In search of greener pastures? Boat-migrants from Senegal to the Canary Islands
Poeze, M.

In search of greener pastures?

In search of greener pastures?

Boat-migrants from Senegal
to the Canary Islands

Miranda Poeze

Preface

This book is the winner of the Africa Thesis Award 2009. The jury's report included the following comments:

"The jury was very impressed by the quality of Miranda Poeze's thesis and the ingenuity she showed in her research on boat migrants. She has managed to record her interviews in such a way that it almost reads like a novel: Pierre and Ibrahima come alive as one reads their tales and it is difficult not to become emotionally involved in their stories. Miranda convincingly describes why migrants' decisions to board these boats have to be viewed from a Senegalese socio-cultural context. However the thesis is not only very readable, it is a thorough piece of research too. Miranda managed to familiarize herself with and then gain access to the social environment of boat refugees in a remarkable way. The jury was also convinced of the societal relevance of the thesis, particularly the way certain difficult topics, such as the migrants' fears and expectations, their financial position, and their (often) forced return to Senegal, are dealt with."

Contents

List of figures

Foreword and acknowledgements

> When the rush to acquire the "mandate" for all aspects related to migration becomes an end in itself, the losers inevitably are the migrants, the people who should be, but are not, at the centre of the entire migration debate. Too often discussions within this Council [Governing Council of the International Organization for Migration] have spoken of migration as an abstract, purely economic phenomenon. What has been missing from the debate has been an understanding that we are talking about the movement of human beings; individuals who become obscured behind the statistics and policy discussions. (Amnesty International 2005)

The idea for this research was born during an internship at the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the beginning of 2007, where I got first-hand knowledge on immigration policies. During this period I became particularly interested in policies directed at undocumented migrants, which mostly revolved around issues of repatriation and the tightening of external border controls at a time that undocumented boat-migration from the West African Coast to the Canary Islands had just finished its peak-year. The preceding year European newspapers had regularly reported on weakened migrants arriving in small fragile boats and mentioned that large amounts of migrants had died on this route. As a result of this sea-migration from West Africa towards Europe many organizations in the field of migration had set up projects directed at these undocumented boat-migrants. However, as I soon learned when reading some evaluation reports, a lot of them seemed to be rather ineffective. This was not surprising as most of these projects were based on common sense knowledge on undocumented migration in which the migrant was generally depicted as a purely rational economic being, while the actual life world, experiences and motives of the migrants themselves were left unexplored by practitioners in the field as well as by social scientists. This study is therefore an effort to understand more about undocumented migration decision-making by giving a voice to those who undertake dangerous migration routes and above all to turn these migrants, who often become obscured behind statistics and policy documents, into human beings.

This work would not have been accomplished without the support of many others and therefore I would like to use this space to give a word of gratitude to certain people. I owe considerable debt to the young Senegalese men and their families in the neighbourhoods of Dakar, who shared their personal and often traumatized stories with me. Through them I came to understand why people were taking such high risks to move from the West African coast to the Canary Islands in small and often fragile boats in an effort to reach European mainland. I feel privileged that I had the opportunity to talk with these people and experience

another way of living that has broadened my horizon considerably. As my respondents did not have the same privilege as I did to travel to whatever place possible, I hope that with this thesis at least their voices and stories will transcend geographical as well as cultural borders.

Also the support and feedback of my supervisors Joost Beuving and Jan Abbink has been of great importance during all stages of the research process and kept me motivated and going at times when I felt lost in my data. I would like to express my gratitude to Abdou Salam Fall for hosting me at the University of Dakar and giving me a space to write up my data. In addition, I thank my friends in Dakar for taking me up in their lives and for providing a space where I felt at home, and I would especially like to mention and thank my dear friends Abdou and Moussa for listening to many of my stories and helping me with my struggles in and outside my fieldwork. *Namm naa leen*.

Finally, I would like to thank my Senegalese friends in the Netherlands for their hospitality and for providing me with some useful contacts in Dakar, and last but certainly not least, my close friends and family in the Netherlands for the inspiring discussions and their loving support.

Executive summary

Since the early 1990s undocumented migration flows from Africa to Europe has been on the rise. For several years the sea passage from Senegal to the Canary Islands, in often fragile and overcrowded boats, has had an important function in the West African undocumented migrant stream towards Europe. This route received a lot of media and political attention, which was for a large part due to its high risk character, with an estimated one-in-five deaths. In migration literature, decisions to move elsewhere are commonly viewed as an automatic response to unfavourable economic and political conditions. However, considering the region's relative stable political environment and diminishing economic opportunity in Europe, and the high risks involved on route, it appears that one has to move beyond understanding migration as a rational choice. This research explores the meso-level, by which migration decisions are considered to be embedded in ongoing social contacts, in an effort to explain the decision-making process of Senegalese boat-migrants. The study draws on life histories of unsuccessful boat migrants, collected during seven months of anthropological fieldwork in Dakar. Analysis of the data suggests two models of informal migration decision-making. African migrants that may be characterized as opportunistic are motivated by an individual surge for independence from the hierarchical family networks and social mobility that they fulfil by cultivating important social contacts, i.e. with migrants abroad. Hence their actions resonate with well-established notions of migrants as strategic investors in the social capital of their relations. In another model, young migrants are seen to conform to the ambitions of senior, mostly patrilineal, kinsmen to send a family member abroad. Migration in this conformist model is part of a strategy of families to improve their social status that is driven by expected remittances. Whereas the first model may be appreciated as being based on individual cost-benefit calculation, the second model raises important questions about cultural factors driving undocumented migration from West Africa to Europe.

1

Introduction

Although the human migration is a worldwide historical phenomenon, much is left unexplained about the choices people make in relation to international migration flows. My study seeks to contribute to recent developments in migration related research in which a relational perspective has been adopted to better explain migration behaviour. I do this by analyzing the functioning of various social networks and their influence on the motivation and decision of individual boat-migrants from Senegal to the Canary Islands, an islands group that is part of Spain. This research is based on ethnographic research with unsuccessful boat-migrants in several suburbs of Dakar, Senegal's capital, which has been an important departure node in this informal migration flow.

Research problem

West-African countries have historically experienced diverse migration flows, both within as well as from the region. Among them, Senegal has traditionally been one of the most important labour exporting countries. International migration from Senegal towards Europe started during the colonial period at the end of the nineteenth century and became massive after Senegalese independence (1962) from France. As a result of the European economic boom in the 1960s, companies in the former colonizer states started to recruit migrants on a large scale. Almost two decades followed with free movement for Senegalese to France. However, as a result of the economic slow-down and the downsizing of European enterprises, immigration in France was formally suspended on July 5, 1974 (MFAS 2006: 2-3; Massey *et al.* 2005: 5; Riccio 2001a: 5; Adepoju 2005:

1). With a focus in France on return migration in the 1990s and a further tightening of the borders, new types of South – North migration developed, whereby the destination of Senegalese migrants shifted from France to Southern Europe, most notably Italy, Spain and Portugal (de Haas 2007: 33). The formation of the European Union together with a fear of a massive influx of unskilled immigrants and stagnating employment opportunities in the North has resulted in disadvantageous migration policies for these types of migrants from Africa, while at the same time policies became more favourable for high-skilled migrants. Consequently, since the end of the 1980s and beginning of the 1990s it became extremely difficult to enter a European member state or settle for a longer period of time in a legal manner if one was not a high-skilled migrant, a dependent migrant family member, or applied for asylum on the basis of humanitarian grounds.

Until today, the most common means of entering a European country for those who do not fit into any of these categories is to enter a European country on a three month valid travel document, only to later overstay the visa and disappear in informality. In Senegal (and probably in other West-African countries as well) there are accounts of lucrative informal markets where visas for European countries are sold by so-called *businessman* for extremely high prices.[1] However, as many West Africans are not able (or willing) to pay these large amounts of money, the demand for less expensive migration routes has increased over the last decades.

Sea-crossings from the West African coast towards Europe started some two decades with the crossing of the Street of Gibraltar from Morocco in order to reach Spain, a journey of only 12 kilometres, with migrants coming over land from several Central, West and North African countries.[2] The amount of migrants trying to enter Europe via this route varied per year, with 6,519 arrested migrants in 1999 until 16,167 in the peak year of 2001. These figures obscure the perilous nature of this migration flow as an estimated 10,000 died on route between 1989 and 2003 (Dutch Embassy Dakar 2005: 18; Simon 2006: 41). This route lost most of its popularity when an early warning radar system was installed. A second important informal route led from Morocco to Ceuta and Melilla, two Spanish enclaves in Northern Africa. In 2005 the number of attempts to make it into the enclaves declined from 55,000 in 2004 to less than 12,000, mostly as a result of the deadly fences that were erected by authorities to prevent further entries (UNODC 2006: 8). In 2005 the Dutch Embassy in Dakar (2005: 34) reported on a new informal migration route: the sea-crossing from Mauritania

---

[1] The price mainly depends on the country of destination, for example, a visa for Turkey is sold for €1,000, while a travel document for Portugal can be bought for around €5,000, while average wages of my informants were around €80 a month (interviews Senegal, 2007).

[2] For an overview of undocumented migration routes beyond those that depart from the West African coast, see de Haas (2005) and Adepoju (2006).

and Northern Senegal (mainly Saint Louis) to the Canary Islands by groups of migrants in small and fragile boats in an attempt to reach Europe. Although the Canary Islands form an autonomous community, they fall under the Spanish central government. This meant that those migrants who entered the island group, and for whom the authorities were unable to trace the nationality within 40 days, were moved to mainland Spain where they would live at least part of their life in informality.

In the peak-year of 2006 32,000 migrants arrived on one of the seven islands.[3] This migration route has received a lot of press coverage from European media, which reported on weakened migrants arriving on the sandy beaches of the touristic Canary Islands. This media attention cannot be explained by the amount of persons that made use of this route; compared to the total European Union immigration stocks of 2.6 million in 2004, 32,000 is almost negligible (UNODC *2*006: 7; de Haas 2008: 42-43; Ryan 2008: 2).[4] Instead, this informal migration flow made group entries of African immigrants in Europe visible and due to its large death ratio raised important questions on the effects of European migration policies on the human rights and security of the individual migrant.

The sea-passage from Dakar (Senegal) to the Canary Islands, a distance of 938 miles (see Figure 1), takes five to seven days in the boats that are used for the transport of migrants (timeanddate.com, n.d.), although more recently the point of departure has shifted further south, where nowadays boats are leaving from as far as the Casamance, the southern region of Senegal, and Guinea-Bissau (Adepoju 2005: 2; UNHCR 2008). The sea-passage has caused many deaths due to starvation, drowning, and thirst, with a total estimated death toll of 5,000 in 2006 (Magoni *et al.* 2007: 21; *Migration News* 2006).[5] Not surprisingly then, most migrants return from their trips with nightmare-like stories. To give just one of the many examples I was told by one of my informants about his on-route experience:

> 'We were on open sea for eight days. The fourth day water started to enter the boat. At that time food and water was also finished (…) the fifth day we encountered a big European ship that was fishing for tuna. They gave us bread and milk and a little bit of water, but they refused to take us with them. We asked them the way for Nouadhibou (Mauritania), but they didn't want to tell us (…) When we continued our trip some people fell overboard and died. The conditions were hard and we really wanted to reach land as quickly as possible as everybody was afraid to die.'

---

[3] A year later the number of arrivals declined to 18,000 (UNHCR 2008).

[4] The exact number of informal migrants is unknown as most statistics are mainly based on published police estimates that base their numbers on deportations and regularizations. Consequently, migrants that have never been into contact with government officials are not incorporated in the statistics.

[5] A German newspaper reported of 1167 officially registered deaths. However, other sources estimated that 7,000 was a more realistic figure (*Der Standard*, January 16, 2007).

Figure 1   Sea-route from Dakar to the Canary Islands
               (source: Polfliet 2007)

In the end fear became reality when close to land the boat sank and 65 people died from drowning.

In the past, African migration flows towards Europe were mainly explained by macro-economic forces, whereby wage gaps and a lack of economic growth prospects in the home country were considered to be the main motivating factors for migration behaviour, a perspective that is also at the base of contemporary migration related policies (see for example Hatton & Williamson 2003). For example, European policy makers have adopted the idea that development aid will prevent African emigration towards Europe, with the rational that growing development in the country of origin takes away the economic incentive, which is considered to be the most important factor for these labour migrants (Wereld in Woorden 2006: 13). Furthermore, in a report from the Senegalese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFAS 2006) it was mentioned that economic factors, in addition to demographic ones, were considered to be the most push factors for people to make use of the sea-route towards the Canary Islands. However, when considering the high risks – besides physical also financial, psychological and social risks – the motivation and decisions of migrants to take part in this type of

informal migration need to be problematized. This asks for an exploration of the dynamics of informal migration decision-making processes that goes beyond pure economic explanation (Massey *et al.* 2005: 14).

Research questions

In the last decades migration related research has yielded several important new perspectives whereby migration behaviour is considered to be part of its social context. First of all, there is growing recognition on the influence of transnational ties that migrants maintain with their country of origin on subsequent migration flows. Second, there has been a shift in attention from the individual migrant as the decision-making unit towards the household, which has resulted in the incorporation of a relational perspective on the explanation of migration behaviour. My research incorporates these more relational approaches and asks whether risky informal migration flows can better be explained by analyzing migration behaviour in the social context of the migrant. This is done by a study of the recent risky informal migration route from Dakar (Senegal) to the Canary Islands, which is most often used by Senegalese, which has resulted in the following basic research question: What are the social and culturally related factors that shape the motivation and decision of undocumented migrants in urban Senegal to emigrate via risky sea-routes from Senegal via the Canary Islands to Europe? The more specific question derived from this is: *How are the motivations and decisions among Senegalese to make use of the sea-route from Senegal to the Canary Islands influenced by networks of social contacts, both at home and overseas?*

This question is differentiated into three sub-questions:
1) How is undocumented boat-migration from Senegal to the Canary Islands socially organized?
2) How do social networks, both at home and overseas, function? Subsequently, how do migrants themselves behave in the social structures and give meaning to them?
3) How do social networks, materially as well as immaterially, affect the different steps in the migration decision-making process?

The aim of this study being to identify specific factors that shape the motivations and decisions of informal migrants to take part in the risky sea-journey from Senegal to the Canary Islands, I took a (social) relational perspective on migration behaviour. Nevertheless, the *focus* is on the individual migrant, who is appreciated as an active agent, instead of depicting him as a passive player in the social structure that surrounds him.

Relevance

There are several reasons why informal boat-migration from Senegal to the Canary Islands is an interesting topic of research. First of all, the recent shift in focus from macro-economic to social explanatory factors of African international migration behaviour can produce some important insights in understanding historical as well as more recent migration flows (see also Andersson 2006: 378). By studying informal migration from a relational perspective I attempt to contribute to these developments by better understanding the impact of social relationships, including its associated cultural elements, on the migration decision-making process. In this way I want to go beyond reductionist economic cost-benefit models. Furthermore, with this study I want to contribute to empirical data on informal migration from West Africa to Europe, as many questions remain. Most research on the topic has focused on migration routes, estimations of migration flows and the organizational networks, often in relation to finding solutions for informal migration, while questions on the nature of (informal) migration flows are left unanswered (de Haas 2008: 47). By concentrating on the experiences and motives of the migrants themselves this research attempts to contribute to a better understanding of informal migration behaviour.

The study of Senegalese boat-migration flow towards the Canary Islands is of special interest as this is one of the most important modern day informal migration streams from West Africa to Europe. Because the focus is on the motivation and decisions of informal migrants, as well as on the organization of the migration flow, it has been of importance to be as close as possible at the source. Therefore, research has been conducted in Dakar, which enabled the collection of data from individual unsuccessful boat-migrants, meaning those who left the Senegalese shore by boat but who were not able to reach mainland Spain, as well as their family members. Although informal migration routes are subject to continuous change, understanding more about the motivations and decisions may contribute to a better understanding of successive migration flows.

