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## The tough way back: failed migration in Mali<sup>1</sup>

### Abstract

Migration to Europe is for many Malians a dream and an option to escape growing insecurity. As regular ways of migration are rare and expensive, migrants head north for the Moroccan or Libyan coasts. Due to European migration management including transit states in the Maghreb only few arrive at European borders, many are stuck in the transit and deported back to Malian borders in the desert. Increasingly rigid controls within Europe lead to the forced return of irregular migrants who disembark, bare of all means, at the airport of Mali's capital Bamako.

Out of this situation, self-organisations of returned migrants emerged in Bamako. By describing the unfolding and activities of three different organisations the article outlines certain aspects that mould the possibilities and practices linked to the assistance for returned migrants in Bamako, Mali. Part of these practices is the recourse on and the claiming for rights for these returnees, be it on the national, trans- or international level.

### 1. Global citizenship, national reservations, transnational interventions

The arrival zone at the airport Bamako-Senou is brightly lit, and slowly the Air France Airbus approaches, stopping right in front of the building. Air France is privileged; even the Air Mali planes have their parking positions a bit further down, a clear indication that the relationship to the former colonial power still governs the international relationships in Mali. Standing on the first floor, together with some souvenir sellers, I watch the passengers leaving the plane. Most of them are Malians, wearing dark suits or colourful basin clothes. Perhaps a quarter of the travellers are white, either tourists heading for the Dogon country or Timbuktu, or employees of one of the countless development agencies. I am waiting for the last ones to leave the plane, deported Malians from France. Just before the cleaning crew enters the plane

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<sup>1</sup> The paper relies on first findings of an ongoing research project dealing with the effects of (failed) migration on the home country society, taking the West African State Mali as an example. The underlying theoretical and methodological approach is a mostly practical or praxeological one. That means, in short, that culture is understood as meaningful practice or bundle of practices which are exercised on the basis of perpetuated, often implicit ways of knowing how (Bourdieu 1979, 1987, Reckwitz 2008, Schatzki 2002). The fieldwork approach tries to gain insights via qualitative research, participant observation, interviews and the gathering of different data, into the practices and discourses on failed migration in Mali.

to get it ready for the departure later in the night, French plainclothes policemen descend the back staircase, escorting three men. On the soil they were received by Malian police, taking over the deportees and accompanying them into a small office for identification. The French officers will leave Mali on the same plane.

Mamadou Keita explained the procedure to me one of the last evenings when we attended deportees. Every night he drives the old Mercedes of the AME, the Association Malienne des Expulsés, to the airport, waiting for returned Malians the AME assists on their arrival. Since early 2009, the deportation figures from France dropped, so often the tour to the airport is in vain. Mamadou relates this decrease to the readmission agreement France wants to be signed by the Malian government. Slowly I make my way downstairs, as Mamadou told me not to show up too early. Mamadou takes over the deportees from the police, and I follow them with some distance when they leave the police office, taking care not to interfere and endanger the good relations Mamadou established with the police staff. When I arrive at the car, Mamadou is already explaining his role to the deportees. We stand in the dark, the young men listen attentively, showing impressions that only slightly allow to guess what they experienced these last days. Later they tell their stories, reluctantly. They all have been caught on their daily way to work, have been arrested for some days, one for more than two weeks, and then put on the plane today without the possibility to gather their things at the places where they lived. One carries a plastic bag with some papers; the two others have nothing with them. All of them have family at Bamako, so Mamadou offers them to drive them along. He describes the work of the AME, distributing business cards where he notes his mobile phone number. He knows that it is the personal contact that is important in the first hours after the arrival. As a sign of credibility he tells the three men that he himself stayed and worked in Paris for thirteen years, not being able to achieve a legal residence, and being deported in the end. To underline this, he pulls out a plastic chip card and shows it to the deportees: his French social security card which he still carries around almost four years after his expulsion from France.

This social security card seems to be a life line, connecting Mamadou with a world that has been lost, though there, at Bamako airport, it is only five flight hours away. The expulsion, enforced by a re-entry ban, and the increasingly sophisticated controls effectively exclude Mamadou from the life he spent in Paris for fourteen years, condemn him, whom they call “le français” in his neighbourhood, to stay at Bamako and only see the Air France, not to enter it.

