Chapter 8
Conclusion

This book set out to tell an alternative story, based on the narratives and practices of former deportees in southern Mali, of supposedly "failed" migratory adventures and their ambivalences, caused by and endured after deportation. To this end, it examined the social, material, cultural, emotional, political, temporal, and spatial dimensions of life after deportation. Now, in this concluding chapter, after a short summary of the main lines of argument, I will revisit the leading theme, the notion of the "failed" migratory adventure with respect to its sociological ambivalence, before taking my leave with some final reflections on the political dimension of the post-deportation situation in southern Mali and beyond, touching on the role of the researcher in particular and on what remains to be done.

Facing conditions post deportation in southern Mali – a short summary

The dominant discourse on migration that relates to the adventurer's supposed success – leaving to search for money (as "there is nothing here"), earning, then returning to contribute to the social uplifting of the family – is contradicted by the effects of the global deportation regime and the EU's externalization of its borders and migratory controls onto the African continent. The opening scene of the book, which described families commemorating the loss at sea of community members, their sons, fathers, and brothers, in a city to the west of Bamako, offered a powerful image of the response to this disruptive condition. Moreover, the overwhelming number of deportees, repatriates, and other returnees and former migrants participating in the event was a strong testimony to the ruptures and frictions affecting established migratory and social patterns and multiple transnational entanglements in the region. In terms of this dominant narrative, a supposed "failure," is condensed into the drama of returning with empty hands as a result of a deportation. Against this background, the book focused on how former deportees cope with a central dilemma arising from their deportation experience: that of going on over the long term with shattered socio-economic prospects and, most impor-

tantly, while still enmeshed in the dense web of social relations and obligations that many had at first tried to flee.

Mali is a special case as regards the number and variety of deportations to which its people have been subject. They started in the 1960s, when many African states gained their independence, and continued with forced returns from Europe after increasing migratory restrictions in the 1970s, first of all from the former colonial power, France, and then from Spain, and finally Italy. The number of forced returns increased with the strengthening and outsourcing of a European external border to the African continent in the 2000s, a process that gained momentum in the aftermath of the European "refugee crisis" and the human rights violations committed in North African detention centers. The Malian state, meanwhile, never implemented large-scale deportations itself, though it has lately taken up the practice of so-called "assisted voluntary returns." Multiple political crises – in Libya around the fall of President Gaddafi in 2011; in northern Mali from 2012, spun off as one consequence of the Libyan case; latterly the European "refugee crisis" – have, furthermore, formed the political context in which the post-deportation situation is discussed. All this adds to a widespread sense of economic, social, intergenerational, and allegedly gender-related crises among people. Oriented along the general lines of grounded theory, the book provides a multi-sited, in-depth ethnographic view of the global deportation regime in operation over an extended field site stretching from the deportee organizations in Bamako to the administrative district of Kita Cercle in the region of Kayes, and towards the region of Sikasso in the direction of the Ivory Coast. All these places are characterized by particular regional, historical and (reversed) migratory settings and, above all, a high level and frequency of migration and (forced) returns, as well as a certain amount of organization on the part of the deportees in question.

The majority of the men in this book (young and old) were deported during and after the peaks in the 2000s, particularly during the Libyan crisis, but more generally during the first wave of externalization from Mahgreb countries and in the aftermath of the attacks on the border fences of Ceuta and Melilla in 2005. Some were sent back by air, but a substantial number were also put on trucks and set down in the desert. Many eventually returned to their villages of origin: some after many deportations and violent push-backs, after phases of protracted waiting, and "forced immobility" (Stock, 2019). Others came from European countries, often after long experiences of being undocumented, spending periods in detention and facing sometimes arbitrary deportation practices. Most of them called themselves *refoulés.* These people, mostly men from a rural or urban background even if they lived in urban areas, retained substantial connections with their villages of origin. Many had left on an adventure after something had not worked out: leaving became an "exit option," which was subsequently torpedoed by another breakdown

and supposed "failure" as the objective of social becoming and uplifting the entire family did not "work out" either. Many had been back "home" for several years.