Thesis outline

The thesis is divided into several parts. In the first chapter migration related explanatory models are outlined, whereby it is argued that economic micro and macro-level approaches alone cannot fully explain informal migration flows. In effect, a relational perspective on individual action will be introduced in which the need for the incorporation of social factors in the analysis of migration behaviour is suggested in order to come to a better understanding of migration behaviour. Chapter 2 zooms in on methodological choices that were made before and during the course of fieldwork as well as on several methodological prob-

lems that were encountered. By focusing on the economic and political situation in Senegal in 'Regional background and policy initiatives' (Chapter 3) Senegalese boat-migrants are placed in their geographical and political context and it is argued that economic and political factors alone cannot fully explain this informal migration flow. In addition, different policy initiatives are discussed. 'Organization and practices of informal migration' (Chapter 4) outlines the organizational part of informal boat-migration from Dakar. In addition, two varying case studies of unsuccessful boat-migrants are presented with a focus on their social context. In 'The decision making process in socio-cultural context' (Chapter 5), the process of informal decision-making is analyzed with reference to the case studies. In this chapter the focus is on the role played by different social networks in varying steps of the migration decision-making process. In the final chapter, the existing theoretical models are revisited with reference to the data from this study. The concluding argument holds that there is a need for more refined and sophisticated migration models, which leave more space for the individual migrant as an active agent.

2

Individual migration behaviour socially embedded

> Migration does not occur in a vacuum. People do not migrate because they must. We are not animals that have some deep-seated need to complete a circuit in response to some biological drive. Rather, humans migrate because they can. People make decisions to migrate in response to desires, lifestyles, resources, and needs. (Cohen 2004: 19)

In the early days of migration research, rational choice theory was most influential in trying to explain international migration behaviour. From this perspective it is argued that the migrant acts as a rational economic calculating agent independent of his/her social context. Another influential perspective comes from the so-called structuralists, who argue that global processes and country relations shape migration outcomes. In response to these under- and over-socialized explanatory models, a relational perspective was developed, which placed individual behaviour in its social context in order to better explain differential migration behaviour. After having outlined the concept of undocumented migration, I will zoom in on several theoretical approaches in the migration literature.

Conceptualizing international undocumented migration

International migration concerns the movement of persons across international borders with the intention to settle in another country for a period of at least one year (Muus 2001: 32). People can have varying motives for this action; migrants can be driven by a *survival motive,* an *improvement motive* or a combination of the two. The main difference lies in the ability to choose, whereby the first group

is forced to migrate, while the second group has a free choice to do so (van Wijk 2007: 25-26). Besides motives a further categorization is derived from the means to move across international borders with or without a legal travel document. This research focuses on *undocumented migrants*. The term in general refers to those persons who enter or remain in a country of which they are not citizen and for which they do not possess valid documents according to national laws. This then includes those who enter a country without valid travel documents, like those in the present study, but can also include migrants who stay in the host country after their valid travel documents have expired, as well as rejected asylum seekers (GCIM 2005: 32; Içduygu & Unalan 2001: 3). The majority of migrants who want to enter a country without valid travel documents have to rely on on-route assistance from informal facilitating networks during at least part of the journey.

The term 'undocumented migration' is not generally used. Instead, different appellations for this type of migration are circulating, which makes for varying connotations. For example, European policy makers usually seem to prefer the term 'illegal immigrants' to denote migrants who enter or stay in the country without legal papers in order to legitimize measures taken to tackle this kind of immigration by prevention or deportation after apprehension. Although in the legal-technical sense they may be right, in this thesis I prefer to use the term 'undocumented migrants' to stay away from the judicial field.

The micro- and macro-level

Migration as an economic rational choice outcome
The idea that improvement migrants move as a result of well-considered eco-nomic cost-benefit calculations has for a long time prevailed in the development of theoretical models that tried to explain international migration flows. This perspective suggests that future migrants mainly respond to economic differences between the country of origin and the country of destination as individual rati-onal agents and is 'based on several universal axioms such as the maximization of preferences of utility and the principle of strategic intentionality' (Long 2001: 15, who criticizes this approach). This classic economic push-pull framework was first postulated by Ravenstein in his work *The Laws of Migration* (1889), which' reasoning later studies have largely followed. For example, in the *neo-classical model* it is proposed that migration is a consequence of calculated differences in the supply and demand for labour and a way of establishing equi-librium between the country of origin, where there is a high supply of labour, and the receiving country, where there is a high demand of (low skilled) labour (Massey *et al.* 2005: 8). It is assumed that emigration will occur when expected results show a positive net return, which are mainly based on income differentials

in the home country and the country of destination. This also means that in the long run international migration will disappear when labour wage differentials are absent (van Wijk 2007: 27).

Even though economic disparities are important predictors for migration flows, they cannot by themselves explain why labour migration occurs, and more important, why it does not occur everywhere. After all, a large proportion of the impoverished population stays at home (Cohen 2004: 4). Furthermore, migrants are not homogenous and different countries (and regions within countries) with a similar level of economic development show different levels of migration. Moreover, most international economic migrants do not come from the poorest countries in the world (Massey *et al.* 2005: 10, 18). Especially for risky migration routes, there has to be more at stake than pure rational economic cost-benefit calculations. This asks for the inclusion of secondary factors that are neglected in these economic models, which would also open up the possibility for the prediction of the origin and changes of migration flows (see also van Wijk 2007: 27).

Structural models
Besides rational choice models, a theoretical approach can be found that attempts at explaining international migration flows by mainly focusing on historical macro-level processes. One of the most influential has been the *push-pull theory,* which assumes that bad social, political and/or economic environments in the home country (the push factors) motivate people to migrate. At the same time they are attracted by prospective positive elements in another place, i.e. high incomes, a safe living environment and a stable political climate (the pull factors) (van Wijk 2007: 26-27; Massey *et al.* 2005: 13-14). This approach draws mainly from the *dependency* and *world systems theory*, which suggests that global expansion of the capitalist system led to international migration flows (Massey *et al.* 2005: 34-36). Another model that emphasizes the importance of structural factors is the *migration systems approach,* which focuses on the role of historical, economic and political relations between countries (van Wijk 2007: 31). One of the consequences of this structural thinking was a shift of the unit of analysis from the individual migrant to the global market and to political and economic policies (Brettell 2000: 103).

Although this structural perspective has some explanatory value on the macro level, it cannot fully explain international migration flows. Where micro-economic explanatory models fall short in integrating structural factors in the analysis, this macro-level model portrays migrants as passive agents, who blindly react to world capitalist systems. In this way the structural approach does not provide insights into the experience and motivation of the individual migrant. In

addition, these models do not leave much room for the explanation of migration selectivity. In other words, why do some people migrate, while others do not (van Wijk 2007: 33; Brettell 2000: 103)?

An actor-oriented perspective on migration action

Individual action socially embedded

A general weakness of the above-mentioned models is exactly their negligence of each other's' reasoning. In the rational choice perspective the focus is too much on the individual, while structuralism underestimates the individual power to act. From the 1970s onwards, Giddens has voiced criticism on these micro- and macro-level models of thinking and developed in response *the structuration theory*. Stones (2005: 14), revising this theory two decades later, argued that according to Giddens,

> [S]ubjectivism uproots agents from their socio-cultural context, treating them as de-racinated, free-floating individuals, whereas objectivism treats them so derisively that they sink without trace, conceptualized as if they lack the autonomy to cause even the slightest ripple of disturbance on a social surface determined wholly by powerful and impersonal systemic tide.

The structuration theory basically implied that there is a dialectical relation between individual action (agency) and social relations (structure), whereby agency should be understood as people's ability to *do* something. This action draws upon their knowledge of the structural context and is guided by power relations, meanings and norms. In this sense they are dependent on the system. However, at the same time, their actions, with their unintended outcomes, also reproduce structure (Giddens 1984: 3-19; 1979: 55).[1] Structure than refers to rules, which constrain the agent in his/her power to act, but also enables the act of those who possess more power. In this theory of structuration, Giddens (1984: 178) considers human beings to be knowledgeable *rational agents* who act within an enabling and constraining *structural context*. In effect, social forces, when taking into account the motives and goals that underlie specific questions, sometimes can make a person unable to resist these forces. On the other hand, structure provides resources, whereby human beings are enabled to experience a relative sense of freedom as it gives them the ability to affect change. Yet, this depends on the time-space dissociation: 'the greater the institutions bite into time and space – the more resistant they are to manipulation or change by any in-dividual agent' (Ibid.: 171). Power is thus an essential element of structure and refers to a person's ability to act otherwise, which means that a person over whom power is wielded could have acted otherwise had this power not been

---

[1] Giddens (1984: 19) has called this the *duality of structure.*

exercised, thereby giving all human beings a certain relative autonomy (Lukes 1977: 6-7).

Granovetters' (1985) model of '*social embeddedness*' can be linked to Giddens' theory of structuration. The central idea is that all human action is purposive and embedded in ongoing systems of social relations (Ibid.: 487). Rather than viewing social structures as external of human beings, theorists like Giddens and Granovetter argue for the existence of a mutual dependency of structure and agency, whereby people for a great part understand their surroundings and the circumstances of their action (Giddens 1979: 71). As human beings are rational agents they calculate the risks of the outcome of their future act in respect to the likelihood of the sanctions they might face. In addition, they may be prepared to submit to them as a price to be paid for achieving a particular end (Lukes 1977: 87). This means that by incorporating social factors in the analysis of human action, i.e., power, status, expectations etc., in addition to economic motivations, behaviour that might seem irrational can in fact be very sensible.

This line of thinking on human action has had its impact on the study of migration. As the preceding micro- and macro-level theories failed to explain the origin and changes in migration flows, researchers in the field of (undocumented) migration started to incorporate the structure-agency paradigm in their analysis, which led to a shift on the relative importance of non-economic over economic factors. In this process two influential models were developed: The social network theory and the collective action model.

Social network theory
The first model that derived from the social actor-oriented perspective mainly focuses on a person's membership in migrant networks. These networks are considered to be a set of ties between the former migrant, non-migrants and migrants in the country of origin and destination, based on shared characteristics. This is integrated in the *social network theory*[2] whereby it is assumed that social networks are the binding factor between relational decisions and structural forces that influence international migration as they lower the (expected) risks and costs of movement, while at the same time the expected net outcomes increase. The presence of these networks can lead to a process of *chain migration*,[3] whereby every new migrant creates social capital that is assists in reducing the risk of movement for future migrants. In this way, the odds of migration increase and eventually make it virtually risk free to move (Massey *et al.* 2005: 42-43, 56; Staring 2001: 9-10).

---

[2] The theory is not restricted to the field of migration, but has been of importance in many fields of social research.
[3] This is also called cumulative causation.

Most attention in migration related literature has been paid to networks based on shared ethnic origins. These networks of solidarity are said to provide new social connections and employment in the country of destination for new migrants, by which they are less prone to exploitation. At the same time, information on opportunities, transportation and initial accommodation in the receiving country is provided (Choldin 1973: 164; Winters *et al.* 2001: 29-30).[4] This has led to the argument that future migrants are more prone to migrate to countries where they are able to make use of these networks (Choldin 1973; Padilla 2006). Moreover, it is suggested that migrants' dependency on transnational networks increases with the risks attached to migration (Staring 2001: 3; Massey *et al.* 2001: 1275).

Social capital
The suggestion that migrants can make use of the resources of their migrant networks before and after migration, as well as en route stems from a social capital approach. In this model it is argued that a person is able to make access claims on scarce resources by virtue of membership in social networks or other social structures (Portes 1998: 6). Here we can find two lines of thinking on the maintenance of social ties and the functioning of access claims. Instrumentalists like Coleman, Portes and Putman consider access to resources to be a strategic investment in which reciprocity of the contacts is of central importance. This means that people can make access claims by deliberately investing in cultural and economic resources by which they maintain social relations (Ibid.: 4). Bourdieu voiced criticism against this instrumentalist approach and argued that social capital is the whole of resources that result from membership in a group with a common name (family, lineage etc.). He further suggested that the volume of social capital is based on the network of the ego he/she can effectively mobilize, as well as on the amount of capital his/her network members possess. In addition, Bourdieu reasoned that people do not always deliberately maintain social relations for future benefits, while access claims also depend on the position and type of network of the person who makes these claims (Pels 1989: 132-133, 18).

In the social network model on migration behaviour the instrumentalist perspective on social capital dominates, as it assumes that future migrants are able to make access claims on the resources of their migrant contacts, which is the result of deliberate investment in these relationships by the non-migrant for future benefits (Staring 2001: 12). Two types of resources that can be derived from migratory networks and which can influence migration decision-making processes

---

[4]   In the 1980s this was called the *information hypothesis,* meaning that strong networks encourage and direct migration behaviour by making potential migrants aware of job and housing conditions (Hugo 1981: 200).

are discussed in the migration literature. On one hand direct assistance can reduce the costs of migration by provided money, housing, food, and transportation (Engbersen 2004: 31). On the other hand migrant networks can provide information to 'update their subjective distribution of returns from migration' (Winters *et al.* 2001: 161).

As this model on social capital accumulation mainly focuses on the equal distribution of scarce resources, several questions about the functioning of social networks and migration decision-making remain. For example, it can be questioned whether migrant networks always provide support for future migrants. As the focus has mainly been on the positive effects of social capital, negative elements of 'competition' and 'exclusion' are largely ignored, although they can be of great importance in understanding the functioning of social networks (Long 2001: 133; Hardwick 2003: 164; Portes 1998: 15).[5]

Strong and weak ties

Social capital can come from various transnational networks, based on different common identifying elements, i.e. kinship, community, ethnicity, religious affiliation etc. In migration related literature most attention is paid to the role of ethnic and family networks. Kinship relations in this field mainly refer to nuclear and extended family members and are therefore categorized as strong ties, characterized by long-lasting contacts, emotional intensity, intimacy and reciprocity. Close friends are also spoken of as strong ties due to their similar relationship characteristics. Although it is suggested that strong ties are the most important source for reciprocal support, the high levels of trust which are inherent in these relations is also their weakness as it might isolate people from outside information and support (Staring 2001: 14-15). Weak ties include friendship relations, colleagues and acquaintances and are often excluded from migration-related studies as they are assumed to have only a minor influence on future migration action (van Wijk 2007: 28; Boyd 1989: 649). Nevertheless, Massey *et al.* (2001: 1295) have argued that networks based on kinship do not necessarily have to be the most salient in shaping migration behaviour. Instead, they suggest that friendship and acquaintance networks may be equally or better predictors of migration. Wilson (1998: 401), in a study on Mexican immigrants in the U.S., found empirical data on the varying functions of strong and weak networks and suggested that strong ties provided more social capital in the form of direct assistance from the migrants to their community members, while new information came from weak contacts. Granovetter (1973) already mentioned this 'strength of weak ties' in the 1970s, with the argument that these ties have the character and ability of

---

[5]   Engbersen *et al.* (2000: 3) found for example that undocumented migrants in the Netherlands were excluded from migrant networks as they could not reciprocate support due to their status.

connecting different networks (*local bridges*). These findings suggest that different networks provide varying types of social capital.

With respect to information distribution a distinction is made between latent and direct information. The first comes from the observation (non-contact) of migrants and results in common knowledge about migration (the folk-wisdom). It is suggested that the value of this kind of information depends on whether a message is fully expressed and on its source. Direct information in contrast, is transmitted through contact with the source. Media can also be a source of information on migration, but with the argumentation that this information is equally distributed among (urban) households, it is not expected to explain a differential outcome in informal migration action (Winters *et al.* 2001: 161-162). In addition to family and friendship contacts, previous research found that two other networks can influence migration behaviour, those related to the organization of the trip and religious networks.

Smuggling networks
Those who want to reach the Canary Islands from Senegal generally need some kind of assistance, which is either provided by social networks of the potential migrant or by more organized networks. In migration literature the latter is referred to as either human smuggling or human trafficking networks. The last implies that 'migration is not entirely voluntary and the intent invariably exploitative' (UNODC 2006: 1). Instead, human smuggling, which is a relatively new concept in the (international) jurisdiction and social sciences, refers to the assistance of person X by person Y during at least part of the migration journey (van Wijk 2007: 49). Although this assistance arises from profit seeking for which high amounts of money are asked, it is based on mutual consent and advantages and therefore it does not necessarily involve exploitation (Içduygu & Toktas 2002: 29; GCIM 2005: 39).

Not much is known about the relationship between organizers and clients on different undocumented migration routes, besides that they are short lasting, unique, formal and distant (Staring 2001: 16). In several studies a relation was found between the motivation to migrate and the organizational network, for example as a result of the false or too optimistic picture of Europe human smugglers give in order to recruit clients (see Schloenhardt 2003: 18; Chin 1999: 26). Nonetheless, studies on the influence of organizational networks on migration behaviour are scarce.