As Hannah Arendt (1993:455) stated, human beings in modernity have access to rights only within the confines of their own nation state, which effectively excludes stateless persons and refugees and makes them rely on generosity instead of law. Against the dictum of Hannah Arendt the recent years saw a discussion (e.g. Ong & Collier 2005; Ong 2006) about what is called a global citizenship, unfolding spaces that are constituted by transnational actors and crosscut national boundaries. Yasemin Soysal (1994), studying the position guestworkers hold in Western societies, states that not nationality alone, but different forms of membership constitute hierarchies of access to rights and possibilities. I am not sure how far this argument carries us in the realm of failed migration, and from a southern viewpoint outside the privileged zones, but it seems worth to take this notion of global citizenship as a starting point and explore its usefulness.

## **2. Mali: country with a complex tradition of migration**

The norm of sedentariness is increasingly contested. Looking at West Africa and Mali in particular, we find good reasons to rather suppose geographical mobility if not as a norm, than as a frequent and ubiquitous practice. Different sources state that between 10 and 25 percent of the Malian population (about 14 Millions) live outside the country (e.g. Merabet & Gendreau 2006). Apart from the founding myths of different ethnic groups which are often related to the

arrival at a certain place, and historical migrations in medieval times, we find different migration traditions that begun well before colonisation in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and last until today (e.g. Manchuelle 1997). The most prominent example are the Soninké migrants from the Upper Senegal River region, but on a closer look many ethnic groups and regional populations have their own cultures of migration (Petit 1998; Hommes et Migrations Vol. 1279).

Often, migration is linked to ethnic or economic stratification or to specific professional groups (peasants, herders, fishermen, traders), that follow different migration trajectories. Mostly, migration is circular, comprising a certain period within the year, or adolescents at the eve to count as an adult, who spend a couple of years abroad. But frequently, out of a bundle of reasons, for a certain number migration ends up with a prolonged stay in the destination country, often unintended.

### **3. Failed migration: effects of closing national labour markets and xenophobic attitudes**

Most Malian migration takes place in the region, but we find Malian communities almost all over Africa, in Europe (mostly France, Spain, and Italy), and the US and the Gulf States. Within the last two decades, in many of these countries, Malian migrants faced repeatedly xenophobic riots, forced displacement and deportation, e.g. Algeria, Angola, Libya, and Côte d'Ivoire. This was partly motivated by the attempt to safeguard national labour markets, but, like in Côte d'Ivoire or Angola, was used also as one strategy among others within the conflict between different political forces.

The most concerted and systematic efforts to “manage” and control migration from Sub-Saharan Africa within the last two decades clearly are made by France, Spain, Italy, and the European Community. The applied methods comprise (among others) an increasingly strict visa and asylum policy, growing efforts to control and expulse irregular migrants within the countries, an intensified readmission policy, efforts to strengthen mandatory returns, as well as strategies and actions to close the outside borders of the European Union. The latter does not only include the control of borders in the Mediterranean Sea and the Canary Islands, but as well the instrumentalisation of most Maghreb countries in strategies to stop irregular transit migration.

This had (at least) four major effects:

1. It cut circular migration chains. Migrants in Europe had to extend their stay, because a re-entry became more difficult or impossible. At the same time, the irregular stay became increasingly difficult and measurements gave rise to the vulnerability and exploitability of migrants. New migrations to Europe are increasingly blocked.
2. it deepened the divide between middle and upper class members who still are able to invest the necessary money for going abroad and can rely on extended migration networks, and the poor and lower income classes that increasingly face difficulties to arrive at European shores;
3. it turned former transit countries in the Maghreb to countries of destination; the Maghreb has always been a destination for sub-Saharan migrants, but, as many were blocked from trespassing to European shores, the time they spent in Maghreb countries increased and a growing number stays there for working reasons, too.
4. it led to increasing numbers of expelled persons as well from European countries as from Maghreb countries. These expulsions are effected both by charter (Spain, Libya) and regular (France, Morocco, other EU countries) flights to Bamako airport and by

busses and trucks (Mauretania, Algeria), dumping the deportees at the Malian frontiers.