Deportees retrospectively narrated their deportation experiences in accounts of (social) suffering summed up in the phrase "the adventure is not easy" – feelings of restlessness, violence, fear, stress, and anger were repeated patterns; they also depicted the deportation regimes running from European countries through North Africa that had caused these forms of social suffering. The central narrative of suffering revolved around the loss of money and the emblematic "empty hands" that they returned with having left on a quest for money, a quest that has to be seen in light of the social norms of contributing, reproduction, and the management of social relations in which money and wealth occupy a specific symbolic position fundamentally related to the social order. Post deportation, this leads to conflicting social dynamics conditioned by deportees' feelings of shame, which, in the form of the Mandé concept of *maloya*, is ambivalent, being seen also as status-enhancing, inasmuch as it maintains respect and one's inner sense of self. Gossip can serve as a regulator and also a revisor of the social order; silences may be strategies to counteract gossip; both equally are attempts to preserve or re-establish social harmony. They can condition each other. Mothers, who in Mandé are given a central, moral role in beliefs linked to the performance and success of their children and vice-versa, are especially impacted by gossip.

Fa den sago – without spirit, lazy, cowardly – is the narrative denotation of social death, something one might be said to undergo after deportation, when one runs the risk of narrative emasculation because obtaining money and providing for the family through the migratory adventure are central masculine features. Deportees in urban and rural areas have to navigate their immobilities and masculinities after deportation – and eventually over the longer term – getting by through hard work, showing courage, marrying, and, most importantly, through (re-)interpreting the suffering both of the journey and of the everyday, eventually reconverting it into what I term "adventure-hood," which may provide them with some new (masculine) self-confidence, dignity, and autonomy. It remains to be seen to what extent these realities and renegotiations contribute to emerging deportee masculinities that complement the existing repertoire of hegemonic and other masculine features.

The deep ambivalence that the deportees are thrown into is countered in the end by the emic notion of *la chance*, which appears to dominate in everyday conversations generally and receives a particular meaning in situations post deportation. As a final effort at sense- and future-making, deportees narrate and practically relate to *la chance* as a way of coping with the contingencies and uncertainties of their past, their present, and their future. Within a broader context of cosmology, religion, and spirituality in Mali and West Africa, chance is deeply socially embedded in everyday practices. Set between conceptions of fate, destiny, and human agency,

such an approach enables people to provide guidance – most importantly on how to go about creating the certainty that there will be another chance, often either through leaving again or building up something on the ground.

The book has shown how deportations impact individuals differently depending on a number of factors. In addition to time spent abroad and the time since one's return, age, gender, and generation play a central role since mobility, and the migratory adventure in particular, are related to different aspects of masculinity as one grows up and becomes someone. This links in with one's economic positioning and embedding before, during, and after migration, as well as one's capacity to contribute and other people's expectations that one will contribute. Moreover, the type of migratory journey one undertook, and the specific experiences, hardships, and suffering one underwent determine one's condition after deportation substantially. It fundamentally matters, as I have shown earlier, what people lived through while abroad and on the way. The months or years between leaving and returning are of critical importance. Insofar as they form one's experience of adventure or migration, they may enable embeddedness and preparedness, even in cases of unplanned, unexpected, and involuntary, forced returns, in which, according to Cassarino, preparation is quasi "non-existent" (2004, p. 19). The same applies to experiences of deportation, the way that people are returned, and the violence that accompanies it, which is also of central importance. There is even a certain hierarchy as regards the means of transport used for one's deportation, by air or over land. Moreover, the starting point of a deportation carries symbolic value in terms of its gravity, related above all to particular characteristics ascribed to the deporting state. As far as social embeddedness is concerned, it is one's social networks and relations before, during, and after return, that have been shown to be most relevant for re-embedding after deportation and, at the same time, most challenging in relation to the central loss of money and one's ability or inability to contribute. Whether one was able to earn some money while abroad and remit it back home, or managed to return with something anyway can substantially influence the economic and social conditions of one's life post deportation. Not least one's place of settlement after deportation – in a rural or an urban area – influences one's position in relation to economic and mobility opportunities and autonomy, and also to one's development and social being. In the end, what matters, it is said, is the wealth of being a full person, caring and contributing with body, heart, and soul for that signifies being "a man" as well.