Religious communities
Previous studies have indicated the influential role of religious communities and their leaders on formal migration behaviour in Senegal (see for example, Scha-

pendonk & van Moppes 2007c; Riccio 2000, 2001a, 2001b, 2005). These leaders, who also possess great political power, are called *marabouts.* Their influence has especially been proven to be of importance among members of the Mouride (*Mouridiyya)* brotherhood, which brings forth the largest group of transmigrants.[6] These migrants move back and forth between Senegal and, in the majority of cases, Italy to practice trade. The role of these religious networks mainly stems from the presence of a large transnational network and social capital they provide for their members (i.e., support in establishing businesses, and mobility and temporary settlement in the country of destination). Moreover, in these religious networks emigration is considered to be part of a training experience. However, this form of circulatory migration is only provided for the members of the Mouride brotherhood and is directed to migration with legal documents (Schapendonk & van Moppes 2007c; Riccio 2000). It therefore needs to be explored if there is a relationship between these religious networks and undocumented migration.

In the present study the content and strength of different types of social networks will be analyzed in order to better understand how different types of relations influence informal migration motivation and decisions. With respect to content it will be asked what the positive and negative effects of embeddedness in migrant networks are on boat-migration behaviour of Senegalese men, whereby it is of importance to understand the significance and nature of the resources that can be mobilized from different sets of social relations as well as how these social ties are maintained. In addition to the significance of the different roles of migrant networks in undocumented migration decision-making processes, the relationships *vis-à-vis* religious groups and smugglers will be incorporated in the analysis.

Collective decision-making
Social network models overwhelmingly focus on how migrant networks abroad affect migration outcomes and as a result ignore the role of social relations in the country of origin. Since the 1970s, the *new economics of migration* approach has made attempts to incorporate the home country relationships in explaining migration behaviour, by shifting the unit of analysis from the individual to the household (Grasmuck & Pessar 1991: 15). Although economic cost-benefit calculations are still at the base of this model, it dissociates itself from the idea that migration behaviour is a purely individual process. Instead it is argued that the decision to migrate is part of a larger unit than the individual, in most cases the household. In these larger units migration behaviour is collectively motivated in

---

6   In Senegal the majority of Muslims is part of a religious brotherhood, the three others being *Tidianyya, Quadryya* and *Layenne* (Riccio 2000: 3).

order to minimize economic risks and maximize wage-earnings on the household level (Massey *et al.* 2005: 21; Curran & Saguy 2001: 60). 'The household' can therefore be defined as '(…) those who live together, but also those who are residing elsewhere and whose principal commitments and obligations are to that household, and who are expected to return to that household in the future' (Içduygu & Unalan 2001: 12). Hence, migration is in this model regarded as a (transnational) household strategy, whereby migrants overseas retain linkages with the ones in the country of origin for the benefit of the household (Schoorl *et al.* 2001: 4; Boyd 1989: 643; MacGaffey & Bazenguissa-Ganga 2000: 134).

Networks of obligations
It is suggested that members of a household act according to *networks of obligations.* This refers to the expectations people have of each other as a result of the social position they occupy, expressed in 'common sense' meanings (Mitchell 1973: 13). This in turn relates to norms and beliefs that are associated with these perceptions of which the actors themselves are knowledgeable (Giddens 1984). The expectations, norms and obligations are differently divided among members based on ones position in the household that depends on age, sex, and kin relation (Harbison 1981: 241). In the new economics of migration model it is assumed that these relationships of obligation enable household members to select and encourage another household member to migrate with the expectation that remittances will be distributed among the remaining household members. In effect, it is the household as a larger unit that mobilizes the resources and support for the trip (Grasmuck & Pessar 1991: 15; Boyd 1989: 645-646).[7] In a recent study on international migration from Cameroon to Germany, Fleischer (2006) emphasized that the extended family and kin networks have a major influence on migration behaviour as a result of the extended family's expectations, obligations and responsibilities on its members. Her data showed that authority figures in the household and extended family, i.e. parents, cousins etc. are the most important decision-makers when it comes to migration, influenced by their expectations of modernity and 'the prospects of consuming imported foreign goods' (Ibid.: 11). This suggests that larger units than the individual migrants do not decide to send a person abroad out of a means to minimize risks, but rather to achieve social upward mobility. This is often related to the process of *relative deprivation*, meaning that the desire for an increase in income is not (only) caused by 'real' poverty, but by a comparison to the income of other wealthier (migrant) households, a so-called 'relative' poverty (Massey *et al.* 2005: 26). In addition, the authoritarian decision-makers in Fleischer's study were the ones who held access

---

[7] This also explains why migration as a household strategy does not occur at all times, for example in families for whom the economic costs are too high (Boyd 1989: 645-646).

to information about the journey and the country of destination and created networks for the future migrant to make the move to Germany possible (Fleischer 2006: 26). In this sense her study confirms the idea that the basic unit of decision-making is a larger unit, in this case the extended family, rather than the individual migrant him/herself (see also Grasmuck & Pessar 1991: 15).

In the present study the role of other household members on the decision to participate in the risky sea-migration from Senegal to the Canary Islands will be analyzed. In order to better understand their influencing role, I will zoom in on the functioning of family relationships and the related networks of obligations. Moreover, the adoption of an actor-oriented perspective will enable me to understand how individuals act within these networks of norms and power relations, as persons '(…) do not simply respond to the imperatives of cultural norms and values, or to the dictates of dominant discourses' (Long 2001: 4). In other words, relationship structures of obligations and expectations do not automatically lead to certain action, but, dependent on the constraints and enabling factors inherent in specific social structures, individuals have some leeway to act and negotiate their position vis-à-vis other contacts. In addition, this study takes the organization of the sea-journey into account in order to indicate from which networks information and direct assistance (i.e., finances) are derived that enable boat-migration.

Risk

The abovementioned theoretical models have been mainly applied to formal migration behaviour. One important aspect that in most cases distinguishes undocumented migration from documented migration, and which characterizes the boat-migration from Senegal to the Canary Islands, is the element of *risk* involved in the move. Besides expected financial, social and psychological dangers, a more humane risk attached to this type of migration is the chance to lose one's life during the trip.

Considering that human security is of primary concern to every person and that human being are rational actors, who are aware (to a certain extent) of their decisions and related perceived costs and benefits of future outcomes, questions can be raised on the motivation to participate in the high-risk boat-migration. As Massey *et al.* (2005: 13-14) argued, an improvement in the economic situation alone cannot completely explain the decision and motivation in the case of risky migration. Instead, people who migrate without documents need a very strong motive. However, there is a lack of scholarly attention for the way undocumented migrants conceptualize risk, and assess and understand risk-taking (Hernández-Carretero 2008: 1; Lupton 2006: 21).

In the social sciences, risk is often conceptualized as the action that can have possible positive or negative results and assessed in relation to human experience, by asking questions on how risk is perceived and understood. Aven & Renn (2009) suggest that risk assessment is based on two dimensions, uncertainty and severity, which applies to behaviour or an event as well as to its outcomes. In effect, personal and social characteristics influence how a person experiences the uncertainty and severity of the event and its consequences. This therefore means that risk is inherently related to the person who perceives it and his/her environment. This then means that in order to understand a person's perception of risk we have to focus not only on the individual assessment but also on the way the experience of risk is socially embedded.

The inclusion of the factor of risk might mean that an adjustment has to be made to the new economics of migration model. For example, it is suggested that in migration flows in which there is a high risk, households are less likely to send migrants abroad as they aim at maximizing returns of migration (Winters *et al.* 2001: 163). However, a recent study on informal migration from Senegal to the Canary Islands indicated that the majority of the parents of the informal boat-migrants supported the activities of their children (Mbow & Penda 2006: 49). In the present study it will be explored how Senegalese boat-migrants as well as their family members assess and perceive different types of risk-taking that are inherent in the boat-migration. Specifically it asks questions on how these migrants deal with possible negative physical outcomes of the trip and how this relates to their motivation and decision-making process to participate in the boat-migration.

The research focus

The over- and under-socialization of the micro- and macro-level models cannot on their own explain migration flows (and changes therein). Different authors like Giddens and Granovetter have provided renewed perspectives on behaviour, which has been a starting point for several more recent actor-oriented models in migration related literature. They have suggested that individual behaviour is embedded in a system of rules and resources, governed by power relations, which can both constrain and enable intended behaviour of individuals. In other words, their focus is on the strength of social forces on individual action. Two models that followed from this line of thinking in migration related research; the social network theory and the theory of new economics of migration that both focus on the embeddedness of migration behaviour in social relationships. The first mainly looks at the role of migrant networks, while in the second it is suggested that the household should be the unit of analysis.

It is expected that this actor-oriented approach can provide important insights for the study on undocumented migration. First of all, it will help to explain how the undocumented migration flow from Senegal to the Canary Islands is organized. Second, it will be explored how the act of undocumented migration is embedded in different sets of social relations of the potential boat-migrant. Although the action of human beings is embedded in social structures, governed by resources and rules, actors '(...) are capable (even within severely restricted social and personal space) of processing (self-consciously or otherwise) their lived experiences and act upon them' (Long 2001: 18). In other words, actors do not blindly follow a pre-scribed ideological script but rather find ways to monitor their own actions with reference to socially learned experience. Based on this idea, my study focuses on the experiences, perceptions and actions of the migrants themselves, instead of merely describing the social structure in which they act. In this way I attempt to come to a better understanding of undocumented migration behaviour. In order to achieve this, different sets of social relationships and their varying influences on undocumented migration behaviour are integrated in the research: Kin, friendship, and acquaintance relationships in the home country as well as abroad, as well as facilitators of the trip.

3

Researching undocumented migration

Migration by boat from Senegal to the Canary Islands is characterized by informality and secrecy. In an early stage of my fieldwork I discovered that quantitative research tools could not provide the necessary conditions to come up with reliable data in this specific research context. Rather, elements of informality and secrecy ask for confidence and relationships of trust, which can only be established by long lasting personal contact between the informant and the researcher. Ethnographic research methods, inherent in anthropological fieldwork, have proven to be suitable for the establishment of rapport and confidence. In what follows I will detail the methodological considerations of this study. I will start by elaborating on the field setting and the informants, after which I will proceed to the research design. I will end this chapter with a discussion of the methodological problems I encountered.

Research location

The primary research location for this study has been Jaraax, an area of larger Dakar which borders the sea. This suburb of Dakar is characterized by its high population density,[1] its poor infrastructure and lack of waste management. The majority of its inhabitants identify themselves as *Lébou*,[2] an ethnic group that for many years economically relied on the fishing industry (Mbow & Tamba 2006:

---

[1]   39,998 persons on an area of 1,297 hectares (Mbow & Tamba 2006: 41).
[2]   The *Lebou* are one of the ethnic groups in Senegal. Other, larger ethnic groups are the Wolof (43.3%), Pular (23.8%), Serer (14.7%), Jola (3.7%), Mandinka (3%) and Soninke (1.1%) (CIA 2008).

41). This is still visible every morning on the beach where a crowd of mostly older women sell the daily catch to male traders and local customers. However, during the last decade the revenues from the fishing activity have decreased, which mostly has been the result of the inability of the Senegalese fishing industry to compete with the growing presence of large European fishing vessels along the North and West African coasts (U.S. Embassy Dakar 2001).[3] Consequently, nowadays many young men from Jaraax have shifted their activities to manual work, which has resulted in a growing amount of ateliers for carpenters, cabinet-makers and tailors in the neighbourhood.

As Jaraax used to be a key node in the boat-migration network in 2006 (Mbow & Tamba 2006), it became an obvious location for further study.[4] In addition, and not unimportant, in this neighbourhood I met some first informants to whom I was introduced by one of my Senegalese informants in the Netherlands. The availability of a network of informants proved essential as during the research process it turned out that finding contacts was difficult.

Pikine and Guediawaye, also suburbs of Dakar, are the two other areas where I carried out fieldwork. They do not connect directly to the Atlantic Ocean and are located further from the city centre (see Figure 2 for research locations), and finding informants in these areas proved to be more difficult. Although economic activity is not directed to fishing in these areas, these suburbs do resemble Jaraax by their bad infrastructure, poverty and overpopulation.

The informants

The core data was collected among 16 Senegalese young men between the age of 23 and 44 years old,[5] who had at least once tried to reach the Canary Islands by boat in the last three years. These men either failed to reach the Canary Islands due to premature return or were repatriated upon arrival, and therefore I will call them in the rest of the thesis '*unsuccessful boat-migrants*'. As I mentioned before, finding respondents proved to be difficult. Due to the sensitive and illicit character of the practice of boat-migration many people did not want to talk about their present or past undocumented migration attempts with others. In addition, boat-migration stands high on the national and international political agenda with police and marine corpses being instructed to arrest those involved in the activity. As those in the preparatory phase also did not want to speak about their plans to others for mystical reasons, which I will explain later, and as I did

---

3   The presence of European vessels has been allowed by Senegal's external fishing agreement with the European Union (U.S. Embassy Dakar 2001: 2).

4   At the time of fieldwork the points of departure had moved further south.

5   This was the age at the time of interviewing, with an average of 30.5 years.

Figure 2   Research locations
            (source: Toubab.com 2008)

not want to put any of my informants in danger, it turned out that speaking to those who were in the preparatory phase of leaving the country by boat seemed practically impossible. As a result, researching those who had already made the passage seemed a more logical and pragmatic option, which also enabled me to gain insight into the stages of the decision-making process of those who had made multiple attempts.

Access to informants was provided by the *snowball* method by which the interviewed informant introduced me to a friend or acquaintances for future interviews. This had several advantages. First of all, once I had established a good relationship with the informant, he would tell his friends, whom I could interview, that I was trustworthy. This eased subsequent contact. For example, one of my key informants belonged to a network of informal boat-migrants and introduced me to many of his friends and colleagues that had, like him, tried to make the sea-passage. As he told his friends that I was trustworthy, I could build up relationships of confidence with them more easily than would have been the case otherwise. Especially in research among activities that lie outside the law and for which one has to rely on relationships of trust, 'snowballing' can be regarded as the best sampling method. Another advantage of this method was the possibility it provided me to cross-check information among different informants that belonged to the same network (see also MacGaffey & Bazenguissa-Ganga 2000: 24).

The majority of my informants belonged to the work and friendship networks of Ibrahima, among who several were, like him, working in the cleaning business. Other labour sectors in which my informants were working included retail trade in cement and fish, and small commerce in addition to their regular jobs.[6] One of my informants was running his own barbershop and only one was unemployed. Thirteen of my informants either lived or worked in Jaraax, while one lived in Guediawaye and two others in Pikine. Seven of the respondents were married and had children at the time of interviewing and time they made the attempt to leave for Europe by boat. The rest of the men were single or had a girlfriend. Besides this, most of the respondents were born in Dakar and left school at a young age to do practical education at the workplace or to start working. The majority of them was Muslim, with only two being Christians, which reflects the country's religious composition. Most come from polygamous households and have at least four siblings. All of the informants still lived at their parental homes at the time of interviewing. With respect to their migration history it can be said that ten of the respondents tried to leave Senegal by boat once, four twice and two up to three times.

In an effort not to expose my informants I decided to use pseudonyms, even though the chances of police arrest would not have been very likely as they are no more in the process of preparing for departure by boat. In addition, all of my informants indicated that I could use their names, as it are their stories that have to be told. However, especially in studies among informal activities I believe it is necessary for the researcher to be as careful about the identity of the informants as possible (MacGaffey & Bazenguissa-Ganga 2000: 26).

Research design

Ethnographic research and grounded theory
The use of ethnographic research methods was motivated by the informal nature of the topic and the need for confidence between the researcher and the informants. Even though many people have been involved in boat-migration activities, especially in Jaraax, it still is a topic that people do not talk about in public. Anthropological methods are very well suited for this kind of research setting, as it leaves room for building long lasting relationships of trust. I found out myself that the use of quantitative methods proved difficult in this study setting when I conducted structured household interviews among family members of 'successful' boat-migrants, meaning those who actually had made it to Europe through the Canary Islands. It soon became clear that the respondents gave so-

---

[6] In general small commerce is not considered as a job in Senegal and in most cases not included in employment statistics.

cially desirable answers and occasionally did not want to answer certain delicate questions. I learned that this was the result of me not having a trustworthy relationship with them. Instead, the only possible way of gaining valuable insight into people's decision-making processes was to spend a lot of time with them. Moreover, as different family members do not always share the same opinion about boat-migration, the researcher has to be sensitive to family relations and has to pay special attention to who knows what. I discovered during the many hours I spent with my informants and their family members, which persons knew what about the informal migration activity of their relative and this information proved to be of paramount importance in order not to damage any of the informants in front of their relatives.

