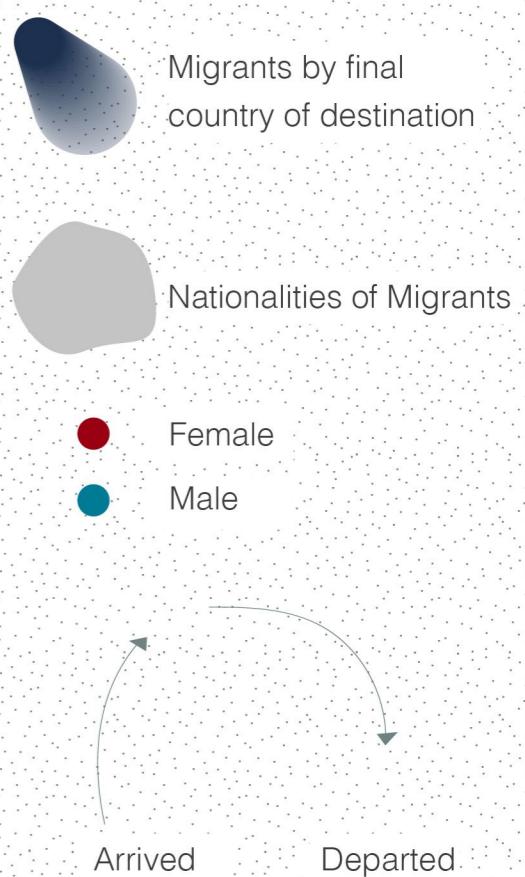
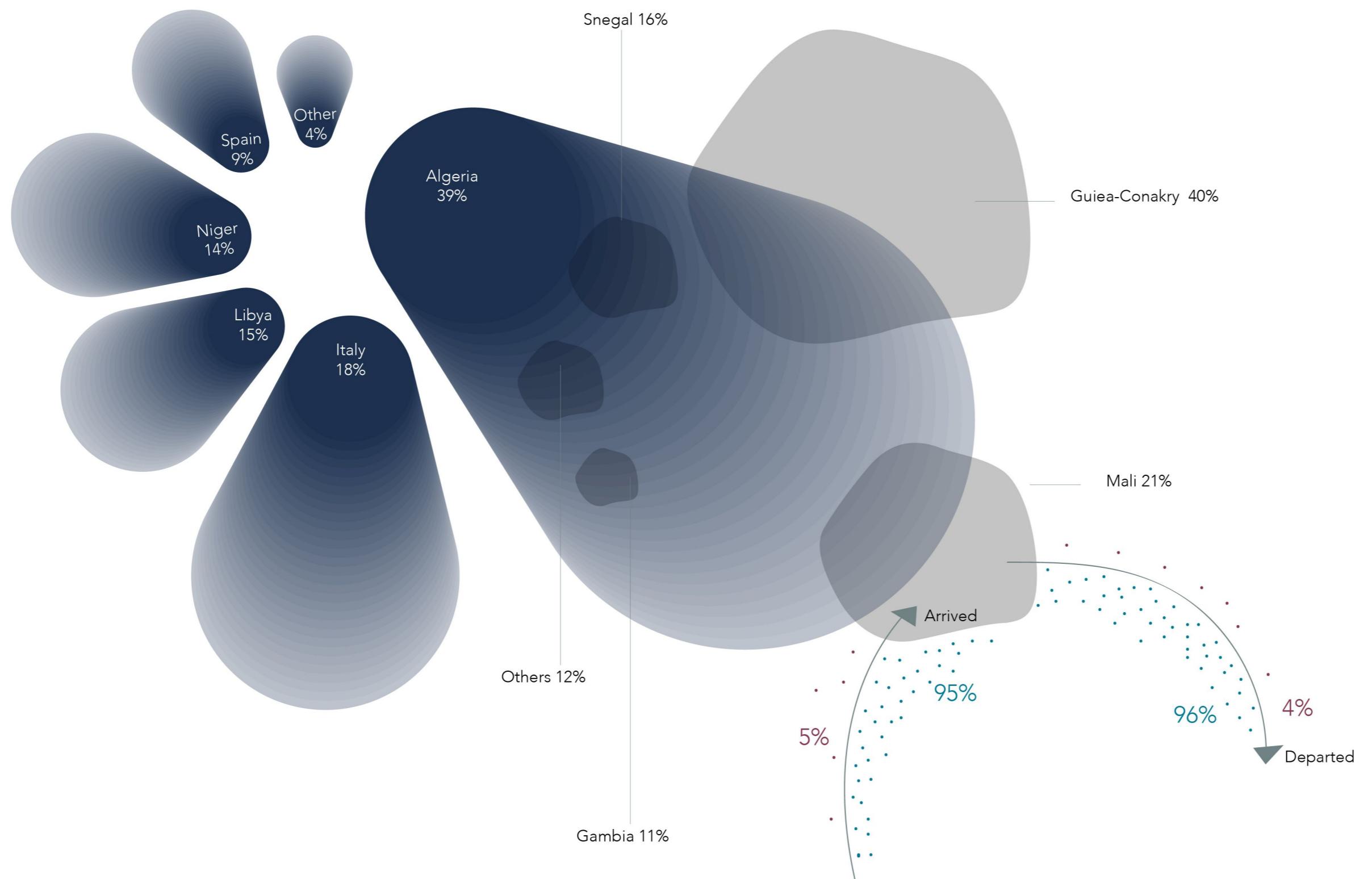