Supposed "failed" migratory adventures and sociological ambivalence

Deportees are forced into an unwanted situation in which they must confront un-met expectations of reciprocity and contributing and are forced to navigate in a charged social environment where a person normatively counts only in terms of his or her relatedness. This situation is deeply ambivalent and contradictory in many dimensions as it is impossible for the involuntarily returned migrant to take on the expected role of breadwinner and provider, given that he may become dependent on his family instead, at least for the interim; this is a severe blow to someone's personhood and may impair it substantially, even over the longer term. On the other hand, the deportee has survived and has come back healthy and alive – ideally, given that many return psychologically and physically impaired – and is thus able to go on.

Ambivalence has relatively recently been rediscovered as a subject for sociology (e.g., Boccagni & Kivisto, 2019; Arribas-Ayllon & Bartlett, 2014; Wegar, 1992; Baumann, 1991; Billig et al., 1988). Most significantly, Robert K. Merton borrowed the concept from psychology (originally psychoanalysis) making "sociological ambivalence" insofar as it is "built into the structure of social statuses and roles" (1976, p. 5) fruitful for sociological theory. Different from ambiguity, inconsistency, uncertainty, or disorientation, ambivalence "is the coexistence of opposing emotional and cognitive orientations toward 'the same person, object or symbol'" (Boccagni & Kivisto, 2019, p. 6; cf. Smelser, 1998, p. 13).[1]

Within sociology, ambivalence has been mostly discussed with respect to family and kin relations, as well as immigration (Boccagni & Kivisto, 2019, p. 4). For the latter, a shifting and contrasting of roles and identities in different lifeworlds and cultural value systems, in the sending, potentially the transit, and the receiving society, is a practically unavoidable matter of fact. As shown extensively in this book, migration itself may be deeply ambivalent, full of hope, hardships, and happiness, "sometimes resulting in a protracted emotional experience" (ibid., p. 6), requiring constant navigating, repositioning, and negotiating. Analytically, ambivalence allows individual emotional depth, which at the same time needs to be seen in light of "the competing role-based normative expectations [and] the broader societal contradictions that engender it" (ibid.). Ambivalence may be a time-specific or place-specific experience or a protracted condition (p. 11). In this vein, ambivalence makes it possible to grasp and discuss social complexity, linking the individual experience to the social dimension as well as the historical and structural context.

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1   Merton's definition of sociological ambivalence is notwithstanding a psychological one, as ambivalence cannot be thought of without "an emotional, conative, or cognitive response" (Boccagni & Kivisto, 2019, p. 5).

In the current book ambivalence has been developed as a helpful analytical lens to study deportees' experiences and lifeworlds starting from what I have called the ambivalence of the "failed" migratory adventure. Deportations are the result of a political administrative measure that is potentially economically driven. Still, deportees are thrown into what many consider to be "failure," a morally and emotionally charged judgment (cf. Appadurai, 2018). Deportees cannot resolve this dilemma, at least not at first. It is the morality of "failure" and judgmental behavior, based on normative and hegemonic conceptions, which can cause emotional extremes of stigmatization, shame, and, even if only rarely, social (self-)exclusion for deportees. The term "relational ambivalence" best describes the complex social dynamics that occur within family and village or neighborhood spaces through the drama of return. Monika Palmberger (2019) emphasizes the relational approach to ambivalence in a study of Turkish labor migrants in Austria, according to which, ambivalence "can neither be seen solely as an individual experience, as residing within the individual, nor as a result of differing social status and roles alone. Rather it is a product of relationships individuals engage in" (p. 14). This defining addition of the social relationality of ambivalence is of major importance in the context under discussion, where people consider themselves not as having relationships but as being relationships (cf. Piot, 1999). Moreover, relational ambivalence has shown itself to be the most significant analytical lens for examining the (re)negotiations described as taking place through gossiping and silence post deportations.

