civiop in West Africa. In: Lemberg-Pedersen, M., Flett, S., Mayblin, L., Sahraoui, N., Stambøl, E.M. (Eds.), *Postcoloniality and Forced Migration: Migration Management, Surveillance, Agency*. Bristol University Press, Bristol.
- Stambøl, E.M., 2019. The rise of Crimefare Europe: fighting migrant smuggling in West Africa. *Eur. Foreign Aff. Rev.* 24 (Issue 3), 287–307. <https://doi.org/10.54648/eerr2019026>.
- Stoler, A.L., 2008. Imperial Debris: Reflections on Ruins and Ruination. *Cult. Anthropol.* 23, 191–219. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20484502>.
- Tazzioli, M., 2015. *Spaces of Governmentality: Autonomous Migration and the Arab Uprisings*. Rowman and Littlefield, London.
- Torpey, J., 1998. Coming and going: on the state monopolization of the legitimate “means of movement”. *Sociol Theory* 16, 239–259. <https://doi.org/10.1111/0735-2751.00055>.
- Tubiana, J., Warin, C., Saeneen, G.M., 2018. *Multilateral Damage*. Clingendael, The Hague, Netherlands.
- Turner, M.D., 2017. Livestock mobility and the territorial state: South-Western Niger (1890–1920). *Africa* 87, 578–606. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0001972017000134>.
- Van Dessel, J., 2023. Externalization through “awareness-raising”: the border spectacle of EU migration information campaigns in Niger. *Territory, Politics, Governance* 11 (4), 749–769. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21622671.2021.1974535>.
- Vives, L., 2017. The European Union-West African sea border: Anti-immigration strategies and territoriality. *Eur. Urban Reg. Stud.* 24 (2), 209–224. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0969776416631790>.
- Walters, W., 2015. Reflections on Migration and Governmentality. *movements. J. Crit. Migrat. Border Regime Stud.* 1. URL: <http://movements-journal.org/issues/01.grenzregime/04.walters-migration.governmentality.html>.

Wright, S., 2011. Section I: Studying Policy: Methods, Paadigms, Perspectives. Introduction, in: Shore, C., Wright, S., Pero, D. (Eds.), *Policy Worlds: Anthropology and the Analysis of Contemporary Power*. Berghahn Books, New York.

Zandonini, G., 2019a. Biometrics: The new frontier of EU migration policy in Niger. *The New Humanitarian*.

Zandonini, G., 2019b. Biometrics: The new frontier of EU migration policy in Niger [WWW Document]. accessed 9.13.19 *The New Humanitarian*. <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news-feature/2019/06/06/biometrics-new-frontier-eu-migration-policy-niger>.