Figures vary, but in 2007 approximately 1.200 expulsions of Malian citizens from European countries and approximately 420 deportations from different Maghreb countries by air took place<sup>2</sup>. From late 2005 to October 2008, 3.417 deportees arrived at the Mali-Mauretania border crossing of Nioro, Mali<sup>3</sup>. About 2.000 deportees arrive annually at the Malian-Algerian border<sup>4</sup>.

#### **4. Return with empty hands: return experiences and perspectives of returnees**

Migration in Mali is not necessarily a migration of the poor. Rather, it has often been induced by the relatively wealthy and powerful families, being then a phenomenon of younger men trying to improve their position in a patriarchal society. On return, the accumulated wealth and remittances consolidated the relative position within the family and the wider network. Migration is often conceived of as a form of “aventure”, an adventure, and a liminal phase before counting as an adult. Though this still seems to be true, during the 90ies migration to Europe ceased to be linked foremost to certain regions and ethnic groups, and increasingly comprised different income levels. Deteriorating economic possibilities, induced by population growth, failed development and structural adjustment measures, and a growing knowledge about migration options are among the reasons for this trend. We can speak of a generalised migration pattern, in which Spain instead of France became the most important destination country.

This turn in migration coincided fatally with the closing down of entrance gates to Europe. Media attention (as well in Mali as in European countries) was attracted by the events of the Spanish enclaves Ceuta and Melilla in 2005, and the sea arrivals on the Canary Islands in 2006. Since then, routes have diversified, but ways to Europe became increasingly difficult, expensive, and dangerous. While the upper and middle classes still obtain and (mostly) successfully manage their transnational linkages, it is the poorer majority of the Malian population that suffers most from the new migration barriers.

The returned migrants, not only returning with empty hands, but often enough having lost a small fortune in the eyes of the family, have to confess their failure, which they often avoid by not returning to their families, trying to cross to Europe a second, a third time, or staying in Bamako. Failed return does not only mean the failure of a difficult adventure, but also the failure to trespass the threshold of becoming an adult. Male honour is closely linked to economic success and the ability to gather the means to maintain a family<sup>5</sup>. Migration is linked to a rise in wealth and status on return. Failed migrants often are seen as failed men. Insults and mockery (often by the younger female cousins) drove numerous returnees out of the family. “La honte”, the shame of being returned, is something returnees do not easily talk about, but which lies at the core of their social behaviour. Often, the family can not understand why people are returned, they assume that a person had committed a crime or has

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<sup>2</sup> Figures according to the information of AME, cited in Lecadet 2009: 22.

<sup>3</sup> According to Malian local authorities, cited in aphda/ame 2009: 55

<sup>4</sup> Information from Clara Lecadet.

<sup>5</sup> This is not necessarily related to a western model of work and wage earning. A common expression in Mali is to “trouve le moyens”, that is, to “find the means” for economic success. This “finding” is more related to a successful management of social relations than to anything close to a protestant ethics in a Weberian sense. Adventure, luck, and Allah will help.

been returned for other reasons. A rejection of a returnee by his family often comes close to a social death, cutting off a returnee from all social links within his home society.

In many cases returnees do not stay with their families, but with friends, sometimes people who were equally expelled, or alone at Mali's capital Bamako. Often enough, the loss of money and perspectives throws failed migrants back to the harsh and limited ways to earn a daily living for themselves and their families<sup>6</sup>. In a couple of cases the hope for a better access to a minimal income is the main reason for failed migrants to stay at Bamako.

## **5. Return: a field for an emerging network of social actors**

Rising numbers of deportees combined with a growing awareness of the difficulties of migration and the quest for perspectives for returnees led to the emergence of different organisations that deal with migration and return. A landmark in this project clearly was the forced return of more than 400 Malian migrants in the aftermath of the events at Ceuta and Melilla in autumn 2005. While the Malian government didn't care a lot for these returnees, it was a former ministry of culture, Aminata Dramane Traoré, who in first instance offered shelter, food and care for these failed migrants, simultaneously stepping into the political debate about the effects of French, European, or global migration control. The 2006 Social Forum at Bamako was dominated by the topic of expulsion, and brought together victims, activists, and organisations from Mali and abroad. The Social Forum offered the opportunity to broaden the local and national basis for activities in this field, and eased contacts with delegates from European human rights organisations and networks, in first instance the French organisation Cimade.