Sociological ambivalence is, furthermore, considered to be a transitional stage to be overcome (Belloni, 2019). Migrants' ambivalence is often thought to resolve itself once they are back in their country of origin, but returning migrants may, in fact, carry with them cultural values from abroad that cause new ambivalent sensations. In the case of deportations, expectations and realities collapse altogether, once deportees are back, potentially leaving them torn. More than that, deportations cause ever more extreme emotional experiences of ambivalence. In this sense, I appreciate Monica Belloni's appeal for sociological ambivalence to be considered as an "ongoing condition" (Belloni, 2019, p. 5) and emotional experience, illustrated here by the protracted normative inconsistencies deportees confront during and after their migrations and deportations, caused "from above" by the deportation regimes.[2] Protracted ambivalence may be experienced in deportees' immobilization and sense of stuckness. The social dynamics in kin and family relations are particularly challenging since they condense the contradictory expectations and

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2   This is different to the case of the Eritreans that Milena Belloni discusses, where contradictions are produced in the country of origin itself with opposing expectations – becoming a breadwinner through migration, as against a lifelong obligation to do military service in the home country (Belloni, 2019, pp. 14f).

ambivalent reactions of joy, sadness, and hope. This may be added to by intergenerational ambivalences, as I have shown.

At the same time, a supposed "failure" has generally been summed up by deportees and their circles in the phrase "the adventure did not work out." In this sense, wealth and value lie in the person, who is healthy and alive and able to go on in most cases. "It's not the end of the world," as the staff of deportee organizations say too. What is important is the space left for going on. Deportations may bring about a turning point and vital conjuncture. In this sense, I developed "failure" as a productive category as well. Deportees have a range of strategies for dealing with things, as shown. Considered a *rite de passage* towards adulthood and becoming somebody, in West Africa the migratory adventure still also functions partly as a ritual intended to transform the adventurer as well as his social circle. Even if deportees "have not made it" in the expected way, they have the air of having been "there," or at least somewhere else, and of having acquired some "adventure-hood." In this respect, the adventure has worked out as some form of transition. Like the memories of hardships and shame, this "acquisition" may endure over time as well to be potentially integrated into the ambivalent experience of a supposed "failure," collectively shared and thus also becoming somehow normalized.

"Failure" and ambivalence can also be seen in Appadurai's view as "nothing bad": if you fail, "fail early, fail often" (2016, p. xxiii), he suggests, trying to grasp the contemporary conception in capitalist modernity. One might also be reminded of Samuel Beckett, the "maestro of failure" (Power, 2016), and his literary work, once dubbed "the art of failure" (Coe, 1964, p. 4; cf. Burton, 2005). For Beckett, failure was the only artistic goal, the single act of expression worth trying to articulate,[3] most prominently in *Worstward Ho* (1983): "Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter. Try again. Fail again. Fail better": it is about the value of trying, even if one fails and suffers.[4] Malian adventurers are not artists in the literal sense, but they are definitely artists of life. A supposed "failure" may become part of their being and eventually a productive category. In the artistic sense, "failure" and suffering are not only inevitable, but even to be glorified.[5] All this links in with the existential quest of leaving and returning in the concept of the migratory adventure with suffering at the core of sense-making post deportation: memories of suffering, suffering in everyday life, but also suffering that can be reinterpreted as a new chance.

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3   "To be an artist is to fail, as no other dare fail, that failure is his world and the shrink from it desertion" (Beckett, 1983, p. 145).