Quantitative research tools would have been appropriate when the aim of this research was to describe the social structure in which the informal migrants find themselves. However, I focused on social and cultural elements that shape individual migration action, in other words, how migrants behave in the social structure of constraints and opportunities. By making use of an actor-oriented approach I was able to uncover by which intentions, motives, beliefs and rules people were guided in their decisions. In the words of Flyvbjerg (2006: 229):

> (…) from (…) an action-oriented perspective, it is often more important to clarify the deeper causes behind a given problem and its consequences than to describe the symptoms of the problem and how frequently they occur.

Therefore, this research asked for long term and close contact with the respondents in order to become familiar with the meanings in social behaviour (Mitchell 1973: 15). This is of special importance as the objective of this study has been to interpret the social processes and cultural logics that lie underneath the individual act to migrate by boat.

The data is interpreted with the aim of building theory through the *grounded theory* approach, with an awareness of the existing literature before engaging in the fieldwork, instead of merely generating models from the collected data. This is for two reasons. First, the existing literature can guide the research design in some ways, especially when it comes to stating the research question. In this way the problem of being overwhelmed with data during the fieldwork can be avoided as existing theory brings structure to the data collection. Second, rather than merely repeating previous studies and wasting time on information gathering that could have been found in secondary sources during the pre-fieldwork stage, having knowledge on existing literature makes it more likely to something to scientific knowledge (Pidgeon & Henwood 2004: 633; Fox 2004: 311, 313).[7]

---

[7] Pigeon & Henwood (2004: 634) use the term *theoretical agnosticism* to illustrate the relationship between the research and the pre-existing literature. This means that the researcher should be aware of

In practice the grounded theory approach means a constant comparison between the literature, the data and the generated models, until the moment of theoretical saturation has been achieved, whereby more data does not add anything new to the developed theory (Gasson 2004; Pidgeon & Henwood 2004; Strauss & Corbin 1998).

Case study design

A case study design was chosen because it enabled me to make a detailed study of the decision-making process and to uncover its key elements. It has also been useful in situating the decision-making process in its social context, as it enabled the identification of social norms, values and interests on which the undocumented migration decision-making process and relationships are based. The use of case studies leaves room for subjective criteria in analyzing network mechanisms, which can be of great importance. For example, a relation that scores high on objective criteria (for example the amount of gifts) might score low on the importance for the informant and therefore the tie might not be of such great significance as otherwise would have been concluded (Boissevain 1974: 46). Furthermore, by "observing" the social system and at the same time comparing this to the informants' (sentimental) statements, I was able to analyze 'the discrepancy between people's beliefs and professed acceptance of certain norms on the one hand and their actual behaviour on the other' (van Velsen 1967: 143), which allowed me to show individual migration behaviour in relation to the structural norms that govern this behaviour (Ibid.: 145).

The focus on actual behaviour in addition to structural norms has created space for the explanation of heterogeneity, rather than merely reporting the dominant case-scenario (systems of prescribed behaviour) and resulted in the presentation of two concrete accounts of undocumented migration. These selected cases were chosen because they were interesting in dealing with the same decision-making process, but show two different models of behaviour and social relations that give the reader an idea of the data upon which the generalizations are based.[8] Furthermore, this enables the reader to visualize the whole process through its diversity (van Velsen 1967: 134).

The selected cases are not just two unique situations of undocumented decision-making processes, even though numerical generalizations do not derive

---

broad scale theories in the research discipline, while she has to avoid being guided, or rather constrained, by particular theoretical positions.

[8] The comparison of different ways of individuals' relations to society and patterns of behaviour is borrowed from Chanfrault-Duchet (1991: 84).

from them.[9] Although quantitative methods can reveal the presence of two or more characteristics, its statistical inference does not say anything about the logical relation between the different variables. The contribution of case studies for scientific knowledge lies in their ability to make these kind of causal inferences, which is '(…) the process by which the analyst draws conclusions about the essential linkage between two or more characteristics in terms of some systematic explanatory schema – some set of theoretical propositions' (Mitchell 2006: 33). This means that the selected cases, which show diversity, negative instances and detail, are at the basis of theoretical abstractions, whereby extrapolation is based on logical inference (Mitchell 1973: 200).

Social network analysis
As this study deals with social relations and their influence on migrants' behaviour, a social network analysis has been used. Social contacts can provide both constraints and opportunities for (social) behaviour, which includes the existence of normatively guided, as well as the 'structurally determined limits of behaviour' (Wellman 1983: 163). The ties that make up the social networks are categorized according to strength, which is 'a combination of the amount of time, the emotional intensity, the intimacy (mutual confiding), and the reciprocal services' (Granovetter 1973: 1361) of the tie. Although Granovetter does not give any further operational measures for these factors, it can be roughly argued that strong ties include kin family members and close friends, while friends, friends of friends, acquaintances and colleagues can be regarded as weak ties. In this study the information (opportunity) and normative (constraint) content of social ties are analyzed in order to understand their influence on the decision-making process. Opportunities can be distributed through information, for example on migration possibilities and the situation at the country of destination, while normative content refers to the expectations that social contacts have of each other (Mitchell 1973: 9-12). In addition, I will also collect data on the size and structure of different (transnational) networks in order to show which elements affect informal migration behaviour.

Life history and observation
In order to present the social processes and cultural logics upon which the decision-making process is based, an in-depth analysis of the respondents' behaviour and norm evaluation is required. Life histories proved to be an adequate tool for this. For example, MacGaffey & Bazenguissa-Ganga (2000) have used

---

[9]   In the process of statistical generalizations the researcher aims at drawing conclusions about the related existence of two or more characteristics that are found in a certain population of which the researcher takes a sample.

this method to illuminate social processes that condition the lives of clandestine Congolese traders. Life histories can be used as a means to explore social structural elements, by which the researcher learns about the personal histories of the respondents, the content of the linkages in their social networks and the functioning of informal networks.

The core data comes from in-depth interviews with unsuccessful boat-migrants, which in most cases lasted several hours. After a few orientating talks a topic list for further interviews developed. I started the interviews by inviting the respondent to speak freely about the period before his (first) departure and the trip itself. After this I started to ask more specific questions by which I went through different stages of the migration process, from the preparation of the trip to the actual trip and the return. Subsequently, the informants' migration networks were discussed, his expectations about life in Europe, and finally some issues on his personal background. With several key informants multiple interviews were conducted. These open-ended interviews have been successful in addressing in-depth how the boat-migrants experienced the decision to migrate by boat and to get detailed information about the organization of the trip. It appeared that after sixteen life histories among the unsuccessful boat-migrants knowledge was saturated and a pattern of socio-structural relations had developed (see also Bertaux 1981: 37).

The majority of the interviews were conducted in the informants' private quarters, with no other persons around besides the informant and me. They were all but one conducted in French and afterwards transcribed in English.[10] I made use of pen and paper for writing down notes during the interviews to secure the anonymity of the respondent, as the illicit nature of the topic might have prohibited respondents from talking openly while using a voice recorder.

In addition to life histories I conducted semi-participant observation by participating in the daily life activities of my informants (see also Bleek 1987: 315). I spend many hours at peoples' house and workplace, drank tea with my informants and had many informal conversations.[11] Participating in these social gatherings proved to be very useful in building up trust with my informants and in understanding their everyday life situations and social structures (the opportunities and constraints of social relations). For example, by observing parent-child interactions, the structures of authority revealed themselves to me, which I could later relate to the informants' own narratives. In this way behaviour and the spoken word could be compared. This also showed the deviance from relational norms and the conditions under which the informant acted out agency (see also

---

[10] The one interview that was conducted in Wolof was translated by a Senegalese friend, who I had taken with me to the field.
[11] The afternoon tea is an important social gathering which can take several hours.

Jenkins 1994: 438). Furthermore, as the decision-making on migration is a (social) process rather than a one-moment event that can be directly observed, the observations were directed to the outcome of the decisions instead of the intentions of the boat-migrants.

Besides these research methods, information was derived from informal talks and interviews with friends and family members of the informants that opened up the possibility to observe and better understand the social mechanisms, while at the same time the information given by the informants could be cross-checked.

At the end of the fieldwork period I conducted several structured household interviews among family members of 'successful' boat-migrants in an attempt to better understand the influence of different household members on the decision making process of the boat-migrant. Due to a lack of time I was only able to carry out four of these interviews with two members of the household (at least one parent and a brother or sister).[12] Sometimes practical issues prevented me from interviewing people one by one, when more than one person was present at the time of interviewing. For example, when interviewing the older sister of an undocumented emigrant, her mother and grand-mother were also present in the room. As it would have been disrespectful to ask the mother and grand-mother to leave the room as to be able to interview the sister alone, I decided to interview them together. However, an advantage of these kinds of situations was the insight it gave in family relations.

Before the actual fieldwork period in Senegal several preparatory interviews with (informal) Senegalese migrants in the Netherlands were conducted. Although none of them could be categorized as a boat-migrant, and therefore did not belong to my actual research population, they did give some first focus points. For example, they stressed the importance of relational expectations and interests of (transnational) social networks. Furthermore, they provided me with some important contacts in Senegal.

Other sources
Although undocumented boat-migration from Senegal is a relatively new phenomenon on which few research exists, it has been given much policy attention on both national and international level. In order to find out whether policy initiatives match the migration reality I conducted interviews with representatives of several organizations.[13] In addition, an interview was conducted with an Imam, who was also involved in a project to prevent undocumented migration, as

---

[12]   The initial idea was to carry out ten household structured interviews.
[13]   These include the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Dakar, the Senegalese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, KadduJaraax (a local NGO) and an office on regular migration (BIT) in Dakar.

well as with a Senegalese sociologist who is working on migration-related topics.[14]

Besides these interviews, I attended a three-day conference on undocumented migration in Jaraax, where I also presented some of my research findings. Some theatre forums in Jaraax that addressed the issue were visited with some of my key informants. Furthermore, I attended a meeting with representatives of NGOs on '*how to inform the population about the risks of illegal migration*'.[15] As the phenomenon is relatively recent and scientific literature on the topic in this region was nearly non-existent, I mainly had to rely on Senegalese and European newspapers, reports and documents for my secondary sources. However, these sources have been handled with caution and their usability analyzed in their context, as media reports are 'not only reflecting, but also actively constructing our senses of the social reality to which it refers (…) what people decide to record, to leave in or take out, is itself informed by decisions which relate to the social, political and economic environment of which they are part' (May 2001: 187, 197).

Reliability of the data

One of the first reliability questions stems from the selection of respondents. Although I made use of informants for whom the boat-migration was a past experience, it can be questioned if more reliable data would have emerged from observing and talking to people who were in the process itself. I believe not. First of all, my informants did not run the risk of being arrested by the police and therefore were willing to speak openly about their decisions, albeit in private. Second, decision-making is not a one moment event, but a process that could have started years ago and lasted until the moment of departure. By interviewing unsuccessful boat-migrants I was able to reconstruct the whole process, instead of only parts of it. Due to a lack of time and money I have not been able to incorporate data on 'successful' boat-migrants in Europe, although it could have been a plus for this research to explore whether their stories corresponded to those of my informants. With respect to the latter group, their narratives might have been influenced by the bad experience of failure and social stigma upon return. However, it can be argued that the reconstructions of successful boat-migrants past experiences are also coloured by present-day events (i.e., discrimination and social stigma in the country of destination).

This leads directly to the second issue, the problem of reconstruction. I tried to cope with the gap of time between the event and the interviews afterwards by

---

[14] This person asked me to guard his anonymity.
[15] The conference was sponsored by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and a German organization.

spending long hours with my informants and re-discussing the pre-migration phase many times. As time passed and the informants started to trust me I also noticed that they were more willing to speak freely about their previous decisions, experiences and more sensitive topics, i.e. money and their relationships with close relatives and friends. I believe that by gaining the confidence of my respondents through spending many hours with them and being introduced to them by other respondents or personal friends, I also gained in the reliability of the data.

Thirdly, triangulation has been used as an approach to overcome the problem of reconstruction, by verifying information with friends and relatives of my informants. However, this was not always possible, for example when friends and family were not informed about the migration attempt. This in itself proved to be interesting and I will elaborate on this in a later part of the thesis. Whenever family members and friends were informed, interviews or informal talks were conducted with them. For example, in the case of one informant, interviews were conducted with him, his cousin, his uncle and several good friends. Nevertheless, I found out that instead of throwing data away that is not confirmed or by another source, this data contributed to my understanding of the social structure and individual action therein.

Finally, I enhanced reliability by checking my interpretations from time to time with some key informants (see also Baxter & Eyles 1997: 511). Regularly I spoke with my respondents about the findings of my research on which they agreed most of the time. However, the problem that can arise with this reliability mechanism is that negative findings are not necessarily supported by everybody of the research population. For example, during a question round after the presentation I gave at a conference on undocumented migration in Jaraax, some women in the audience showed openly offended and told me that the parental expectations and pressure on young Senegalese men is not one of the reasons for young men to leave the country by boat, while this was often stated by the young men I interviewed. This should not lead to the assumption that therefore the findings are unreliable. It only means that not every category of persons in a given fieldwork setting might agree with the research outcomes, especially when this places them in a "negative" light.

Methodological problems

One of the first methodological problems I encountered was related to my own identity as a white European woman. Because it was difficult to find informants, I became dependent on certain informants for other contacts and interviews, which meant that I had to spend many hours with them. Although they have been an indispensable help for my study, the contact with them at times became un-

comfortable when they started to express their "feelings" for me. I was very well aware of my "racial privilege" and the power inequalities in the field, whereby my presence as a white woman with a Dutch passport was for many men a reason to get into contact with me and to ask me to get involved in a 'love' relationship with them (see also McCorkel & Myers 2003). This resulted in me feeling constantly pressured to show my informants that I was there only for my research, which at times irritated me and obstructed me from spending too much time in the research field. Spending time with my informants without doing interviews often resulted in me being overwhelmed with 'romantic' text messages as soon as I came back from the field. I tried to overcome this by shifting as much as possible between informants and avoided seeing the same person several days in a row. This was also the reason why I decided not to reside in the field, but instead choose to rent a room in another part of Dakar.[16]

On the other hand, the politics of identity have not always been that black and white, as Wolf (1992) has rightly pointed out. For example, I was very dependent on my informants during the research process for contacts and for understanding the informal migration process. Furthermore, my status as a female researcher in a male world also obstructed various men from telling me about some experiences. For example, to a German male colleague, who did similar research in Dakar, unsuccessful boat migrants spoke more openly about their fear during the passage, while I was only told in passing.

A final methodological difficulty has been the contact and interviews with women (wives, sisters and mothers of unsuccessful and successful boat-migrants), which proceeded rather laboriously. Although I did have access to women, most of the interviews were short (most did not last more than half an hour) and I always felt I needed to be in a hurry. I encountered similar problems with female contacts in day-to-day life. Especially among young women I was looked upon with suspicion, which I suspect was the result of female concurrence and the polygamous relationship system. Older women were mainly occupied with household chores and small economic businesses and therefore were not able to spend much time on the interview.

---

[16] This area is called Camberene II and is, depending on the traffic, one hour by public transport from Jaraax.

4

Regional background
and policy initiatives

Although Senegal is a relatively poor country on a global scale, in which economic mobility is limited for a large part of the population, it is not the worst off in its region. At the same time Senegalese nationals have a large share in the informal boat migration from West Africa (Hallaire 2007: 27).[1] Consequently, economic factors alone are not sufficient to explain the boat-migration phenomenon. Neither can political factors explain the move from Senegal, as it has been relatively stable since its independence in 1960. In the first part I will elaborate on these economic and political matters by placing Senegal in its regional context. In the second part I will direct attention to the policy initiatives in the field of informal migration from Senegal to the Canary Islands, both national and international, based on interviews with officials in the field and secondary sources. In this section I will give a short state of the art of contemporary migration policy and indicate areas in which policies can be improved to better fit migration reality.

---

[1] Although formal statistics are absent on the number of informal migrants, from the amount of Senegalese that are repatriated it can be argued that Senegalese have the largest share in the West-African boat migration.

