

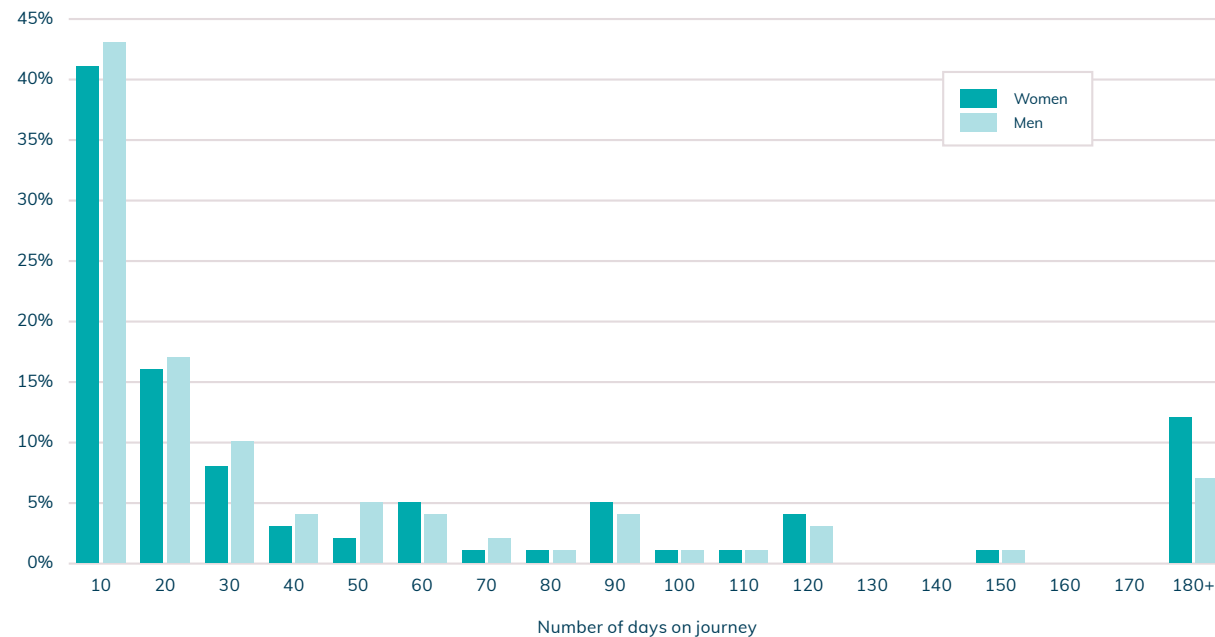
This snapshot provides an overview of the duration of the journeys of migrants and refugees in West Africa, the cost of these journeys and the reasons behind the choice of migration routes.

### Profiles

This snapshot is based on 4Mi interviews conducted from 1 January 2019 to 30 June 2019: 3,058 migrants and refugees were interviewed, of which 31% were women and 69% were men. The main countries of nationality of the respondents are Burkina Faso (15%), Guinea (12%), Nigeria (10%), Côte d'Ivoire (10%), Mali (9%), Niger (8%) and Senegal (7%). Interviews took place in Mali (Kayes, Mopti, Gao, Timbuktu and Ber), Niger (Niamey, Diffa, Agadez and Tillabéry) and Burkina Faso (Dori, Bobo Dioulasso and Kantchari).