At the same time, the "refoulés", the returned, organised themselves and formed an association called "Retour, Travail, Dignité", return, work, dignity, and other organisations and interest groups were founded or stepped on the scene, among them organisations that have been founded earlier, or associations that represent different groups of interest (e.g. the groups of transit migrants from other African countries).

Taking the 2006 Social Forum at Bamako as a common starting point for increased activities, the different organisations all had their own trajectory and development, which is linked to possibilities, but as well to their positioning in the unfolding discursive and practical field. The following three examples briefly illustrate these developments.

### **a. ADT**

Clearly the most comprehensive approach to migration and expulsion is taken by Aminata Dramane Traoré (ADT). She is a prominent and charismatic figure in Malian civil society and coordinating person of the Malian Social Forum Network (FORAM: Forum pour un autre Mali)<sup>7</sup>. ADT has a pronounced position as leading critic of globalisation effects and unequal terms of trade, a critique mostly directed towards Europe and particularly France as former colonial power, being in close contact to European cultural and intellectual elites. In her writings and speeches she often evokes the history of uneven and exploitative relationships between France and Mali, and it is within this frame she puts the effects of new European and French migration policies. A general theme of hers is that the turn to block immigration from

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<sup>6</sup> Especially returned migrants from France, who have spent several years abroad, often have wife and children in Mali. I met several cases where migrants split with the extended family, and live with wife and children on their own in the capital.

<sup>7</sup> The Centre Amadou Hampâté Ba (Cabha) and the Forum pour un autre Mali (Foram) are the organisational grounds of Aminatas activities, but since she clearly is the central figure within this setting, this text addresses her personally.

Mali and to expulse Malian workers and citizens, exposing them to humiliation and disgrace, is a lack of responsibility according to the long history of Malian workers in France and Malians fighting for France in different colonial and post-colonial wars.

Aminata, who owns a hotel and a restaurant designed in what can be taken as traditional Malian style and frequented almost entirely by enlightened European and American tourists, promotes a different way to development and international relations. The expulsion of migrants is but one facet within this broader attempt to recur on traditional Malian respectively African values and to achieve a change in the relations between African and Western countries.

In the aftermath of the expulsions from Ceuta and Melilla, ADT hosted and fed for a couple of weeks more than hundred expelled migrants, and further developed schemes for their reintegration, offering vocational trainings in painting, carpentry and the design of Malian arts, which are sold to hotel guests and tourists. The men who engaged in these crafts, about twenty in the beginnings, were paid on a monthly basis and could make their living. At a meeting in spring 2006 Aminata explained the growing difficulties to assist the expelled with her limited capacities to feed and shelter them over time. Actually by then most of the expelled originating from Bamako were living with their families or friends again, and those originating from other regions, (mostly the regions of Segou, Kayes and Sikasso) had returned home, while others migrated again.

ADT was the central person organising the presence of expelled migrants on the Social Forum at Bamako, where small theatre sketches, popular in Mali, described the situation at the fences of Ceuta and Melilla and the ways through the desert, accompanied by what is called “témoignages”, the oral presentation of the expulsion experience by single victims. These demonstrations of “eyewitnesses” and sketches are for all actors still the main and central means to tell about the expulsion experience, and the source of authenticity of all discourses about expulsion. Furthermore, Aminata could engage university students to collect and transcribe the “témoignages” and thus accumulating a corpus of migration and expulsion histories<sup>8</sup>. These témoignages and the national and international interest they attracted strengthened the self perceptions of returnees and clearly helped them to overcome the traumatic experiences and the difficulties in returning to their families back home.