A relatively stable country

Economy

Senegal is a Muslim dominated country located on the west coast of Africa.[2] Although it belongs to one of the most disadvantaged countries in the world, ranked 156 out of 177 on the Human Development Index (UNDP 2008), when compared to other countries in the region it is doing relatively well. Ten out of twenty countries in West Africa are ranked higher than Senegal. Its regional advantage can also be illustrated by its PPP per capita which was 1,640 dollars in 2007 and compared to other countries in West Africa on the midrange (World Bank 2007a).[3] Although the country had to deal with some economic setbacks in 1994 resulting from the devaluation of the CFA Franc (FCFA) and a subsequent inflation rate of 32%, the country is said to be on track to economic growth (5% since 1994) (Magoni *et al.* 2007: 42; World Bank 2008).[4] However, rural areas stay behind as severe droughts have resulted in environmental degradation, while at the same time they have to cope with a scarcity of natural resources and de-population. In contrast, the urban population increased (Sahel and West African Club/OECD 2006: 9; World Bank 2007b).[5] As a result of this rural–urban shift, mainly to the capital Dakar, the cities' suburbs have become overpopulated and put large pressure on the urban labour market. For example, the Senegalese economy is faced with an overexploitation of maritime resources. The large amount of Senegalese working in the fishing industry in earlier years (15% in 2002), in addition to the European and Japanese vessels that have been catching most of the offshore fish, has caused a reduction in fish stocks (Magoni *et al.* 2007: 36). As a consequence, many urban suburbs and rural coastal towns have to cope with decreasing economic activities as many of its inhabitants used to rely on the fishing industry. Moreover, the country faces a natural high population growth, which has resulted in a youthful population (Riccio 2005: 101). As this under-age group faces a tight formal labour market it should not be surprising that 54% of the population lives below the poverty line, while the official unemployment rate is 48%.[6] Nevertheless, in the region these percentages are relatively low (CIA 2008).

---

[2] 94% Muslims, 5% Christians (mostly Roman Catholic) and 1% indigenous beliefs (CIA 2008).

[3] PPP stands for the purchasing power parity from which the GDP dollar is estimated.

[4] At this time the country also suffered from a decline in the value of its groundnut industry and rising petroleum prices. Despite its economic growth Senegal's economic performance was again weak in 2006, due to the rise in oil prices and a decline in agricultural production (Magoni *et al.* 2007: 42).

[5] The farming population in West Africa decreased from 80% in 1961 to 51% in 2001 (Sahel and West African Club/OECD 2006: 9).

[6] This 48% of unemployment does not include labour in the informal sector, while recent studies have estimated that informal labour (self-employment, causal labour, temporary jobs etc.) accounts for 50 to 80 % of the non-agricultural employment in developing countries (Mofokeng 2005: 2).

Politics

In 1960 Senegal got its independence from France and ever since retained a relatively stable political environment in the region, with only a minor armed conflict in 1982 in the southern part of the country, the Casamance, which aimed at autonomy. With some quiet intervals, this internal conflict further flared up in the 1990s and the beginning of 2000 (World Bank 2008; Magoni *et al.* 2007: 30-31). Although it caused thousands of people to flee from the south and leaders and supporters of opposition parties in the region are harassed to date, the rest of the country was not directly affected by the conflict (Evans 2002). Besides this relatively minor internal conflict, the country's political system is characterized by stability and its human rights and democratization are said to be at a satisfactory level (World Bank 2008; Magoni *et al.* 2007: 33, 44-45).[7]

From the preceding paragraphs it can be concluded that political factors cannot be regarded as a "push factor" for informal migrants, while economic figures illustrate my argument that a simple push-pull model based on income differences fails to appreciate differential migration responses. The claim that poverty alone causes this kind of migration is at odds with data that show that countries like Burkina Faso, Niger, Mauritania and Guinea-Bissau, which are among the ten highest ranked countries on the Human Poverty Index (Maddison 2002) do not have such a large share in the West African undocumented migration in general (Adepoju 2006: 9).[8] While economic disparities certainly have a great influence on migration outcomes, the effect they have on shaping undocumented migration decisions is mediated by socio-cultural factors, which I hope to demonstrate with this study.

Migration policy

Since ten years the EU has taken up policy initiatives to harmonize the management of labour migration flows, which resulted in the tightening of immigration policies over the years. However, worldwide migration attempts have shown that these flows are difficult to manage. The recent policy initiatives aimed at closing Europe's external borders have actually contributed to a rise in undocumented migration. In addition, the activities of small scale organizations in Dakar lack knowledge on the decision-making process of potential boat-migrants and have resulted in ineffective projects.

---

[7] During my fieldwork period in Dakar some minor protests arose in which Senegalese went into the streets to show their dissatisfaction with governmental policies.

[8] Official sources have estimated that 60 percent of the migrants arriving on the Canary Islands by boat are Senegalese nationals (*AfroNews*, October 10, 2007).

The European Union

The cornerstone of European migration policy is the intergovernmental Schengen Agreement (1990), which concentrates on internal freedom and external closure. The Amsterdam Treaty (1999) was the first agreement on the EU-level in which issues relating to migration were incorporated. Particularly, it moved attention to co-development with countries of origin of migrants; tracking smuggling networks and keeping migrant movements under control and finally, the integration of third-country nationals that reside legally in EU countries (Muus 2001: 41, 43-44). With the Tampere agenda in 1999, the first initiatives were made towards a set of common conditions to manage labour migration flows among the European Member States. Measures were proposed in four fields, among which fair treatment of third-country nationals and management of migration flows. However, this more positive perspective towards migrants changed after the 9/11 attacks and the Madrid attack in 2003 after which the agenda of the EU Justice and Home Affairs became more security oriented and measures were adopted in areas of undocumented migration, and visa and border control (Wiesbrock 2010: 114). The view that migrants pose 'social threats' to society's cohesion has become more dominant and still prevails in most European countries (Wereld in Woorden 2006: 13-14). In the The Hague programme (2005-2010), the successor of the Tampere programme, the importance of documented migration in making a contribution to economic growth was still a priority, but at the same time more emphasis was placed on integration of immigrants and national sovereignty (Wiesbrock 2010: 114).

Especially when undocumented migration from Sub-Sahara Africa increased in the 1990s as a result of the stricter migration policies in individual Member States, fears grew that a mass exodus of Sub-Saharan Africans towards Europe was taking place. The undocumented migrants were portrayed by governments and popular media as either being victims of international criminal networks or as being plain fortune seekers. In reality emigration from West Africa was relatively modest; of the 258 million West Africans only 1.2 million are residing in OECD countries, compared to, for example, 1.6 million Moroccan migrants out of a population of 29 million (de Haas 2008: 25).[9] Nonetheless, this perspective on undocumented migrants has had important implications for EU's migration policies.

Since the end of the 20th century, the European Union has made 'the fight' against migration one of the priorities in migration policy. In the *Global Ap-*

---

[9] The members of the OECD countries are: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Luxembourg, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States (OECD 2008).

proach to Migration in 2006 it was proposed that measures with respect to the management of undocumented migration needed to be reinforced. Measures include the sanctioning of employers of undocumented third-country nationals, preventing document fraud, tackling the root causes of undocumented migration and increasing border management and return and readmission (Commission of the European Communities 2006: 8-9). A year before the European Council launched the Action Plan "Global Approach to Migration: Priority Actions Focusing on Africa and the Mediterranean" that was also directed at Sub-Saharan Africans, while already in 2000 the Cotonou Agreement was signed by the European Commission and the African (including Senegal), Caribbean and Pacific countries. This programme, which will run from 2007 until 2020, contains measures for the prevention and fight against illegal migration, which mainly involves the readmission of nationals who are illegally present in the territory of another party (Magoni *et al.* 2007: 10, 23).

Particular programmes have been set up to tackle the undocumented migration streams from Africa, and West Africa in particular, towards Europe. Frontex,[10] the marine border control agency of external borders of the European Union was established in 2005 as a result of the large influx of undocumented migrants towards the Canary Islands and has become one of the most important mechanisms for preventing undocumented migrants from entering South European countries. In addition, several West African countries, including Senegal, have signed readmission agreements with France and Spain (Senegal in 2006), which basically means that in exchange for resources to monitor its coastline in coordination with Frontex, these countries agree to readmit undocumented migrants from France (Magoni *et al.* 2007: 23-24).

Thus, in its attempt to regulate undocumented migration, the European Union has closed its southern borders and signed agreements with African states for the readmissions of their citizens. Although the amount of informal migrants that tries to enter Europe through the Canary Islands has declined from 2007 onwards, the approach is subject to criticism.[11] First, long and dangerous informal migration routes developed exactly in response to the stricter migration policies of the EU, as formal entries have become very difficult for non-European citizens (Schapendonk & van Moppes 2007b: 12).[12] Second, because the European poli-

---

[10] Although Frontex had to start with a low budget, in 2008 the available finances went up to 70 million euro. In 2008 four sea borders are controlled and monitored by Frontex: The Canary Islands, the West Mediterranean Sea, Malta and the Balkan (*RAPID*, February 13, 2008).

[11] According to data from the Spanish Ministry of Interior, 18057 irregular migrants reached Spanish soil in 2007, a reduction of 53,8% from 2006. However, this number does not include the deaths and persons who returned before reaching the Islands; therefore, one has to treat the number with caution (ADDHA 2007).

[12] The same effect between immigration policies and informal border crossing was witnessed in the United States in the 1990s (Wedding n.d.).

cies only try to prevent migrants from entering Europe, they hardly pay any attention to the dynamics of this kind of migration. As a result, what can be expected is that instead of a significant decline in the amount of undocumented migrants from Sub-Sahara Africa, new undocumented migration routes are developed in response to the monitoring and controlling activities of the EU along the African coast.[13]

Senegal

As a result of the signing of readmission agreements between Senegal and several European countries, several initiatives have developed within the Senegalese government to facilitate the readmission of its nationals. Several governmental organizations are in charge to provide care for the voluntary and involuntary repatriations of Senegalese from Europe and African transit countries, like Libya (Dutch Embassy Dakar 2005: 22). The motivation for the Senegalese government to repatriate its nationals seems mainly to be financial. For example, in exchange for 5000 irregular migrants from Spain, President Abdoulaye Wade was provided 20 million euro for agricultural development (*NRC Handelsblad*, February 24, 2007). This money was said to be put in Plan REVA (return to agriculture), programmed for 2006-2008 (*The Daily Monitor*, May 7, 2007).[14] However, when I was doing fieldwork the Plan REVA was not realized and caused criticism towards the government from different corners of the country.

Visa distribution

Another project is the distribution of visas for temporal stays in Spain by Senegalese workers.[15] According to a spokesperson of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Spain agreed to give 745 Senegalese a working contract for one year after which the temporal migrant had to return home.[16] These visas are mostly for the fishing, agriculture and cleaning sector. At the IOM, the selected migrants are given an orientation on life in Europe.[17] According to an official at the Senegalese Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the time of fieldwork there were also negotiations about visa distributions with France. However, out of the 745

---

[13] As we deal with undocumented migration, it is hard to obtain statistics on the yearly influx of informal migrants in Europe.

[14] This program was aimed at re-developing Senegalese agriculture and at persuading youngsters to become farmers instead of taking a boat to the Canary Islands (*The Daily Monitor*, May 7, 2007).

[15] In 2000 there was another project by which 500 visas were provided for two years for those working in the fishing industry (Interview with spokesperson at the International Labour Organisation in Dakar, March 2008).

[16] Initially there should have been 2,000 visas, but the agreement is not yet fully signed.

[17] This includes a Spanish language and a social integration course to make prospective migrants aware of the functioning of Spanish society.

Spanish visas 700 are given to women. As an employee of an organization working with migrants in Dakar explained:

> 'They [women] are more likely [than men] to come back and return to their families once the program is finished.[18] (...) Also, when they decide to go into illegality, it is expected that most will return after one or two years.'

Although the intentions for alternative legal migration are good, the functioning of the project so far aroused some criticism. First of all, most of the Senegalese that leave by pirogue are men, while the visas are mainly given to women, thereby not reaching the target group. Second, although 800 visas is a start, its number is quite limited when considering that more than twenty times the amount of people tried to leave the country by boat in 2006. The distribution of visas can therefore mainly be seen as a political strategy by Spain, by which it wants to show 'goodwill' instead of only closing its borders. Third, there is a pre-selection for the visas, which means that the prospective migrant needs experience and education in the sector that is offered. As a result, people with few education or work experience are excluded from the project. Fourth, an often heard criticism in Senegal is that the government officials keep most of these visas for themselves and their family members, however, whether this is reality or a mere rumour is unknown.

Awareness-raising programmes[19]

A large group of NGOs in Dakar works on awareness-raising programmes in the fight against undocumented boat migration.[20] This has resulted in theatre forums, radio and television transmissions and a small-scale art project (*Au-Senegal*, September 7, 2007).[21] In accordance with the Spanish government the International Organization for Migration has launched a three month campaign on national television in the second half of 2007, which visually showed the dangers of the trip, supported with comments by Senegal's well known singer Youssou N'Dour. In addition, the International Organization for Migration established an information office in December 2007, where future migrants can get information on what is awaiting them in Europe, about the conditions during the trip by boat and to inform them on legal migration alternatives (Wall Fadjri, October 6, 2007; IOM 2007).

---

[18] A similar reason was given by an official at the Senegalese Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

[19] Already in 2005 the Dutch Embassy in Dakar (2005: 30) asked for awareness-raising campaigns with the aim of making undocumented migration from Senegal less acceptable. At the same moment the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC 2006: 20) and the GCIM (2005: 35) reported the need for awareness-raising on smuggling networks.

[20] According to Schapendonk & van Moppes (2007c: 15) there are 62 organisations in Senegal active in distributing information on migration.

[21] Theatre forums are widely used in Senegal in a surge to make people aware of certain, mainly sensitive topics like polygamy, incest, abuse, and HIV.

The idea behind these programmes is that undocumented boat-migration is partly the result of a lack of information about life in Europe and the risks during the trip on the part of the potential migrant. They therefore have to be made aware of the risks attached to this type of migration. It is expected that after being informed about the risks of the trip, the prospective boat-migrant will choose to stay in Senegal. However, my data shows that undocumented migrants are very well aware of the dangers of the trip and the living conditions in Europe. It can therefore be expected that these programmes will largely miss their goal in reducing boat-migration.

In recent years, many policy initiatives were developed; however, a lot of these programmes do not seem to be very effective (see also Schapendonk & van Moppes 2007c: 15), while the stricter border controls and immigration laws in Europe even have had the more serious negative side-effect of influencing the development of longer and more dangerous informal migration routes as people keep on moving.

5

Organization and practices
of undocumented migration

As most of the Senegalese boat-migrants do not own a boat, they have to rely on some sort of assistance in order to be able to make the sea passage to the Canary Islands. This assistance is organized in networks, which, as I will argue, can better be characterized as informal, rather than mafia-like or criminal networks, as some would suggest (see for example UNODC 2006: 13). In the first part of this chapter I will discuss the organizational elements of migration by boat. Based on my own observations and interviews, combined with insights from existing literature, I will give some background information on the origins and functioning of boat-migration as it is organized in Senegal, in order to better understand the context in which the decision to migrate is made. In the second part I present two cases of unsuccessful boat-migrants to illustrate how this organization works in practice for the migrants themselves and above all to show how social processes that are central to the decision-making process, function.

Organizing boat migration from Senegal to the Canary Islands

Equipment
The boats used in the informal migration from Senegal to the Canary Islands are so-called 'pirogues', flat-bottomed wooden boats of 14 to 18 meters, which are locally produced and typical for the West African fishing industry.[1] The inside of the boat has some wooden benches, but no roof on top, although one captain

---

[1] The word stems from a mutation of *pirogua*, which is the Carib-Indian word for a dugout canoe (Tomkins 2008). The Senegalese mainly use the word '*gaal*' for this boat, which means 'canoe' in Wolof, the national language.

mentioned that occasionally during the transport of persons an improvised roof is constructed in order to protect themselves from helicopter controls by the police and the marine guard. Another reason for the covering of the boat is to decrease the fear of the migrants, as the same captain explained:

> 'They (the migrants) become scared when it is getting dark. And at sea it already gets dark at three in the afternoon. So then we cover the boat.'

According to the United Nations, large pirogues carry up to 200 migrants (UNODC 2006: 10). My data does not confirm this finding; rather, my informants made use of small boats which ship between 50 and 80 persons (see also Magoni *et al.* 2007: 10; Schapendonk & van Moppes 2007a: 10). Most of the time these boats are overcrowded, which means that the transported persons have no place to stretch their legs or to lie down and are forced to sit up with their legs crossed.