### Short journeys...

**Figure 1. Duration of journey up until interview point disaggregated by gender**

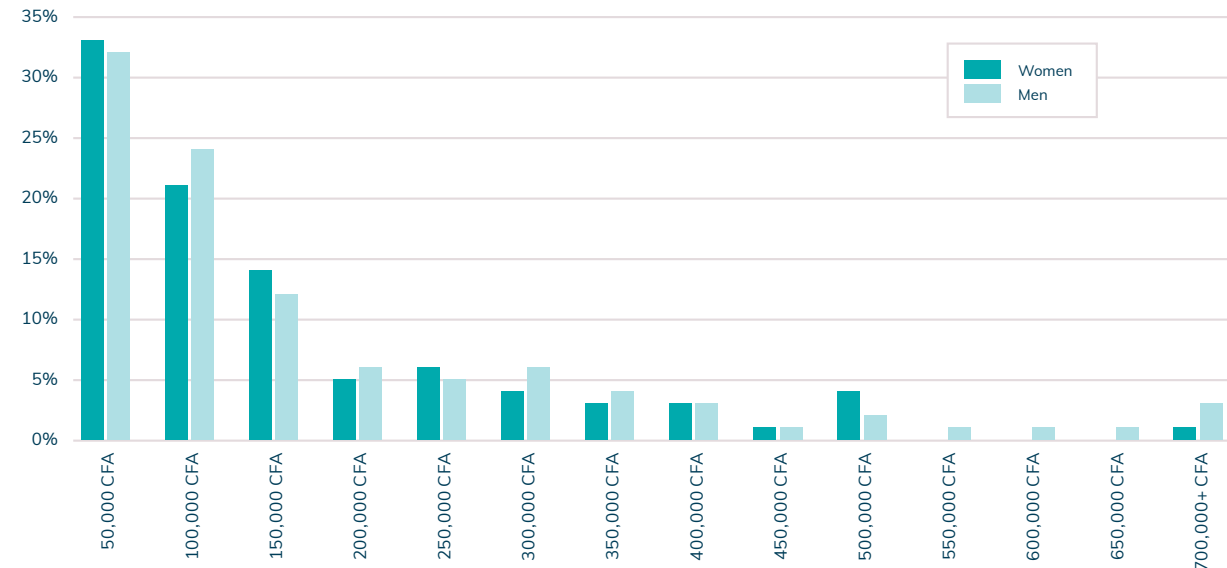


As outlined in Figure 1, a short duration on migration routes is most commonly cited among 4Mi respondents surveyed during this period. More than 60% of migrants and refugees interviewed had spent 30 days or less on migration routes up until the point of interview. Men more frequently report to be travelling for shorter durations. There are hardly any data points indicating travel for longer than eight months. These findings are not surprising given the relative ease of travel most respondents are supposed to enjoy within the ECOWAS space, since the majority are ECOWAS citizens to whom the Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons should apply.

It is noted that about 17% of respondents spend more than two months on migration routes. Among those, all report having stopped along the way for significant periods of time. The main reasons for stopping cited by these respondents include working to earn money for the next stretch of the journey (63%), staying with friends/relatives for a while (43%), waiting for money transfer from families/friends to pay for next stretch of their journey (26%), looking for smugglers to organise the next stretch of the journey (11%) and poor health (11%).<sup>1</sup>

### ... at a relatively low cost

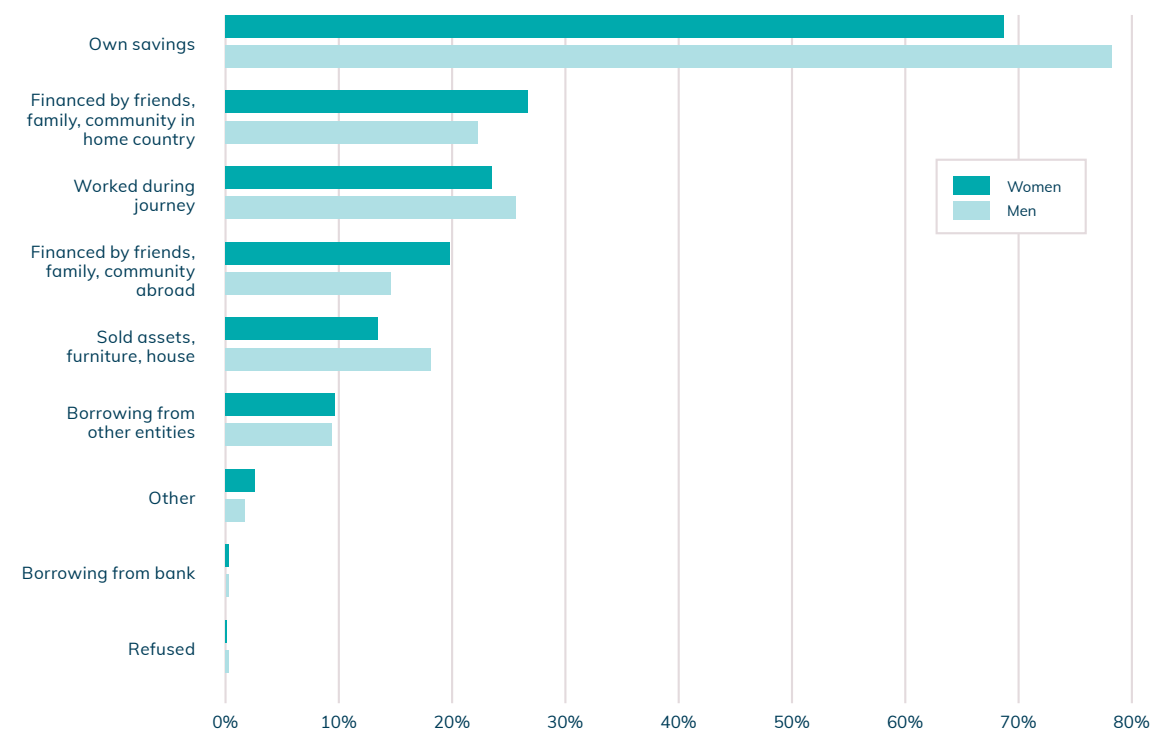
**Figure 2. Cost of journey up until interview point disaggregated by gender**



<sup>1</sup> This question is a multi-select option. The total percentages exceed 100 because respondents have chosen more than one answer.