No.Choice

A project by Akash& Chenlu Guo

«No.choice» is a visual narrative of four immigrants' routes. They travelled from their hometown to Algeria. This project wants to tell their stories in an interactive way and show you the tough choices they had to make throughout their unknown journey.



MALI

Tombouctou
Mopti
Bamako
Segou

(Sharon)

Tombouctou
Mopti
Bamako
Segou

(Ibrahim Ballo)

Tombouctou
Mopti
Bamako
Segou

(Mario Araya)

Gao

Tamanrasset

ALGERIA

Which road you want to choose?

Sharon
Souleyman
Ibrahim Ballo
Mario Araya

~~Immigrants' stories~~

The music of Jingle Bells will always remind Ibrahim Ballo of the first day he stepped on to Mali's soil. It was December 2nd, 2012, and Ballo, known as Lefah, had just reached Mali after travelling for around 125 days from his hometown in Liberia. The 30-year-old, who worked as a tour guide in his hometown in Liberia and had never left the country before, found himself walking around Bamako town centre with memories of his dying mother at home, who pushed him to move forward in life and make a good living for him in Europe, he was searching for some warm layers as the dessert gets really cold at night.

It all started when someone told me they were going to Europe, I told them not to go since it's too dangerous. They called me a month later from Italy. You always hear stories about people dying, but the number of people who do make it is still high. So I thought of leaving too... but I couldn't afford the journey, not even after four years working within the same company. I was feeding my family and paying for my sister's school fees. I have a long way to go and I don't want to be doing the same job for the rest of my life. When I saved up to 2000 euros, I decided to try my luck.

▲ Should I take the route from Mali or Morocco?

Mali Route

Morocco

Day

800

778

100

125

Immigrant
experienced

You
experienced

You chose the morocco route, the
journey never took place from that
route. But I am sure Ibrahim,
would have made it to Europe
from there too.

~~Immigrants' stories~~

After 125 days I was in Mali (Bamako) finally and I had made another 1000 Euros on the way, I was very confident that I am gonna make it to Europe this time and will fulfil my dead mother dream and give my sister a better life and call her to Europe via a flight.

After reaching Bamako, I decided to stay here for sometime and learn about the people so that I don't get cheated and don't rush into things, as I only had one chance, to make it to Europe, started living in Bamako I made a really good friend, he taught me basic French and told me all the ways to Gao and from Gao to Algeria, he helped me find a job too. Making 500 Euros in only 50 days I decided to move ahead with my Journey. After 53 days we (me and my friend) were on our way to Gao. But something tragic happened.

"I left Liberia because I wanted to go to Italy. My friend told me to pass through Mali first so I could make some money. On the way to Gao from Bamako there, the driver sold us to some Arab men and took all of our valuables, including phones and personal documents."

It was horrifying that, all the valuables are gone and we're being cheated with no choice left, there was nothing we could do and nowhere we could go. All my patience, work and everything was slipping from my hands, and I have no choice left except for panicking or begging.

▲ Is this the time to give up and go back?

Yes, go back.

NO! Fulfil the dreams of my mother.

~~Immigrants' stories~~

As soon as we reached Gao in Mali, they put us in some sort of prison. The worst thing was that the prison was managed by fellow Africans who had bought us from Arabs. I was there for 15 days with no food or water, and there were more than 70 other people in the same room. The captors gave me a phone and wanted me to call my family, but I knew my mother had already died in a very small village and my sister, she doesn't even own a phone.