Organization for departure takes about five to six days. The boat itself costs around four million FCFA, depending on its state, and is paid and prepared by the owner. When the day of departure is set the owner buys gas for cooking and two motors, which also cost around four million FCFA. Some of the captains nowadays make use of more technological advanced equipment during the trip, like portable GPS systems, while others have to depend on a compass and general instructions. These GPS systems cost around half a million FCFA. The use of satellite phones, as mentioned by the United Nations (UNODC 2006: 16-18) has not been confirmed by my data.

Depending on the navigation skills of the captain and weather conditions, the trip by boat from the Senegalese coast to the Canary Islands, takes between five to seven days. In addition, the chances to arrive on the Canary Islands partly depend on how much the owner has invested in the preparation. Several informants mentioned that there was often a lack of enough petrol, food and water onboard for the whole trip which often led to premature return to Senegal. It can be suggested that this is a strategy of the owner to profit as much as possible from the trip by investing as little as possible. Another reason might be his/her fear of being arrested when the migrants arrive on the Canary Islands and squeal the organizer during the investigation period. Nevertheless, the organizer also benefits from success stories, as will become clear later in the analysis.

Points of departure
In Jaraax a story circulates that migration by boat started from there when a fishing family from Hann (part of Jaraax district) arrived unplanned on the Canary Islands in the beginning of 2005. It was not until they phoned home to their family that people from Jaraax started to believe in the possibility of arriving in Spain by crossing the Atlantic Ocean to the Canary Islands. Although this story

is not verified by official sources, its importance lies in the populations' belief that migration by boat was perceived as a possibility due to successful arrival stories of others, mainly in 2005. In addition, a large part of the inhabitants of Jaraax believe that boat-migration is particular to this district and are not aware of the large scale on which the phenomenon exists, as one unsuccessful boat-migrant said:

> 'They even call it [Jaraax] the airport of Senegal right now, because so many people have left from here.'

Although the migration business was booming in Northern Senegal and Mauritania before, it was not until at least 2005 that it began to become more prevalent in Jaraax. The majority of my informants have left from coastal waters around Dakar and the Petit-Cote (South of Dakar) in the period 2005 until 2007 when departures were most frequent, while present-day boat migration has been directed further south (the Casamance region) and even to Guinea Bissau, which mainly has been the result of the stricter marine controls along the coastal waters of Central Senegal and the increased media attention since mid-2006 (Schapendonk & van Moppes 2007b: 12).[2] This prevention is visible; when walking on the beach of Jaraax one can see two boats lying some hundred meters in sea. One is a large patrol boat of the Frontex and the other a smaller Senegalese marine ship. Helicopters fly along Dakar's coastlines several times a day to search for suspicious boats, meaning those that ship more than ten persons. According to one captain, the marine patrols are at times distracted by taking up to ten persons in small pirogues to open sea where they gather in a larger boat that ships them to the Canary Islands. During the time of my fieldwork the departures from the Dakar region had significantly decreased and boats were departing from more southern regions. As one unsuccessful boat migrant explained:

> 'Now there is a lot of noise [mainly media and governmental attention] about the pirogues, there are a lot of surveillances. When you want to leave now, you have to go to the Casamance or Koalack. There is a lot of marine patrol along the beaches of Dakar now.'

The shift in the point of departure is confirmed by media reports, which have mentioned boats departing from the Casamance region (see for example *Sud Quotidien*, October 22, 2007).[3]

---

[2] One of the captains mentioned that boats leaving from Guinea Bissau use the Cape Verde Islands as a transit point from where another boat is taken that sails to the Canary Islands, a trip that can take up to 12 days (see also Dutch Embassy Dakar 2005: 21).

[3] It is suggested that most of the migrants who take the boats from the Casamance are from the Kolda region (South Senegal) (see for example *Sud Quotidien*, October 22, 2007).

Arriving on the Canary Islands

When a boat arrives on one of the Canary Islands, predominantly Tenerife, the migrants are incarcerated and have to wait for a judicial process. Imprisonment can be up to a maximum of forty days, as is set out by current Spanish immigration law, during which officials attempt to discover the identity and nationality of the migrant. If they succeed and a repatriation agreement exists between Spain and the country of origin, the migrant is forcibly sent home (Ryan 2008: 6; Kitamura 2007). On the other hand, when the identity of the migrant is not recovered within these forty days or when no repatriation agreement exists with the country of origin, authorities have no choice but to ship the migrants to mainland Spain where they are distributed across the country. This is the loophole that boat-migrants aim at, even though this means a live without documents or legal rights (Dutch Embassy Dakar 2005: 16-17; *Migration News* 2006; Zapata-Barrero & de Witte 2007: 87).

Several of my informants who made it to the Canary Islands mentioned that Senegalese officials work for the Spanish government in order to find Senegalese nationals among the arrived boat-migrants. As one of them mentioned:

> 'We had to show up in court, but there was a Senegalese who let us down. He worked for the Spanish officials and investigated us. He told us that the Senegalese government had stopped sending people back, so we told him we were from Senegal and after that we were repatriated, because he had not told us the truth.'

As a result of Senegal's repatriation agreement with Spain since September 2006, the largest part of the Senegalese boat-migrants who arrive on the Canary Islands is forcibly sent home. Nevertheless, stories circulate among potential boat-migrants about the possibilities to overcome this. For example, some have mentioned that Spanish employers take several strong Senegalese workers with them to mainland Europe.[4] Another strategy is to tell Spanish officials that one is from Gambia, for which there is no repatriation agreement with Spain, or else not to say anything at all during the 40 days. A final strategy could be to apply for asylum (van Wijk 2007: 35), although none of my informants spoke about this option to me, possibly because they were not aware of the possibility to make use of this.

Who is involved?

A first observation of the organizational networks of Senegalese boat-migration to the Canary Islands shows that different actors are involved, who are mostly linked to each other through personal contacts (see Figure 3 for organizational structure).

---

4   This has been mentioned by several unsuccessful boat-migrants and a captain, who has made the sea passage several times.
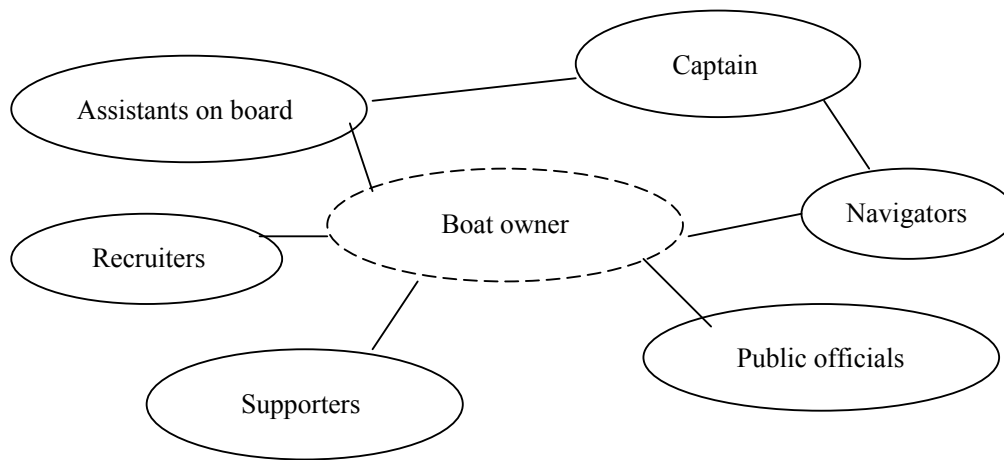
Figure 3   Organizational structure of boat-migration network in Jaraax.

The first person in the networks is the *owner* of the boat, who invests money by buying a boat and needed materials for the sea passage. He is also the one who takes care of the preparation of the boat and pays for food and water that will be used during the trip. Other persons, mostly friends or relatives of the owner, are appointed as *recruiters* who actively look for clients to fill up the boat, by using word of mouth. When he has recruited enough clients (mostly around ten), and negotiated a price with them he gets a commission and/or a free place in the pirogue, which he can use for himself or give away to whoever he wants. A third important link in the organizational network is the *captain*, usually a fisherman, who is in charge of sailing the boat and who knows the sea well. The organization's informal character also shows in the payment for the captain, which is not fixed and seems to depend on his negotiation skills.[5] The captains are in most cases migrants themselves, who leave the boat behind and mingle with the other migrants as soon as the Canary Islands are reached (Schapendonk & van Moppes 2007a: 9). Besides the captain, the crew and navigators, a *team* of about six persons provides assistance on the boat, besides other chores. As one recruiter mentioned:

> 'There were those who prepare the food in the boat. There are people who look out for the coastguard on the coast. There is one who buys the food, one who buys the petrol, one who buys the motor. There is somebody who collects the money and

---

[5]   During several interviews I heard that the owner pays the captain one or two million CFA Franc per trip, besides giving him two free places on the boat. In contrast, Schapendonk & van Moppes (2007a: 10) found that the captains are not paid and instead were obliged to pay for the food for the trip.

there is one who organizes the transport. The owner cannot do everything himself; he needs a team to organize it for him.'

Other persons involved in the organization are *supporters*, who for example provide assistance to undocumented migrants in the form of accommodation when the place of departure is a geographical distance location from where they live. However, this function is not strictly separated from others in the network. For example, one informant mentioned that at the time that he was recruiting he also had taken several people in his house who were waiting for the boat to leave. A final category of persons involved in the organization are *public officials*, who, through bribes, can assist the functioning of the informal boat-migration. In one case it was mentioned that the owner gave money to the marine guard to be able to let the pirogue sail out of the harbour without any difficulties. However, whether this happens on a large scale is unclear.

Informal organizational networks
This organizational structure resembles what other researchers have found among smuggling and trafficking networks (Schloenhardt 1999: 18-20, in Içduygu & Toktas 2002: 35-36) which have proven to be more informal than what was commonly assumed. For example, the UNODC (2006: 13) speaks of the professionalization of organized crime in Senegal's undocumented migration networks. However, I did not find any evidence of forced migration or the role of large mafia-style trafficking networks in the organization of undocumented migration from Senegal to the Canary Islands, even though in some cases financial exploitation was present. Consequently, the concept of 'human smuggling' seems best to fit the present organizational structure, albeit with a locally based character.[6] In the case of Senegal, the smugglers are owners of the boats, either former fishermen or rich locals involved in the fishing industry, who have shifted their activities to the more profitable informal migration market (see also Schapendonk & van Moppes 2007b: 14).[7] Therefore it can be argued that it is better to speak of locally based informal networks rather than large international mafia-like networks (see also Brachet 2005).

Having focused on the organization of the Senegalese boat-migration, I will now direct attention to the experiences, motives and social context of the boat-migrants. Two case studies of unsuccessful boat-migrants will be discussed in order to illustrate the social processes at work in informal migration decision-making.

---

[6] Van Wijk (2007: 46) has proposed the term *facilitators* for these kinds of networks, which resemble the organizational structure that was found in this study. However, for broader international relevance the term 'smuggling' will be suggested.
[7] Migrants themselves refer to these organizers as 'owner of the boat'.

The first case describes in detail the history of a failed boat-migrant who individually made the decision to leave several times, while the boat-migrant in the second case was selected by another member of his household to leave.

The case of Ibrahima: *'I want to do the maximum to leave'*

Ibrahima is 23 years old, born and raised in Jaraax and has tried up to three times to leave by boat for the Canary Islands. His formal education ended at the age of ten, after which he worked for seven years as an apprentice in his grandfathers' metal industry. As he was in training he did not get a salary, which is common in Senegal. When his father retired it was expected of him to financially take care of the family and as a result he decided to quit his job at his grandfathers' place to begin working as a cleaner for an Italian waste company. This ended when the government broke the contract with the employer after which everybody was dismissed. Ibrahima managed to find his present job as a cleaner at the Ministry of Environment, where he works a couple of hours a day, five days per week and earns around 55,000 FCFA per month (around €80). With this salary he pays 15,000 FCFA for the electricity, 5,000 FCFA for water and 10,000 FCFA for the food his aunt prepares for him twice a day. In addition, he gives 15,000 FCFA each month to his father, spends 5,000 FCFA on his breakfast and is able to save the remaining 5,000 FCFA.

He is the son of the second wife, who died when Ibrahima was still young, of his father. After her death he was raised by one of his father's other wives, who also has a daughter, Adema. Ibrahima's father, whom he visits from time to time, lives in Mbour, south of Dakar. As his work is located in Jaraax it is more practical for him to live their where he has found a room in the background of the house of his uncle Abdou, not far from the company where he is working. The younger brother of his father, who made two attempts to make it to the Canary Islands, lives in another suburb of Dakar with his wife and two children, his older and younger sister. Their father, Ibrahima's grandfather, used to live in France and worked there in a car factory, but died when his children were still young.

His uncle Abdou, who is retired and used to work in water management, shares the house with two of his three wives and their four young daughters. The house is situated on the road towards the beach and consists of different parts. The first section, where Abdou lives with his wives and children, is made out of cement and gives place to different bedrooms, a kitchen, toilet and shower, and a salon. In the living room different images of Medina are displayed, which relate to his pilgrimage he made to Mecca several years ago. Having his own house, his pilgrimage to Mecca and his polygamous marriage shows that he is relatively well of financially. Behind the house lies a little courtyard surrounded by small rooms, made out of wood, brick and corrugated cardboard. This is where Ibra-

hima has his room which he shares with his cousin Magueye (28) during week-days, who works as an apprentice in the garage across the road. During the weekends Magueye visits his mother and younger sister in another part of Dakar, Yembul.

Ibrahima's room is bigger and more luxuriously furnished than most of the rooms I have seen at his friends' places. He has a wooden double bed, a little table and a wooden bench, some closets, a little refrigerator in which he keeps water, a stereo, a DVD player and a large television. On the walls of his room hang some images of religious leader of the Tijane, the Islamic brotherhood to which he belongs.[8] Two other rooms in the courtyard are occupied by two of his aunts. One of them is a second wife, who takes care of the meals for her husband, who works and sleeps in Jaraax during the week. The other aunt of Ibrahima shares her room with her seven year old son, Pap, whose husband died several years ago. She makes a small commerce by selling *ataaya,* the local tea, in the morning on the fish market, but is not able to earn enough money to support herself and her son. In the back of the courtyard are another three rooms, which are occupied by men who work in the neighbourhood and take the food Ibrahima's aunt prepares every day. On the left side of these rooms are the shared toilet, the shower and some chicken runs.

Ibrahima is a quiet young man, who does not talk much and mostly keeps on the background in social settings. In his spare time he visits his friends from the neighbourhood and some colleagues. His best friends are Cheikh and Mohammed, whom he knows through the job at the Ministry of Environment. They do not live far from each other and meet regularly outside the job.