There are clear patterns in terms of financing the journey. More than half of respondents have spent CFA 100,000 (approximately USD 165) or less on their journey until the point of interview. Few respondents spend more than CFA<sup>2</sup> 200,000 (approximately USD 330).<sup>3</sup> There are no significant differences between men and women. Extortion at internal checkpoints and borders is often reported by people on the move in West Africa,<sup>4</sup> and while the 4Mi data is not disaggregated by type of costs, these are likely to be part of the costs. Analyzing Figures 1 and 2 together suggests another potential explanation for the relatively low total costs respondents are reporting to have paid in transit; namely that shorter journeys are likely to cost less in total than longer journeys, as migrants have less time to incur expenses on the route.

**Figure 3. Financing of journey disaggregated by gender**

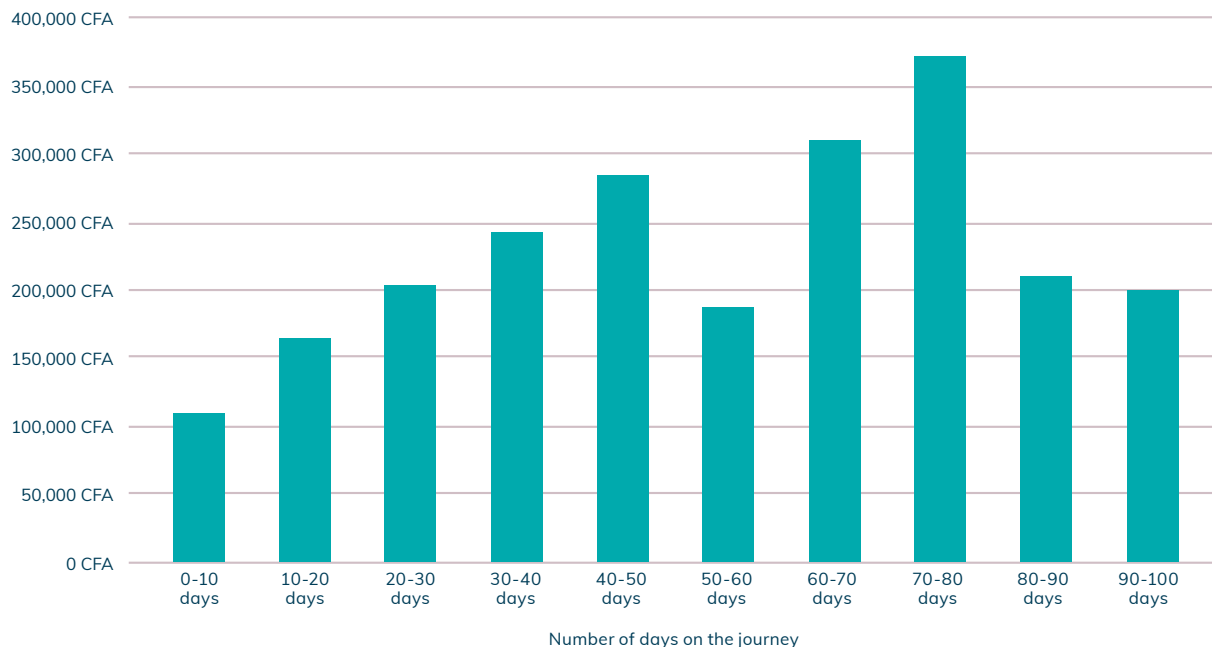


<sup>2</sup> West African CFA franc; exchange rate as of February 2020 = \$1/CFA 607.5.  
<sup>3</sup> 65 responses above CFA 700,000 in the sample were omitted in this graph.  
<sup>4</sup> Mixed Migration Centre (2019) [Navigating borderlands in the Sahel: border security governance and mixed migration in Liptako-Gour-ma](http://www.mixedmigration.org). Available at: [www.mixedmigration.org](http://www.mixedmigration.org), pp. 62-65.