4   Eventually, failure is seen as suffering in Beckett's literature as well: "I suffer, thus I am" (cf. Burton, 2005, p. 60).

5   Silence is also given a prominent place in the discussion of failure in Beckett's work: "silence as an authentic response to failure", and actually the only legitimate response. Burton refers further to Wittgenstein and his similar appreciation of silence (cf. Burton, 2005, p. 57).

So, who is the one judging a supposed "failure" or success and who is the one that is forced to accept the judgment (cf. Appadurai, 2016, p. xxxi)? Hegemonic social conceptions are challenged by increasing numbers of deportations. A "failure" is not denied, but potentially externalized, to God as ultimately responsible, to one's mother, to higher spirits, and increasingly to politics and structural causes. Notwithstanding, though, the migratory adventure also remains an individual endeavor to attain responsibility and manhood. The radical change Malian deportees experience through deportation has long-lasting effects for themselves and their communities. This turning point may lead to standstill and immobility as well. The form of ambivalence experienced seems to change over time and according to each situation and case; but it is hardly ever resolved completely. It is more a matter of reducing its strength by continuing. In some cases, ambivalence may be resolved – when one earns money or potentially becomes someone through setting up a small project on the ground or with the support of a relative. It can be the ambivalence of the situation itself that generates multiple agentic and navigational ways of going about things, and continuing. In this way, deportees redefine, adapt, and negotiate their roles continuously. In the end, perhaps, it is questionable whether ambivalence can or needs to be dissolved after all.

La chance can be a narrative and practical means of going on with this dilemma. In this sense, ambivalence can be hopeful as well; hope can emerge out of uncertainty (cf. Kleist & Thorsen, 2017).[6] Hannah Arendt even considers imaginations to be ambivalent in their political potential to change facts (1972, p. 5, cf. Bottici, 2011, p. 61). Within the cosmological, spiritual, and social order in West Africa and Mali, people are used to mastering contingency (cf. also Bromber et al., 2015) – in the light of ambivalences too, one might say. And inside this cultural repertoire of openness and flexibility, there may also be space to adapt the dominant narrative of migration and the humanly judged concept of "failure" too, not least because its ambivalence and productivity may be a motor for social change as well. As Beckert suggests, imagined futures can be crucial components of the social, economic, and political order itself (2016, p. 11).

Back to the political and what remains to be done

For most people in Mali, migrations, mobility, and deportations have been shaping their lifeworlds and society in recent decades. With changing political realities,

6   For Palmberger (2019), migrants' undecidedness constitutes a strategy to cope with difficult situations, weighing different opinions, moral and social stances, thus not adopting one single position or judgment.

people have been responding differently, by adapting migratory strategies and, if necessary, redefining what they are and may become as well.

Migrants' restless going on against migratory constraints and after deportations seems deeply agentic. Lucht even makes a political act out of migrants' restlessness and desperation, defining "the death-defying journeys in the desert and the Mediterranean" as "ways of transgressing the borders imposed on them in more than one way." Migrant suffering and sometimes death would therefore not constitute "political acts *per se*," but "forms of iconoclasm that question the moral legitimacy of the system" (2017, pp. 157f).[7]

Even if deportees' situations may sometimes be an ongoing experience of ambivalence and suffering, one may frame deportees' restless continuing in Lucht's terms instead as morally questioning the established deportation regimes through "forms of iconoclasm" to political acts. The works of Dünnwald and Lecadet highlight the associations of former deportees in Mali, which have built a remarkable activist legacy in their country and the region. These continue to frame and take part in the political debate and reality with respect to EU externalizations and deportations in Mali today. Cécile Canut and Alioune Snow show with the "*théâtre des expulses*," who performed in 2008 in Bamako under the direction of ARACEM and AME (back then their founding members had recently been deported themselves), how the play *Essingan* demonstrates the ambivalence of the dominant narrative of migratory success. It differentiates the difficulties of the journey and the possibilities of a common "failure," which places the weaknesses of the individual traveler and his "lapsed moral attitudes." This should be "understood as an integral part of the group's attempt to negotiate new theatrical representations and new discourses on migration" (Canut & Snow, 2008, p. 10). Since then, the numbers of deportees in the country have been rising. Experiences of deportation have become ever more collective, even if individual and social ambivalences persist. Protests against state practices of externalizing borders and their corollary effects, the deaths of migrants and their forcible return, have received unprecedented urgency and visibility. This is also a collective endeavor to cope, as in the commemoration of the shipwrecked, public opposition to restrictive migratory policies, and former deportees organizing themselves, accusing the state of "forcing people to leave" and pleading for "real" alternatives on the ground. In this sense, the political and public discourses surrounding migrants' "failure" seem at least to have turned against a Malian state and the EU which "kill," even if the narrative of migratory success persists.