Networks of (undocumented) migrants
Because a large part of Ibrahima's family members have migrated (see Figure 4), it can be said that he comes from a migrant family. His uncle Baay (50) lives in the United States since 1999. He left Senegal with a visa to work in the United States as a teacher. He has his residence permit and brought several visits to Senegal, the last time being in 2004. He married an American woman in 2001, while he has another child, who lives in France, with his Senegalese ex-wife. Baay has a house in Castor, not far from where Ibrahima's room, which he had already built in 1993. In addition, he owns a small shop next to the house and a telephone centre. To Ibrahima's displeasure Baay only sends money to his mother every two or three months and not to other family members:

---

[8]   Tijan is one of the stricter Islamic movements, which results in Ibrahima praying five times a day, something he never omits, no matter where he is. He also does not drink, nor smokes and visits the mosque every Friday.
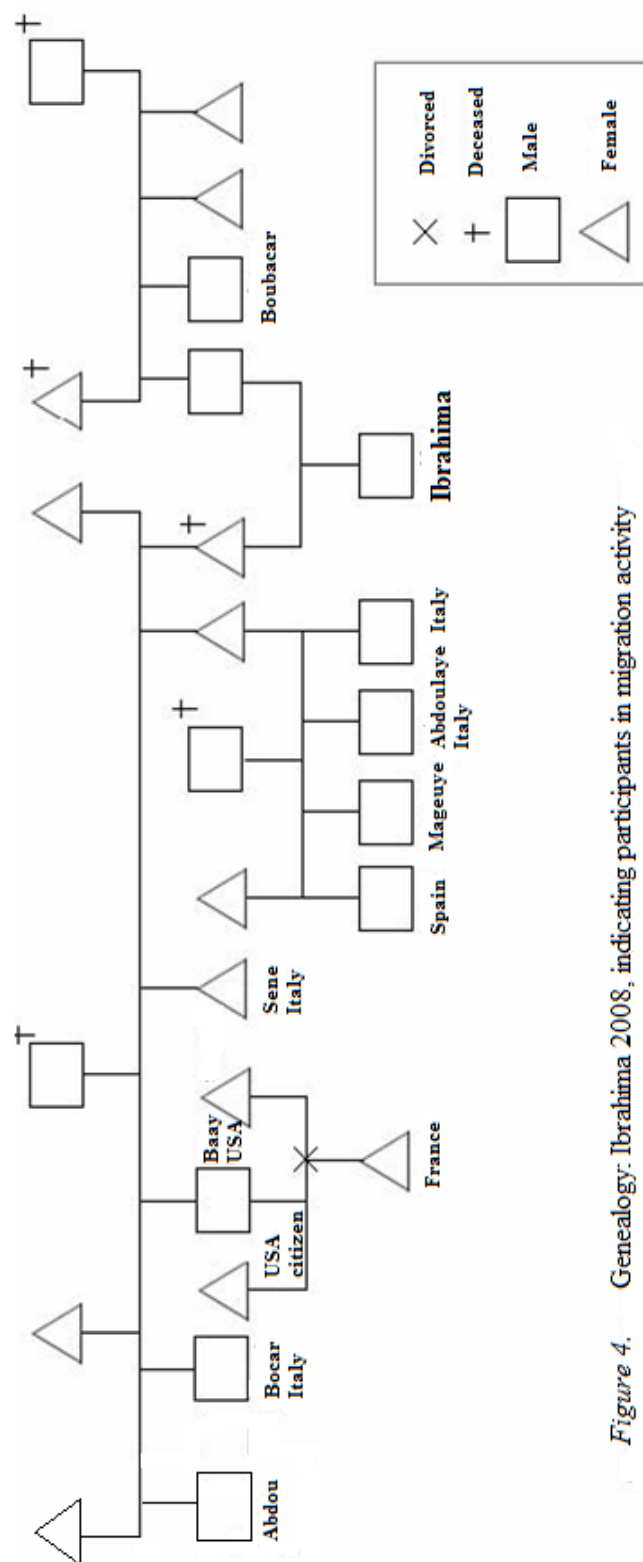
Figure 4. Genealogy: Ibrahima 2008, indicating participants in migration activity

'He does not give anything and we know that he has money, because he has a big house.'

Another point of concern to Ibrahima is the unwillingness of his uncle to help him arrange a visa. He has been asking his uncle for several years, but he keeps on telling him that he has to wait. At the time of fieldwork they did not have any contact with each other.

His aunt Sene (46), with whom Ibrahima used to share the house before she left Senegal, lives in Italy since 2002. In Senegal she made money with buying and re-selling dried fish on Jaraax's fish market. Sene left Senegal on a tourist visa for which she paid three million FCFA, which was given to her by her brother Baay and her ex-husband, and she has not been able to arrange a residence permit for Italy yet. During sporadic telephone contact (once every two months) with Ibrahima, she explains that she shares and apartment with other Senegalese and works in agriculture. Since her departure she has been able to buy a piece of land in a Senegalese village to build her own house, but to date she has not yet been able to start with the construction. His close relationship with her allows him to ask her for money when he has a problem, although he has never received anything from her. Nevertheless, he considers her to be an open person, who you can more easily ask for help than other contacts.

Another migrant relative is his cousin Abdoulaye (25), who lives in Italy since seven years and left on a tourist visa for which his father paid 2.5 million FCFA. He does not have a residence permit and works as a cleaner on an irregular basis, while he used to work as a fork-lift truck driver in Dakar. Last year Abdoulaye bought a piece of land in one of Dakar's suburbs, where the house, which is meant for the family, is still under construction. In the meantime he married a Senegalese woman. Every month he sends money home for his father to pay for the water and electricity bills. Ibrahima complains that his cousin does not send him any money, especially since they were close before his departure when they used to share a room. Ibrahima hears about his cousin from telephone contact Abdoulaye has with his brother Magueye to whom he explained that he only has a little bit of work, that it is cold in Italy and that life for immigrants is hard. Ibrahima does not believe him:

'There are migrants who say that they don't have any money, but that is not true, they put it all on their bank account and build a beautiful house with it (...) they are liars.'

Magueye once received a picture of Abdoulaye from Italy from which Ibrahima concluded that his cousin has changed for the better, as he had become bigger and was better dressed.

His uncle, Bocar, who has been in Italy since two years has been able to build himself a large house for his wife and two sons in Keur Mbaayfall, a suburb on

the outskirts of Dakar, where plots of land are mainly bought by migrants.[9] As the ability of his uncle to build a house and buy a car within two years is in contrast with success stories of other migrants, for whom it normally takes longer to do so, Ibrahima suspects his uncle of being involved in criminal activities.[10] This rumour has been rebutted by another relative of Bocar, who told me that he was able to obtain a residence permit by marrying an elderly Italian widow whom he left as soon as he had his papers. During informal conversations I had with Ibrahima he often complained that his uncle has become arrogant since his departure by neglecting his cousin. Nonetheless, he also envies his uncle. When on my request we went to visit the house of his uncle, Ibrahima told me en route:

> 'My uncle has been able to construct a nice house and buy a big car, which is why I want to do the maximum to leave. I also want to have a nice house, a beautiful wife and a big car. That is what I want.'

Two other cousins of Ibrahima, the older brothers of Magueye, have left for Europe. The oldest one (38) is in Italy since two years and works there as a mechanic. He left with a visa and visited Senegal once for two months.[11] His other cousin (30) is in Spain since one year and left by boat from the Casamance. Without a legal residence permit he tries to make money by selling his merchandise on the streets.

Ibrahima's network of migrants is not restricted to members of his family, as also some of his (best) friends are residing in Europe. For example, Moussa (24), a former neighbour, left in 2006 by boat. He does not have a residence permit and works in the wood industry, in which he was also active before his departure. Ibrahima believes that his friend has a good life in Spain, even though his financial status has not improved much. He has never received anything from Moussa and he does not ask for anything either. Based on the picture he has seen on a phone he had sent to his sister, Ibrahima says that the colour of Moussa's skin has become lighter, which he considers to be a positive change.

A former neighbour, Bocar, left by boat in 2007 and lives in Spain at the moment. From stories he heard from the family of Bocar he knows that Bocar does not have a residence permit and works as a street vendor. Another friend migrated to Belgium, where he married a local woman. During our conversations Ibrahima expressed repeatedly that he has to leave because a lot of his friends have made it to Europe.

---

[9] The land out of the city is cheaper than the land in Dakar, which makes it easier for migrants to construct a house in these 'new suburbs'.

[10] My informants regularly told me that the ability to build a house for migrants takes about four to six years.

[11] According to Ibrahima he got this visa by winning a contest for mechanics, which was organized by the Italian government.

From the preceding paragraphs it can be concluded that most of Ibrahima's contacts abroad are residing in Europe, mainly in Spain and Italy.[12] Ibrahima knows more than ten men from the neighbourhood who have made it to Europe by boat and who are residing there right now. In addition, Ibrahima has numerous friends, colleagues and neighbours who have attempted to leave Senegal by boat, albeit with unsuccessful outcomes. For example, from the job, Cheikh, Mohammed, Alioune and Ibrahima have tried to leave in this way, which took place around the same time of his own departure. He knows of one neighbour who died during the crossing.

Pre-migration phase
In 2007 Ibrahima decided to leave by boat to the Canary Islands. During this time he talked with some of his friends about migrating. In May one of them, Xadime, told him that he knew an old man, Bocar, who owned a boat that he was preparing for departure. Ibrahima asked his friend if he could introduce him to this man. When they met, Bocar told Ibrahima that the trip would cost 400,000 FCFA, to which Ibrahima responded that he did not have more than 350,000 FCFA and tried to persuade him by saying that he was desperate to leave. After some negotiation Bocar agreed with the money and told Ibrahima to wait another week for the actual departure. Because he did not have a mobile phone at the time, he gave Bocar the fixed telephone number of his uncle Abdou to call him when the day of departure was set. During this week Ibrahima tried to persuade others to accompany him on his trip. His cousin Magueye reckoned the trip to be too dangerous and decided not to leave with him. His friend Taffa refused as a result of a lack of financial resources. Only one friend, Ousmane, told him that he was interested, after which Ibrahima introduced him to Bocar with whom he negotiated a price of 400,000 FCFA.

Ibrahima claimed that the money for the trip came from a lottery he took part in since 2007. The idea is that a group of people hand-in money every month, which in this case was 25,000 FCFA.[13] Every month this group comes together and their names are written on a piece of paper. The name of the person that is drawn from the pile of papers wins the pool. Ibrahima won 250,000 FCFA the second month they were playing. Before this he had asked his aunt in Italy for 200,000 FCFA, to whom he did not tell the actual reason for this amount. Instead of telling her about his migration plans he told her that he was coping with a lot of financial problems out of fear for her disagreement. In a response she said that

---

[12]   Ibrahima does not have any contacts in other parts of Africa.
[13]   It has to be mentioned that this is a very large amount, as normally prices range between 100 to 1,000 FCFA per week (see for example Salam Fall 2007: 143).

she was not able to help him out financially due to unemployment at the moment. He told me that he understood her position.

Several days before his departure Ibrahima had a conversation with Magueye about his plans, during which he told his cousin that his life in Senegal is difficult and that he needed to do something to leave. In addition, he told him he had to do this because many of his friends had done so. When Magueye realized that he could not stop his cousin he took him to a *marabout,* a magical-religious specialist. This is a person who knows the practice of magic and is considered to be a mediator between human beings and the spirits (Gemmeke 2004: 72; Franklin *et al.* 1996: 325). Their service is for hire and based on their type of knowledge and prayers they can offer 'healing, protection, fulfilment of wishes and the elimination of enemies with the help of secret knowledge of the Qur'an' (Gemmeke 2004: 72). The *marabout* told Ibrahima to wash himself with 'holy water' he could buy from the *marabout* and was instructed to do the same twice a day during the days he had to wait for departure.[14] He also had a talk about his departure with his uncle Abdou, who disagreed with the plan as a result of the risks of the trip. Consequently, Ibrahima did not mention the actual day of departure. In addition, he talked about his plans with one of his best friends, Cheikh, who was also preparing for departure by boat himself and they wished each other good luck for the trip.[15] While talking to some of his relatives and friends, Ibrahima decided not to talk about his plans with his father. Superstition is the reason for this, as he believed that the possible disagreement of his father could have resulted in misfortune during the trip.

A couple of days before his departure Ibrahima brought his friend Taffa a visit to talk about his plans. During one of our conversations in his telephone shop Taffa mentioned that Ibrahima came to ask him for advice about the sea to which he was familiar as a result of his former job as a fisherman:

> 'He asked me how the sea would be at a certain moment, if it would be livable, these kind of things (...) Sometimes I was scared that he was going to leave as I did not want him to die.'

Two other friends tried to discourage Ibrahima from leaving by telling him that they knew of various people who had not survived the trip. However, Ibrahima was sure that this was not going to happen to him.

The day of departure Ibrahima got a phone call from Bocar, who told him that the departure would be that night at nine o'clock from Fajoul, a village south of Dakar in the Siné-Saloum Delta. In an effort to keep open the possibility of return when the trip would fail, Ibrahima told his manager that his father was ill

---

[14] This 'holy water' contains some spices or plants and a verse from the Koran.
[15] A couple of weeks after Ibrahima's first failed migration attempt Cheikh left, but did not succeed either.

and in order to take care of him he needed ten days off. Although his manager first refused and explained that ten days was too long, Ibrahima was able to convince him not long after.[16] Before he left the house Ibrahima was sure to make a mystical sacrifice, a so-called *gris gris*, and asked Magueye to pray for him.[17] He gave his cousin his passport, which he was instructed to send to Ibrahima upon arrival in Europe in order for him to be able to arrange a residence permit. Ibrahima took with him 30,000 FCFA as pocket money and the telephone number Taffa had given of one of his friends who lives in Spain. Taffa had explained this friend that one of his friends was soon going to arrive and asked him to help Ibrahima with finding accommodation.

Migration phase
Ibrahima travelled by public transport via Mbour to Fajoul, the point of departure. Around mid-night they were told to board a small boat, which would bring them to a larger one that was situated a bit further out at sea. Some first problems were encountered when the small boat got stuck in a sandbank after which all the men had to use their force to take it out. Before the large boat is entered it is washed with holy water with the belief that this will bring good fortune on open sea, after which the persons that get onboard are instructed to wash themselves with the same water. Some 100 persons had entered the boat, among who Ibrahima recognized four other men from his neighbourhood. They greeted each other and he placed himself next to Ousmane with whom he had a short conversation, while others were falling asleep. The first couple of days the trip passed as planned but this came to an end when the fourth day, close to Morocco and some 60 kilometres from the Canary Islands, water started to enter through a hole in the boat. The captain instructed everybody to take of their t-shirts to fill it up, after which some panic arose. Ibrahima was afraid to die from drowning as he was not able to swim and started to cry. In the next moments the captain decided that there was a need to return to Senegal as they would encounter another set of waves close to the Canary Islands for which the boat would not be resistant. A discussion flared up between the captain and men that refused to return, during which Ibrahima kept quiet, afraid of what was going to come. The captain's decision was enforced and three days later at four o'clock in the morning they arrived back at Dakar.

Ibrahima's return was not easy and carries a lot of weight on him:

'The first days were like I still was in the boat, than I was lying in bed and still felt the movement of the boat. I thought a lot when I came back (...) When I wanted to go

---

[16] He asked for no more than ten days as otherwise he would have been cut on his salary.

[17] A *gris gris* is an animistic rite, which is done to protect oneself against different kinds of external influences.

to sleep I thought "why am I still here while a lot of my friends are there [in Europe]." That touched me deeply.'

The first days after his return he had trouble sleeping and felt disappointed. However, the stories he told his friends about the trip are full of pride and he told them that even though it was hard, the ambiance during the trip was good and everybody was singing songs for God. After some days of rest he decided to go back to work.

A couple of weeks later Bocar phoned Ibrahima to inform about another boat that was being prepared for departure. This time they will leave from Jaraax. The owner is not going to refund the money to any of his clients and consequently they are only left with the choice to either try again or to lose their money. Ibrahima decided to try again. This time he only spoke about it with Magueye, who still disagreed and to whom Ibrahima responded:

> 'But what should I have done? Should I have left the money? The least I could do was to leave again (…) If you have a friend here that has left and is there (in Europe) now, than you have to do like him. So I had to try again.'

As Abdou did not agree with him leaving the first time Ibrahima decided not to tell him about his second attempt. Although his friends on the work floor were informed about his first attempt, his manager was not. To get some time off from the work he told his manager that his father was still sick and asked for another six days of leave, after which the manager agreed. Before departure he underwent the same rituals as the first time and washed himself again with the holy water. At night everybody boarded the boat on the coast of Jaraax, but when they wanted to leave the harbour they were stopped by the marine guard and send back to the coast. The boat and one of the gas bottles were apprehended, while Bocar was put in jail. He was released after he had paid the police some money and they warned him that the next time he will be imprisoned for a longer period of time. Afterwards Ibrahima was told by Bocar that he had to pay three million FCFA to recover the boat and to let them through during a subsequent attempt.

A third departure was prepared during the next weeks and again Ibrahima decided to make use of this opportunity, although this time he did not mention his departure to anybody neither did he ask for sick leave. But this time the boat is again stopped by the marine guard, according to Ibrahima, as a result of one of the mothers of the men on the boat calling the police as she did not want her son to leave. After this attempt a large part of the clients brought charges against Bocar when he refused to refund their money, which resulted in the incarceration of Bocar for four to six years.[18]

---

[18]   Ibrahima's friend Ousmane, who joined him on his first two attempts, told me another story about Bocar. According to him, Bocar himself has left with by boat and lives in Spain at the moment.

Post-migration phase

After these three attempts and having lost a large amount of money, Ibrahima is still in Senegal. Although he claims that his attempts to leave the country by boat are over, due to the low chances of arrival and the high costs, he still dreams of migrating.[19] In a later stage he played with the idea to go to Gabon, to work in the metal industry and from there to make the move to Europe.[20] This was after Taffa had told him that some of his friends had done this. Ibrahima turned away from this plan when he heard that in addition to the high crime rate in Gabon he found out that the flight tickets were expensive. He also applied for one of the 800 visas for Spain, but until today he has not received any response. In addition, he tried to obtain a green card for the United States by participating in a lottery, organized by the American Embassy, for 3,000 FCFA.[21] His most recent plan, at the time of my fieldwork, was to leave for Turkey at the end of 2008, for which he had to buy a visa for 600,000 FCFA from a Senegalese *businessman* whom one of his friends has introduced to him.[22] The goal of this trip was to enter Europe through Turkey and Greece. However, two years later I have heard that he is still in Jaraax where he recently got married.