#### b. ARTD

The expelled returnees from Ceuta and Melilla, partly sheltered and gathered by Aminata Dramane Traoré, did not all agree with the form of patronage she executed on them. Aminata assisted in the formation of the association called Retour, Travail, Dignité. But during the year 2006, conflicts between the association and ADT arouse regarding the role of her assistance and the limited space the expelled themselves saw to develop and express their own ideas and aims. In early 2007 the ARTD and Aminata split, and ARTD moved with most of its about 400 members to an office in a southern quarter of Bamako. Only two dozens of returnees, among them most of the craftsmen who worked on a fixed salary, stayed with Aminata.

The others, as was explained by Isaac Coulibaly, the president of ARTD, and Ismail Samassekou, its secretary general, saw the splitting up with Aminata as a necessary act of liberation from her influence. The description of the associations aims shows clearly the differences between Aminata and the returnees from Ceuta and Melilla. Their devise “*Europe is not the Eldorado*” already hints to an orientation that does not want to discuss international politics, but to recover from a failed migration experience. The then described objectives of the associations name in first instance the assistance to socio-economic reintegration of the

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<sup>8</sup> See FORAM: 2008, for a description and compilation of texts and materials on the Social Forum event 2006 at Bamako.

young returnees themselves, closely followed by the aim to assist the Malian government and its partners to fight irregular migration and to inform the Malian youth about the risks of irregular migration, and finally to assist in the reception of recently expelled persons. The splitting up with Aminata and the objective to cooperate closely with the Malian government cut off the ARTD from important relations to transnational networks and partnerships.

Most of ARTD's members have low education, only the secretary general recently obtained a university degree, and the office equipment in late 2009 still consists of but one computer without internet connection. The association survives by the membership fees, and struggles hard to hold up the structure. In 2007 they had a small cooperation with a Spanish NGO, which assisted in strengthening the structure between the office at Bamako (where about 100 members live) and the "antennes", the regional offices at Ké-Mecina (region of Segou), Kita (region Kayes), Bougouni and Yanfolila (region Sikasso). In 2008 they got payment by the Malian Ministry for Malians abroad and African integration to realise an awareness rising campaign against irregular migration. Furthermore, they got some few materials, a motor pump, a motor cultivator, two mills and three sewing machines to assist the economic reintegration of their members, from the same ministry. But, in general, we can state that support from the national government remained very low. Instead, the local groups of ARTD managed successfully to establish themselves on local level, and to claim land for agricultural production from the local traditional authorities. Now these groups are trying to get further national or international support to enter or re-enter into agriculture on an income securing level.

In 2009, the ARTD office at Bamako started a program for the reception of forced returnees, financed by the CIGEM, Centre for Information and Management of Migration, an EU-financed and guided project that is formally under the regime of two Malian Ministries. But the poor structure and equipment of the association does not allow a real implementation of a reception structure, and the practiced assistance seems to be quite rare and poor. The ARTD concentrates on the assistance for returnees from Spain and Libya that arrive on charter planes and are gathered in the courtyard of the Malian "protection civile". If needed, the ARTD assists persons with a first reception for a couple of days, offering a place to sleep and food. This program is limited to twelve months, and there is no other funding in sight. The money ARTD receives for this program, about 10.000 Euro, seems to be consumed totally by the ARTD members at Bamako. This, and the lack of success to access further means leads to growing tensions between the office at Bamako and the regional associations of ARTD. Instead accessing means to support the local reintegration, we see a counter flow of money in form of membership fees that vanishes at the Bamako office and raises suspicion within the local membership groups.

### c. AME

The Association Malienne des Expulsés originates from expulsions of Malian citizens from France, notably of activists of the sans papiers movement at the church of St. Bernard at Paris, and deported Malians from different African countries, in first instance Angola. The president of the AME, Ousmane Diarra, has been a successful diamond trader in Angola, but with the expulsion he lost most of his belongings. The association's activities were quite limited until in 2006 the expulsion topic got international attention. Beneath Aminata and the ARTD it was the AME that profited from a growing network of organisations critical against the new migration order. It was mostly the French Cimade that gave technical assistance, teachings about French and international migration and asylum law, and helped the AME to engage in international networks and meetings. The AME holds a position different from that of Aminata and that of ARTD. Its principle is clearly rights' based, and activities tend to combine practical assistance for expelled with a political struggle for migrants' rights, fair