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7   In a similar vein Alvarez (2016) observes "Despite their small size and relatively small numbers, the small boats that ply the Strait's [i.e., the Strait of Gibraltar's] clandestine routes were often figured as physical and metaphorical vehicles for (imagined) assaults on the integrity of the European body politic. Furthermore, the immigrants they carried were regarded as potential assaulters of the physical and social security of individual Europeans" (p. 121).

In the aftermath of the "refugee crisis" and in the course of the current Valetta process, the new funds for return and reintegration available under the EUTF have given place to new activities and associations of migrants and others. "Assisted voluntary return and reintegration" has become the dominant paradigm also in light of the so far stagnating negotiations on forced returns in the asymmetric architecture of the EU Migration Partnership Framework of 2016 (Schultz, 2020a). Framed as more humane and flexible – and being so in real terms – it is also an option preferred by African states over the highly criticized and contested procedure of forced return in West African societies as developed here (cf. Adam et al., 2019; Zanker et al., 2019). It is only recently that conditions post return and deportations have been discussed as becoming sustainable; notwithstanding, the focus on security remains (Cassarino, 2016, pp. 219f). These (re)integration projects are as much intended to Europeanize the question of deportations and expulsions in Mali and the subregion (cf. Sylla & Schultz, 2019) as to address the fundamental discrepancies between adequate activities on the ground, potential funding, and uneven communication, known as development collaboration.[8] In this respect, former deportees and potential migrants are made development actors themselves through EUTF-programs, marking a clear nexus of deportation and development. More than that, these "assisted voluntary returns" are not necessarily appreciated by assisted returnees themselves, civil-society actors, or the returnees known as *refoulés* either. It is to be assumed that, with the latest increase in assisted returns, above all in the form of transit and emergency returns from North African countries (Alpes, 2020; Zanker & Altrogge, 2019), collective experiences have become an ever more integral part of the societal everyday, with memories and narrations being widely shared. This hints at there being a new quality of return and reintegration realities and society in Mali.

Several of my findings mirror what the existing work on post deportation and return research suggest. These include upholding the migration cycle to permit an eventual sustainable return and reintegration (e.g., Cassarino, 2016), given that deportation may incite renewed migration and worsen matters at the point of departure, and enabling returns to be prepared for, decided on, and multiply embedded (cf. Ruben et al., 2009; Davids & van Houte, 2008.). In terms of development through return for the countries of origin, Collyer (2018) summarizes three central aspects (p. 123): the possibility for migrants to gain work experience and knowledge that will need to be valued and integrated once they come back; the social capital of the returnees before leaving, while abroad and after their return; and migrants' ability to plan their return. This underlines the necessity of enabling a dignified and autonomous, prepared and embedded return, as well as the possibility of mobility,

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8   Even if the aims may be similar, the approaches vary widely and do not necessarily communicate, but are characterized by misunderstanding and a clear North–South inequality.

in order to contribute to development and social well-being too. Currently these aspects are not to be found in deportations and only partially in so-called "assisted voluntary returns" (AVRs) (e.g., Kalir, 2017; Kuschminder, 2017; Koser & Kuschminder, 2015) most of which are perceived as *refoulements* by migrants themselves.