Day 83: We were rescued by the youth vigilantes in Mali. They had heard about the human trafficking situation in the region; they found us and set us free. They took us to the police station and told us to call our families so they could help us get back home. At the police station, there was a huge group of migrants, including plenty of women and children. I had no one to call and I was not ready to give up on my dream of being in Europe. So I did not stay there and started moving towards Algeria again, after being free in Gao for 2 days, I found some other people who were ready to take me on their truck to Algeria. Then I requested for a human rights volunteer to assist us, but the police officers said there was no such thing. They put us in a truck, took us past Gao, and left us in the middle of nowhere. There were more than 200 people there from all over West Africa. We walked and walked for days until we reached Assamaka again but once we got there, we saw the IOM staff. They had come to assist us. We told them everything that had happened and they took us to their centre in Tamanrasset. We couldn't be more grateful for the help."

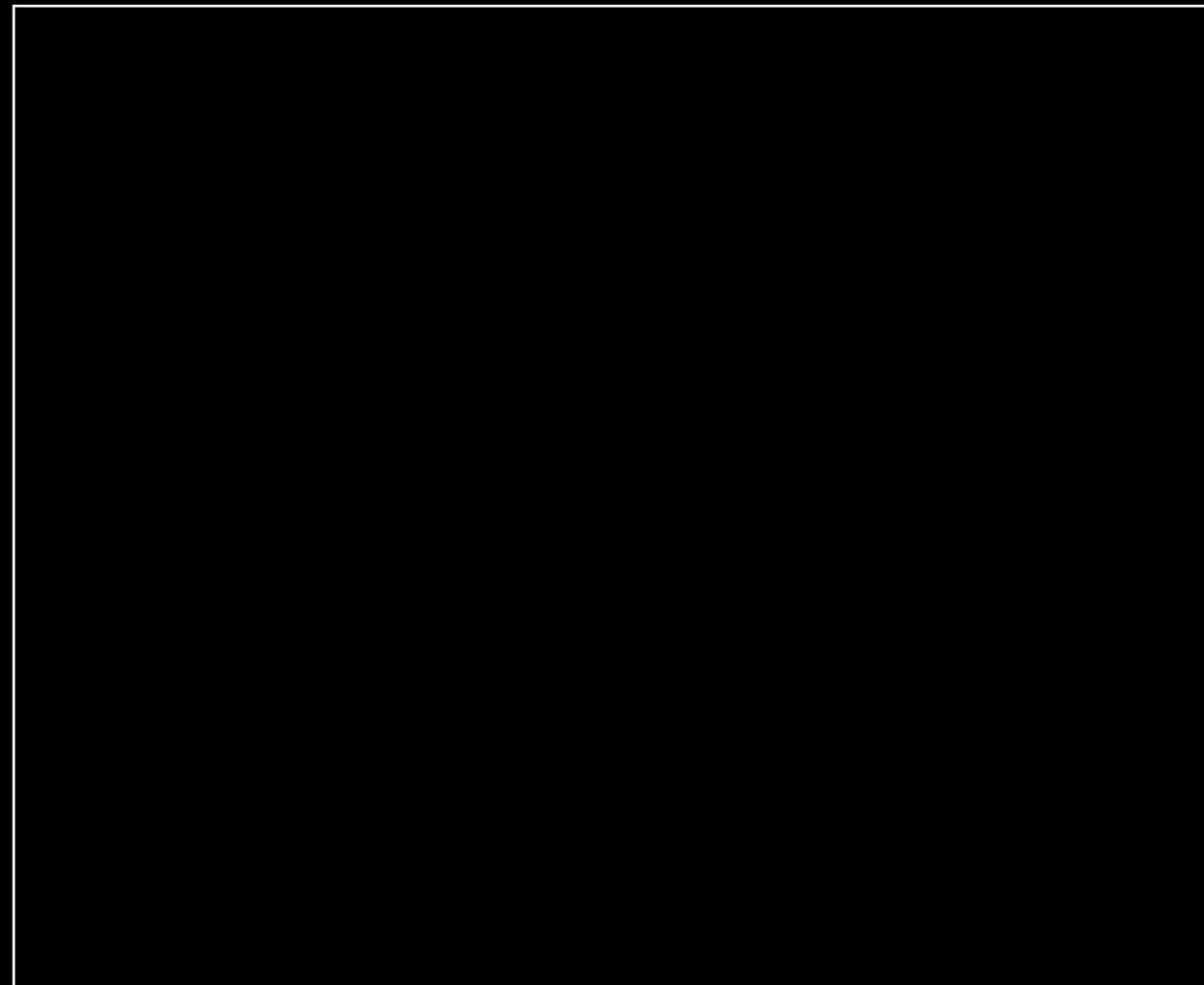


Does the journey end here? Should I settle in Algeria, after all that I have seen?