procedures, for the possibility to recuperate personal belongings and values before or after expulsion, to recuperate pensions and contributions to social security, and a fight against detention and humiliating and violent practices during the deportation procedure. Furthermore, it was the AME in first instance to stand up and mobilise protest against the signing of a readmission agreement between France and the Malian government. This protest, also strongly enacted by Malian associations in France, until now stopped the Malian government to sign into the agreement. Among the organisations active in the field of forced return in Mali, the AME is clearly the association that harmonises best with a broad range of European networks in the field, but the AME is also one of the most effective structures assisting returnees in the fields of social, legal and medical aid. Since late 2008, AME not only gets assistance on the level of knowledge exchange and transfer, but also a regular financial backing by Cimade and the German human rights organisations *medico international* and Pro Asyl. That allowed to strengthen the organisation and to enhance services for deportees. In addition to a regional office at Kidal at the Algerian border, the AME opened up a second reception office at Nioro, close to the border to Mauritania. Furthermore, it operates a daily presence at the airport Bamako-Senou to assist expelled persons from France, arriving with the airlines Air France or Aigle Azur. Since September 2009, AME and Médecins du Monde (MDM) cooperate in a UNDP-EU funded project to establish a structure for mental health assistance to returnees. Since mid 2009 AME is planning to expand to the sector of reintegration of returnees within local development plans.

The above described structures offer a view on the differentiated field of local actors attached to return migration, and show remarkable divergences regarding the scope, the goals and the effectiveness of activities. While for Aminata deportation seems to be but one of the fields symbolising an unequal world order, the activities of ARTD rely mostly on their credibility as survivors and eyewitnesses of a harsh confrontation with European border management. While for Aminata and the AME the political struggle is at centre stage, the ARTD clearly aims at a successful reintegration foremost of the members of their own organisation, turning away from new attempts to migrate again (though for individual members this is often only the consequence of the lack of means to obtain visas).

While Aminata is a prominent figure in the Malian society as well as in international Social Forum networks, and AME successfully manages transnational cooperations with European partner organisations, the capital of ARTD, which consists mostly of the reliability of being eyewitness and a broad regional network of members, is slowly melting away.

One of the factors relevant to the different trajectories is the age and experience of the actors. Aminata is, as former ministry, experienced on national and international scenes, while the ARTD really consists of younger men, most of them without much formal education. The core members of AME represent a different age, are between 30 and 45, and look back to different professional careers within and outside the country.

All described organisations keep close relationships and act together on different occasions; an umbrella organisation for all organisations in the field of return is in preparation. None of them is strong enough to unfold the political power that is necessary to influence the Malian government.

## **6. Civil Rights, citizenship, and transnational fields**

The local setting in Bamako and Mali is closely intertwined with transnational movements and linkages to other national sites, especially Europe and France. Not only migration reaches far beyond the national borders of Mali, but also networks of civil society, European NGOs as well as European government bodies. France has long established relations to Mali, while a



Spanish embassy, together with a unit for development cooperation, only recently was installed at Bamako, in first instance to fight irregular migration<sup>9</sup>. Both nations have been the driving forces in the installation of the CIGEM, Centre for Information and Management of Migration, at Bamako.

This Centre's interests consist in the development of strategies to reduce irregular migration, offering some vocational trainings, counselling about (hardly existing) legal ways to enter European countries, conducting research on migration trends, counselling Malian ministries and integrating the Malian civil society actors into a common network. The latter is tried to achieve by setting up a forum of counsellors, chosen from migrant and returnees' organisations in Bamako, and the funding of programmes for reception activities by the local organisations. Out of about 30 applications nine organisations were chosen, the 10<sup>th</sup> possible funding is still pending. As I was told, it was meant to finance the work of the AME, which yet decided not to cooperate with the CIGEM.

The CIGEM is a pilot project, whose intention can be described in most general terms as the implementation of the European distinction between legal and illegal migration on the African continent, together with the body of laws and regulations organising migration to Europe and the (assisted) return, expulsion and readmission to countries of origin.