Few of these findings, however, have been transferred into political practice. In Germany, for instance, for researchers' analyses and suggestions to be integrated into policy discussions and the evaluation of return and reintegration programs has become acknowledged as a critical tool (cf. Biehler et al., 2021; SVR, 2020; Schmitt et al., 2019). Hasselberg in this sense questions the role of the researcher. She asks how we can make our findings more public and enter policy circles and public debates (2018, pp. 31f). Essentially, a large gap remains between academic and public policy discourses, which, not least, derive from different role perceptions and ascriptions. Thus, the social sciences' conception of their public function is usually a more indirect one, that of producing "orientation and meaning in the local, national, and global public spheres" (Faist, 2018, p. 28), in other words providing explanatory and analytical knowledge. On the policy side, the researcher is considered more valuable for policy consultancy, which is to be provided on the basis of "evidence-based" research, often referring to concrete numbers that will generate clear-cut results to inform policy makers.

From this point of view, the complexity and ambivalence of sociological and ethnographic research, as it has been promoted here, is hard to translate into such clear-cut advice directly. More than that, there is a major lack of more systematic research and data on forced returns, their impacts and adverse effects on the societies and people concerned: longitudinal analysis, statistical and mixed-method data generation are necessary to enable broader comparisons to be made and also for the work to be potentially taken more seriously by public-policy discourse; even if one runs the risk of being policy-driven thereby (cf. Castles, 2010). So, much more social science and ethnographic research is needed on fine-grained social dynamics post deportations, and the impact of deportations over time. This research, moreover, should be conducted not only from a socio-economic point of view but in relation to the social and emotional costs and implications particularly of the debt relations involved with the emblematic loss of money caused by forced return, and take into account how all this translates into relations with family and kin and other types of social relations (cf. Buggenhagen, 2012, p. 169), which are highly ambivalent in how they relate to the shame of being unable to provide in the expected sense. Not least, the useful analytical lens that sociological ambivalence offers for grasping the complexity of deportees' social lifeworlds, which I could only touch on here, should be explored on a broader scale and with greater seriousness. Overall, more space and in-depth detail are indispensable to a better contribution to understanding returnees' survival and dignified and autonomous reintegration and way to go on – as well as how, in the end, this links in with actors' entangle-

ments and the broader discourse and practices of migration and potential social change.

More than discourse, debate, and narration, this book has encouraged action to this end on the practical level. Even if individual deportees and their families do not necessarily recognize structural causes as responsible for their suffering, the highly active civil society in Mali, in the subregion, and transnationally is calling for an all-encompassing transformation of relevant institutions and recognition of migrants' rights, including their right to self-determined development, stay, and mobility. Eventually, this would imply fundamental changes in the world trade system, plus stricter regulation of financial flows (cf. Faist, 2018, p. 29), and, not least, the formal integration of mobility. From this point of view, it is essential to discuss and approach migratory and deportation policies within a broader framework of political, legal, social, and economic transformation. What does the deportation and assisted return of individuals, citizens and groups do to societies at large? More than that, it would require an open dialogue between all actors involved – policy-makers, activists, and migrants, ordinary citizens and other civil society and economic actors – which is aware of power asymmetries and aimed at reciprocity and equal sharing. Even though there appears to be a long way to go, it is worthwhile thinking about this, discussing it, and writing it down. In that sense, this book has provided a view from the south Malian actors' side on the effects of the global deportation regime in this particular historical moment and context, characterized by EU externalizations into the African continent and a great many deportations and returns, as well as on how people cope with the realities of deportation on the ground. It is meant to be a contribution to an understanding of how people's social lifeworlds are carved up, disrupted, and shaped by current global structural inequalities and how they react to it. As such, it builds a basis for further engagement by deportation studies in how this can have a profoundly transformative effect on the society at large and what shape that transformation will take – without ever letting deportation be the last word.