4Mi data indicates that the respondents' journeys are mainly financed by their own savings (78% of male respondents and 67% of female respondents), followed by friends, family and community in the country of origin (22% of male respondents and 27% of female respondents), and working during the journey (26% of male respondents and 24% of female respondents). It is noteworthy that male respondents rely more on their own savings and selling assets, furniture or their house whereas female respondents indicated a greater reliance on financing by friends, family and their community in both country of origin and abroad.

## Decreasing cost for longer journeys

**Figure 4. Average spending in function of duration on migration route**



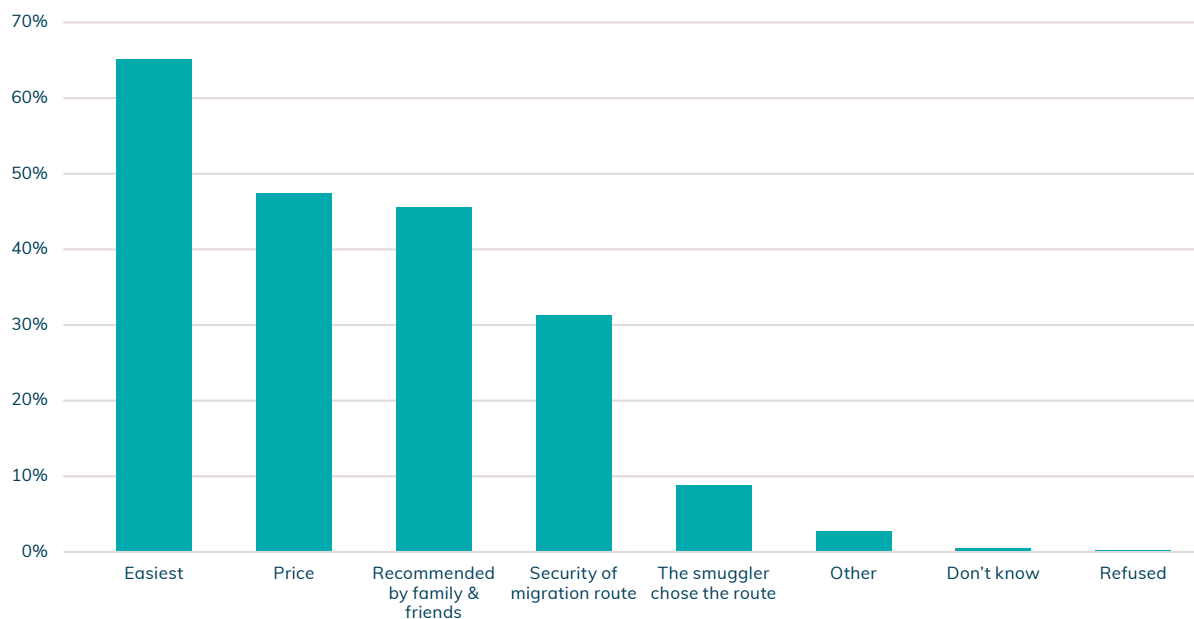
While the relation between cost of journey and length of journey might seem straightforward at first – increasing the length of one's journey leads to increasing costs – plotting these variables against each other provides a more nuanced picture (Figure 4). While the correlation is clearly positive for those travelling for 50 days or less, 4Mi data suggest that for lengthier journeys the amount spent seems to decrease in many cases. This might suggest that less costly travel options take more time.

It is also worth repeating here that all respondents who spent two months or more on their journey reported having stopped along the way for significant periods of time. The majority (63%) of these said that they were working to earn money for the next stretch of the journey. Only 27% of those traveling for less than two months

reported working along the way. It seems likely that those respondents who are stopping for longer periods of time, and thus reporting longer durations on migration routes, may not be factoring in their costs during the time they are stationary.