Algeria is a nice option and Sahara is the new home.

No, keep moving and make it to Europe.

~~Immigrants' stories~~



After 390 days of leaving home, I was finally in Algeria, finding people to help and making friends on the way, learning a new language and seeing things which are not expected to be seen, it was a life changing experience.



Should I call my sister here (Algeria) and go with her or should I reach Europe first and then call her?

Europe, first.

Call her to Algeria

Day

800

778

100

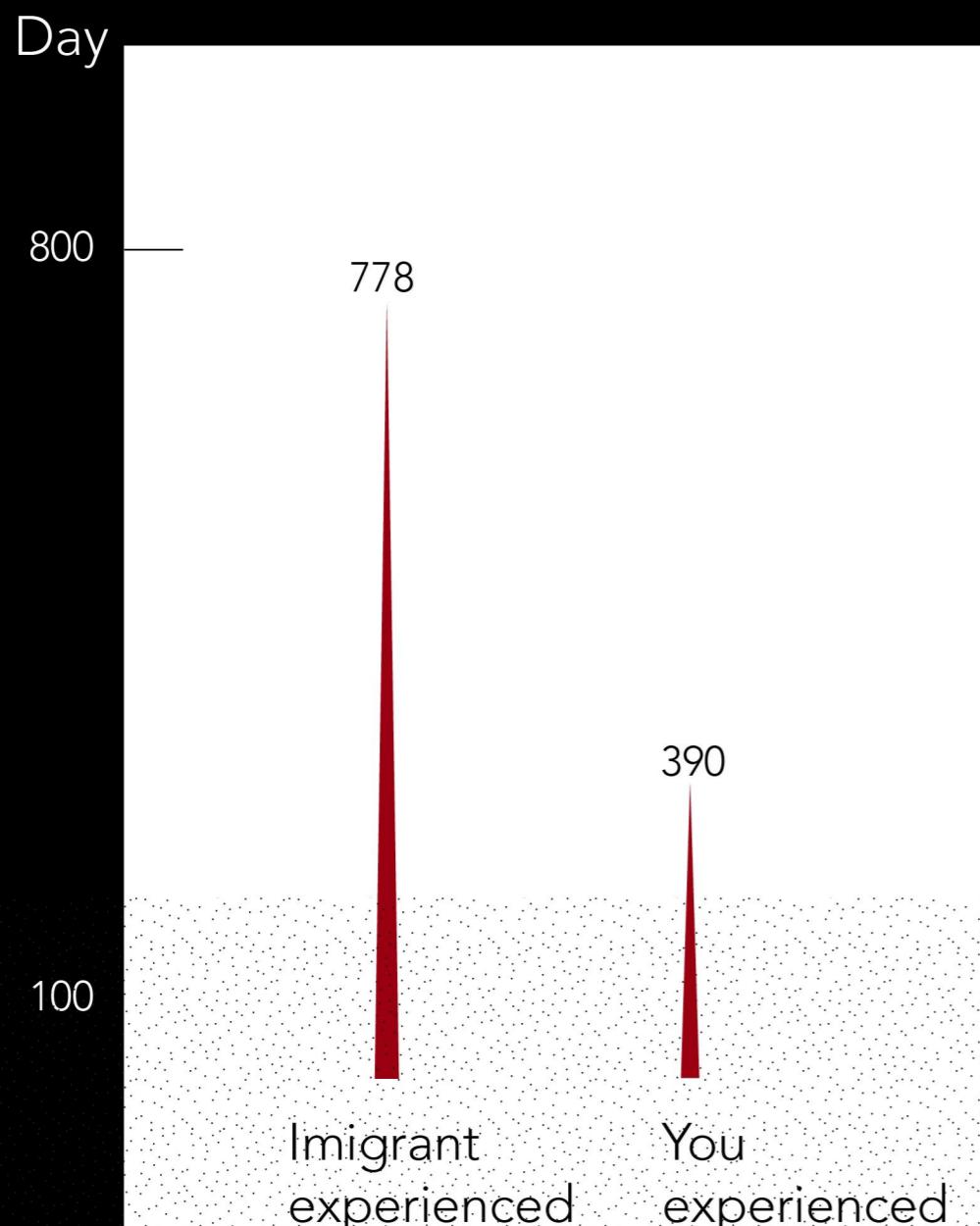