It is migration from Africa (or rather the anxiety of an ever growing migration from Africa) that motivates this European expansion, and it is the European policy of cutting migration chains and migrants routes that brought the associations of and for deportees into being. Both developments are quite recent phenomena, linked to a transnational consciousness and the means and experience to act across borders. Until the late nineties, migration policy and the fight for migrants or refugee rights stopped at national borders, ended with a deportation. Today, it is the act of deportation itself that brings transnational structures and networks into being.

Within this perspective the three described actors approach the scene in different ways, and on different levels.

The work of ARTD obviously is least related to the claiming of international rights. But even here this aspect should not be underestimated. With their clear orientation towards the reintegration of citizens after a failed migration experience they claim the right for a return in dignity and safety, a standard formula of UNHCR and other international bodies. The ARTD wants to release its members from the effects of deportation by the means of a successful reintegration. It tries to turn the failed migration eventually into a successful return, using the experience of deportation, the "témoignage", as central instrument. At the moment the ARTD is by far the weakest organisation, but perhaps in the end its orientation towards the CIGEM and further European and national actors may pay out, as the positioning of ARTD within the field of migration and development fits well into the developing European concepts. With the assistance of national government bodies and international organisations like CIGEM, ARTD claims for the restitution of local rights to returnees, their access to land, their reintegration into existing social and economical networks, therefore assisting the access of failed migrants to the full range of social life.

Aminata Dramane Traoré also links the return of failed migrants to an approach to reintegration, but integrates this practical aim into a broader idea of alternative forms of development, as well as a critique of western postcolonial domination over African societies. She sees migration as expression of these unequal power relations and as one of many fields of intervention, integrating the returnees into forms of ethno-business which she sees as the revaluation of traditional forms of labour and knowledge.

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<sup>9</sup> Apdha & AME 2009: 49f

The AME clearly comes closest to what we might have in mind when we talk about global citizenship, understood as the access to rights and social participation. AME openly articulates universal rights, and AME's intense links to European human rights groups produce a transnational space for common action, with a certain danger that the needs and concepts of these groups tend to channel the work of the AME. But this close cooperation allows the pushing of claims like the restitution of goods and values forced returnees had to leave in receiving countries, or the appeal against expulsion decisions. Yet the outcome of these efforts on behalf of returnees is quite low, it depends on the activities of partner organisations (mostly) in France and their capacities to enforce the French national law in the interest of expelled migrants in Mali.

## 7. Conclusion: a differentiated field

What does this mean for the concept of global citizenship? What, eventually, does this mean for failed migrants in Mali?

It is the striving for rights that underlines the strong linkage of rights and entitlements to nation states. In Western countries irregular migrants or those who lost the status have at best a limited access to civil rights (or a partial citizenship as Soysal (1994) puts it), in contrast to the privileged avenues of wanted migrants to gain full citizenship. Most Western countries did not sign the UN migrant workers convention, and though irregular migrants in France, the *sans papiers*, have a sound position in public discourse, their access to rights remains limited. Nonetheless it has to be underlined that even irregular migrants facing expulsion when intercepted by the police enjoy rights and possibilities in receiving countries, pay social security and taxes, and can establish the illusion to live on equal grounds with other nationals and non-nationals. It is the Damocles sword of control and expulsion that renders their lives dangerous, because once expelled, their access to rights quickly turns towards zero.

In Mali, practical accessibility to rights and possibilities to re-establish a social life are linked to social networks of family, friends and neighbourhoods, which is difficult under the conditions of failed migration. Global citizenship does not make much sense on this level, as participation and rights are linked to membership and status within a social group. State measures to reintegrate failed migrants are not existing or not working. Rights can be claimed, but are difficult to realise, be it on the political or individual level. The described organisations can ease reintegration, thus building new and additional forms of solidarity. But the existing structures are insufficient, and they hardly reach the site of the returnees' social life, be it a quarter in Bamako or the village. The organisations occupy a common political and activist terrain at Bamako, but the analysis showed that they take part in different national and transnational spaces. Though the movements emerging out of the growing difficulties for migrants unfold a growing power in Malian civil society, their ability to occupy a common space and bundle their forces still remains an open question.

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