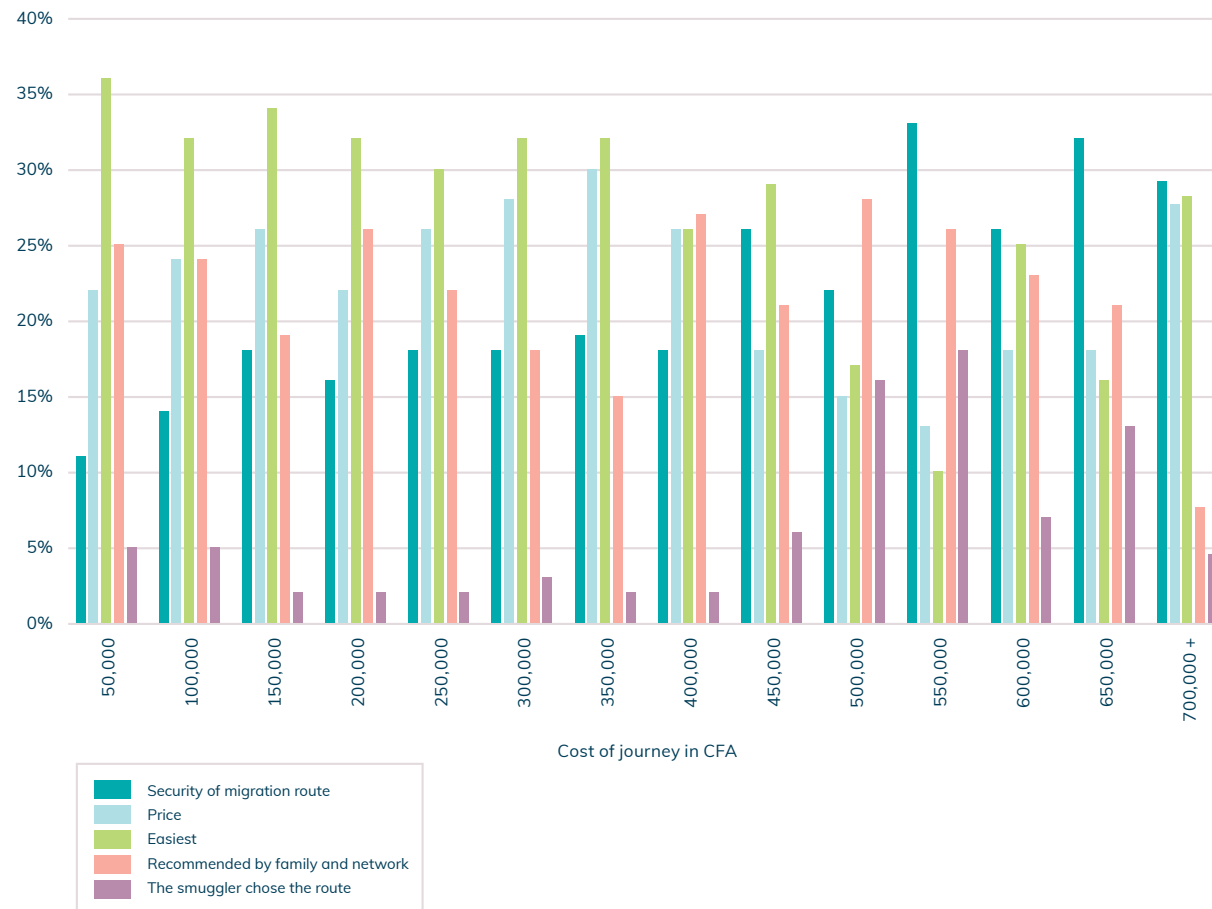
## Cost and reasons for choosing route

Figure 5. Reason for choosing route



The ease of journey is by far the most commonly cited reason for choosing a particular migration route (65%), followed by the price (47%) and the fact that a certain route was recommended by family or the network of the interviewed migrant or refugee (45%) (Figure 5). When those reasons are plotted against the cost of the journey (Figure 6), we see that in addition to the relation between cost and duration explained in Figure 4, an interesting correlation appears to emerge between cost and security on migration routes. The categories of respondents that indicated having paid the most cite security as one of their main reasons for choosing a route (36% of those paying between CFA 650,000 and CFA 700,000 in contrast to only 11% of those paying CFA 50,000 or less).

Figure 6: reasons for choosing route against cost of route



## Conclusion

Respondents interviewed in Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso report that journeys are generally 30 days and rarely longer than 60. This could pose a challenge for NGO outreach towards people in mixed migration flows on the migration route, as migrants and refugees transit relatively quickly, at least until the points at which they are interviewed by 4Mi.

Other insights suggest further investigation. For instance, to what extent do refugees and migrants have scope to concretely improve their security in transit by paying more money? And, for those who are stopping to work on route, what types of activities are they undertaking to support the costs of their journey, and what risks might they be exposed to as a result?



The Mixed Migration Monitoring Mechanism Initiative (4Mi) is the Mixed Migration Centre's flagship primary data collection system, an innovative approach that helps fill knowledge gaps, and inform policy and response regarding the nature of mixed migratory movements and the protection risks for refugees and migrants on the move. 4Mi field monitors are currently collecting data through direct interviews with refugees and migrants in West Africa, East Africa and Yemen, North Africa, Asia, and Europe.

Sample sizes are clearly indicated and represent a limited section of those on the move. The findings derived from the surveyed sample should not be used to make any inferences about the total population. See more 4Mi analysis and details on methodology at [www.mixedmigration.org/4mi](http://www.mixedmigration.org/4mi)