263

Immigrant
experienced

You
experienced

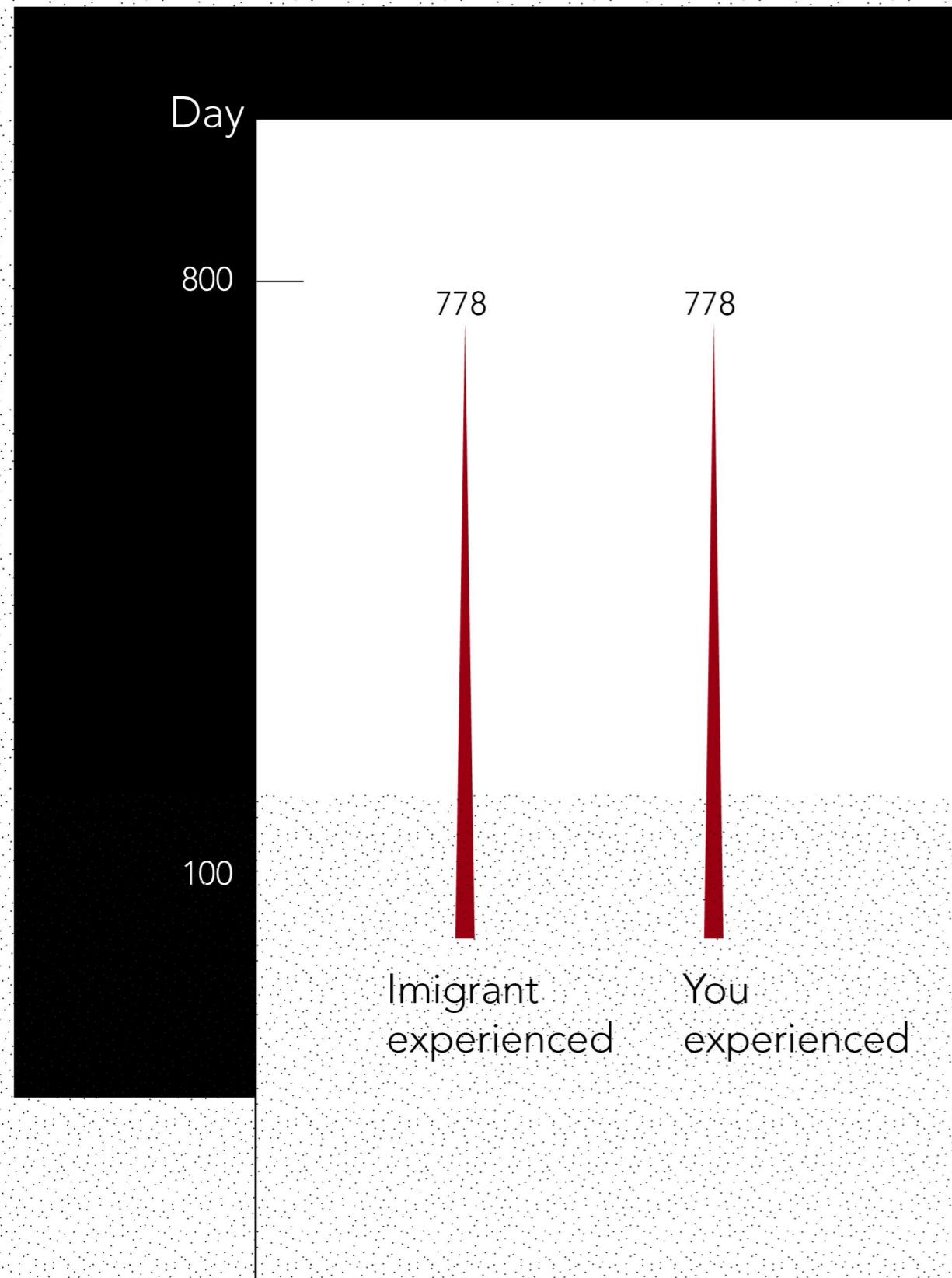
Day 125:

You chose to give up and go back.
But in real Ibrahim, never gives up
and reaches Italy in 778 days.



Day 263:

Settling in Algeria is a good option
but moving ahead in life is what
Ibrahim chose, he made it to Italy
in 778 days.



Day 390:

Calling Ibrahim's sister was not a safe option, and he never chose that option. He reaches Europe first in 778 days and then calls her to Italy.



After 778 days for traveling Ibrahim reached Italy.