The case of Pierre: *'It was my sister who told me I had to leave'*

When I met Pierre, 27 and unemployed, in Jaraax he passed most of his time preparing and drinking the local tea (*ataaya*), played checkers and chatted with his friends on the street or at their place. He only took breakfast when he received some money from his older brother or sister. After he played basketball at six o'clock at night he proceeded the evening by visiting friends until midnight. In addition, Pierre was an active member of the Christian community and spent a lot of time on church-related activities.[23]

The room of Pierre was located in a house in Jaraax where he lived with his uncle Papis and some other tenants. The room was a small space of no more than nine square meters with two of the pink walls covered with posters and pictures of American hip-hop singers and Senegalese artists. In one of the corners hang a large poster of Jesus Christ and on the small wooden table in the corner stood

---

[19] Although he would step in a boat if they would take him for free.

[20] I have heard from time to time that people leave for Gabon and South Africa to work there for a while as it is said to be easier to enter Europe from these countries.

[21] There was a lot of publicity for this lottery in late 2007.

[22] Ibrahima expected that around that time he would have won the lottery a second time as he was still playing. In addition, he had asked his aunt in Italy for a part, which he wanted to refund when he made it to Europe. According to Ibrahima, she agreed with this plan.

[23] Senegal is a predominantly Muslim country with a small Christian minority mainly living on the coast and the south of the country. Mainly as a result of post-independence politics and the lack of ethnic cleavages in the colonial period, the country is characterized by religious tolerance and harmony (Sow 2003: 75; Kukah 2007: 158).

some pictures of family members. Pierre was born in Mar Lodj, a small village in the Siné-Saloum Delta, some 140 km south of Dakar. When his mother died in 1999 his father moved back from Jaraax to the village to take care of Pierre's younger sisters, who lived there. Both girls died in 2003 and 2004 from malaria, shortly before their father passed away. Now Pierre was the youngest of the family with only one older sister, Madeleine (30) and a brother, Papis (34) (see Figure 5). Madeleine was divorced and lived with her two children at the house of her aunt in Jaraax, where she was working as an apparel maker and sometimes was given some money by her previous husband. Pierre's uncle Papis, with whom he shared the house, worked at an association in Jaraax and sometimes in Mbour, where he guided tourists. Papis was also divorced and had two children who stayed in a Christian boarding school in Koalack.

Pierre's educational career ended in 2000, when he was about to finish his high school. During this time he encountered problems continuing his studies after his mother passed away. In addition, he could no longer pay the tuition fee as neither his father nor his brother supported him and he did not have the financial resources himself to do so. After one year of being unemployed he started an apprenticeship to become a shipping-agent. When he left the training two years later he found a job at a company where he organized the employees, but resigned when they refused to pay him his salary. Thereafter he started to work at the port where he was unloading fish, but he found the working activities too risky, while he did not get any insurance, so he decided to he resign. In the summer of 2007 he started a job with one of his cousins as a painter, although at the time of fieldwork in 2008 Pierre was unemployed and had plans to start his own shop with a friend. In the meantime he still dreamed of finishing high school and of going to the university.

Networks of (undocumented) migrants
Pierre's migrant network is small, both in his circle of friends as well as among his family members. From his family, there are only two who are residing abroad. One of them is his older brother Papis, who moved to France six months ago after having married a French woman with whom he has a child. Pierre keeps several pictures of them in his room. At the beginning of 2008 his brother was on a two month visit in Senegal, which he mostly spent in their native village. Although Papis did bring some presents with him for Pierre's birthday, he has not send any money back home. According to Pierre's older sister this is not how it has to continue:

> 'He has only been there since six months so he doesn't have any money yet. But he will send us money in the near future.'

In the meantime Pierre has asked his brother several times to help him with a visa for France, but his brother's response has so far been negative:

'He tells me all the time that it is very hard there [in France] and that going to France is really difficult.'

The only other migrant family member is an uncle who lived in Italy and who paid around two million FCFA for a French visa in 2004. After a short stay in France he moved to Italy. The year he migrated he also got married to a Senegalese woman, with whom he now has a child. He arranged his residence permit in Italy which enabled him to visit Senegal in September 2007. Before his departure Pierre was in close contact with this uncle and they used to share the same house. Consequently, Pierre is disappointed that his uncle that he has not yet helped him to get him to Europe, even though, according to Pierre, his uncle has told him he is willing to do so. The same counts for the money neither Pierre nor his sister has ever received from him:

'If he really wanted to help me he could have done so, he could have given me money to open a shop, than I wouldn't have the need to go to Europe anymore.'

In the past years some of Pierre's acquaintances tried to leave for Europe by boat of which two men from his neighbourhood did not survive the passage and died. From the ones that did succeed, two were friends. One is his childhood friend, Assiz, a Muslim, who left in 2000 by plane for Italy. In 2006 he married his cousin, who lived close to Pierre's house.[24] When Assiz visited Senegal for two months in August 2007 he brought Pierre a mobile phone. According to Pierre his friend has become European, referring to the shift in his ideas. For example, Assiz complained about the rubbish on the Senegalese streets and about the heat. On the other hand, he also became bigger and less mentally troubled:

'You know, here you have the misery, which makes you think a lot and causes you to lose weight.'

Another friend is Mamadou who left two years ago by boat for France. From his four closest friends some are for and others against migration by boat, while none of them has ever made an attempt of which Pierre was aware.

Pre-migration phase
Madeleine, Pierre's older sister, is the one who initiated the migration move of Pierre, because, in her words, '(…) there [in Europe] is work and a lot of money'. She started to believe in the success of boat-migration when she heard of some-one from the neighbourhood who had left in this way and who arrived in Europe.

---

[24] This cousin is the daughter of the sister of his mother.

Figure 5. Genealogy: Pierre 2008, indicating participants in migration activity

When in spring of that year she heard from a recruiter, who was working for a boat-owner in Jaraax that they were preparing a boat for departure Madeleine thought about her brothers:

'My other brother [Papis] was in the village and Pierre was here. That is why I proposed it to him.'

Although Pierre believed that migration in general can be a way of supporting the family financially, he did not agree with his sisters' plan and claimed that destiny should not be forced. He explained that 'everything depends on what God has planned for you.' He told his sister that he did not want to leave by boat as he believed that the journey was too risky. Nevertheless, Madeleine insisted and told him she wanted him to leave for Europe so she would be able to pay for the basic necessities and to open her own shop in the future. Together with her aunt, Madeleine tried to convince Pierre by telling him that there is a lot of work and money in Europe, with which he could help the family. In the situation where both of his parents are deceased and with his older brother in the village, Madeleine was not only his sister, but also his elder, who had to be obeyed, which is reinforced by his financial dependence on her. Even though Pierre did not agree with the plan he felt pressured to respond to his sister's wishes. Not long after he learned that one of his colleagues, who had departed by boat some time before, had reached Spain and this gave him more confidence in the success of the trip and he told his sister that he would prepare to leave. After much difficulty, Madeleine and her aunt managed to collect the money and paid the recruiter 500,000 FCFA, after which they are told to wait until the pirogue is filled up.[25]

Pierre did not feel comfortable about his prospective trip and decided to ask somebody to join him. He informed his colleague Cheikh about his sisters' plan and asked him if he was willing to come along. Initially he refused, but Pierre insisted and convinced him, after which Pierre talked to Cheikh's uncle, the manager at the job, who guarded his cousin's savings. While Cheikh did not dare to ask his uncle for his money, Pierre felt that time was pressing and was able to convince the uncle by telling him that he had a lot of friends that had arrived in Europe by boat who financially were doing well. After this, Pierre met the recruiter and negotiated with him a price of 500,000 FCFA for Cheikh.

Pierre kept quiet towards his friends about his prospective departure and neither informed his uncle Papis. About his silence towards the last he explained:

'If I would have told him about my plans and he would have disagreed, then I wouldn't have been able to leave even when the money was already paid. Also, when

---

[25] Not everybody was willing to talk about how they were able to collect the money for the trip, like Madeleine or Pierre. Later on I will give some examples on how money was collected from other cases.

for example I want to go to the village and he tells me to stay here then I have to stay here.'[26]

His plan was to leave without telling anybody and calling home as soon as he arrived in Spain:

'When you tell everybody that you are going to leave you will never arrive. Here, you have the power of speech that can prevent you from arriving (...) You always have people that start talking (...) That is the African reality.'

A similar situation applied to Madeleine, who did not inform anyone about the prospective departure of her brother, for the same reasons as Pierre. She told me that plans have to be kept a secret as otherwise people might start talking which can prevent the departure. Not surprisingly than, Papis, Pierre's uncle once told me during an informal talk that none of his family members had ever been involved in the boat-migration. Also Magueye, one of Pierre's best friends, told me that he did not know anything about the migration attempt of his friend. One of the only few people Pierre spoke to about his departure was his girlfriend at the time. She responded by crying and told him that he would die, after which he tried to reassure her by telling her that it wouldn't be that bad. Although Magueye was not informed, his cousin Ibrahima was, as he was also planning for departure: 'When both of you are preparing to leave, it is easier to speak about it.' Pierre did not call any of his contacts in Europe to tell them about his plans, as he did not feel sure about the success of the trip and therefore wanted to wait until he reached Spain before he contacted anybody. Because Madeleine has initiated the plan and wants her brother to be safe she did notify one of her friends in Spain about her brother's expected arrival.

During the week that they have to wait for the departure, Cheikh, who did not live in Jaraax, stayed in the house of Pierre. These days Madeleine took Pierre to a *marabout* to ask if it would be a good day to leave. The *marabout* explained that he did not foresee any difficulties during the trip and so it is safe for him to leave. Pierre might have been convinced about the words of the *marabout* before he left, but after his return he argued that 'the *marabout* tells you what you want to hear, that you can leave'.

Migration phase

On the day of departure Pierre got a phone call with the instructions to take a bus for Joal, situated some 110 km south of Dakar on the Petite Côte, where they had to wait for the boat. Early in the morning a small boat brought small groups of people to a larger one that was awaiting them a little bit further in sea, with

---

[26] The same counts for his father, had he still been alive. In this case he would have talked to him and explained why he had to leave. If his father would have refused he would not have insisted and left the idea.

which they eventually left for open sea with 60 to 80 people. According to Pierre all necessities for the trip were on board, from food to navigation material. Nevertheless, the boat was packed with people and everybody was forced to stay seated. During the trip Pierre was scared as he did not know how to swim and was afraid that boat would break down:

> 'It was difficult. There were waves of three meters, but everybody thinks about arriving. It is a risk and without protection everybody thinks about dying. Some did not eat anymore. Some stayed seated for three days without standing up, out of fear. Nobody says it is easy (…) once you are in the water you will die.'

Besides his fear he felt tired and seasick, but nevertheless, he claimed that at times when they had food and when it was possible to sleep for a while it was not so bad.

After seven days the captain decided that they had to return to Senegal as they were running out of petrol and food. However, when they arrived in Dakar five days later, Cheikh noticed that the captain had some petrol left, which would suggest that there would have been enough for the whole trip. According to Pierre the reason for return was not the lack of patrol but the anxiety of the captain for incarceration upon arrival on the Canary Islands, a practice he had heard about over the radio during the trip.

Post-migration phase

When Pierre and Cheikh returned at Jaraax they rested for some days in the house of Pierre. The first days after his return were hard for Pierre; he had lost a lot of weight and he was feeling nervous. He thought about his failed trip and the money his sister and aunt had paid for it. Madeleine mentioned to me that the trip had changed Pierre, as 'he has had some problems, because he has seen a lot on the sea'.

Pierre was certain that he did not want to leave again by boat and when the owner called with the proposition to try a second time for the same money, Pierre refused. He decided not to inform his sister about this and instead told her that the money was gone and that there was no other possibility to leave again. Nevertheless, several months after his attempt Pierre still dreamed about leaving for Europe, but no more by boat:

> 'Some lose their senses in the pirogues and some die along the way. You become crazy if you are not strong. One day I will go to Europe, but not anymore in this way (…) It is the will of God [whether or not you are able to go to Europe].'

Pushed by his sister, Pierre had to ask the owner for a refund who explained that all the money was spent on food and petrol. Not being able to tell her that he could have left a second time, his disappointed sister was informed that the

money is lost. Pierre did not tell anybody about his failed trip and stayed in the house for a couple of days to recover. The only one he called was his girlfriend:

> 'I called her as soon as I returned. I had lost weight and asked her to pray for me. I told her that maybe she had done something to prevent me from arriving.'

When I asked him if he suggested that she might have gone to a *marabout* to prevent his arrival, he answered, 'yes, it is possible, we believe that'. Nevertheless, Pierre's boat migration experience was over and he and his sister directed their hopes to their brother in France. As Pierre explained, 'now with my brother in France it is not necessary anymore to leave by boat'.

The preceding cases illustrate the variations in undocumented migration decision-making behaviour. In addition to the differences, they both reveal the social processes that are central to the workings of undocumented migration. In the next chapter I will elaborate on these processes and show how a person's undocumented migration decision-making is structured by social forces.

Social dynamics of undocumented migration networks

With the closing of the South European borders and the tightening of the visa regulations, there are few opportunities left to enter Europe in a legal manner. In effect, numerous Senegalese fishermen have taken this opportunity to shift their declining revenues from the fishing industry to the more profitable boat-migration. The two selected cases show the different ways in which people with the wish to migrate respond to the availability of this undocumented migration route. I will argue that variations in migration decision-making outcomes among boat-migrants can best be explained by placing the decisions in their socio-cultural context. The main part of this chapter is therefore dedicated to the analysis of how different social networks with their related cultural elements shape the motivation and decision to migrate by boat. Based on this social analysis a conformist and opportunistic decision-making model are extracted.

A poor man's option?

Ibrahima and Pierre are, like all my other informants, young men. This is indicative of the sex composition of the boat-migration flow, which is confirmed by more recent findings that migration is selective of men between the age of 20 and

40 (Schoorl *et al.* 2000: 60).[1] My data further suggests the presence of migrants with low educational levels as well as low skilled jobs with related low salaries.[2] Having a hard time making ends meet, these men have little possibilities for social and material improvement. Furthermore, due to their low incomes they cannot afford to leave the parental house, which also counts for those who are married (with children).[3] Six out of 16 informants were married with children, which suggests that marital status does not or only slightly matters in the choice to stay in the country or to leave (see also van Dalen *et al.* 2003).[4] Despite their low salaries, it has to be mentioned that the poverty of these men and their families is relative, meaning that they are not the poorest of the country (see also Schapendonk & van Moppes 2007a: 6; Lahlou 2005: 5; Pradhan 2007: 32). Although for example their financial resources do not allow them or their children to study, the majority of my informants was able to pay for their basic necessities (food, drink, rent when necessary, transport etc.) and was not immersed in financial misery.

If it is assumed that these boat-migrants are rational beings who act out of purely economic motives, then several questions can be raised. First of all, although these people might act out of a perceived net economic benefit, then how can the risks that are inherent to this migration flow be incorporated into their cost-benefit calculation? After all, dying is one of the possibilities when taking the sea-journey. Secondly, this approach does not explain differential outcomes for persons with the same low economic status. Despite the popularity among Senegalese young men to migrate to Europe, this certainly does not mean that every person decides to make use of the undocumented sea-route to Europe. Based on previous migration related research and my own data I will suggest that a better understanding of informal migration behaviour can be achieved by taking into account migrants' embeddedness in different sets of social relationships, whereby family, friendship and smuggling networks are the most important in shaping (undocumented) migration outcomes. Contrary to previous studies on documented migration behaviour, I did not find any influence of membership in a religious brotherhood on the decision to migrate by boat, although further research is necessary to explore this more in-depth. In what follows I will discuss how the social dynamics of family and friendship relationships as well as more monetized contacts shape the motivations and decisions of undocumented boat-migrants from Senegal to the Canary Islands.

---

[1] Although there have been some reports of women on board, boat-migration is still dominated by men.

[2] All except one of the informants had a job at the time of departure.

[3] Survey data of Schoorl *et al.* (2000: 60) suggests that 40 to 50 percent of the Senegalese young men migrate from their parents' household.

[4] As these findings are based on a small group of people, it cannot be said that they are significant for the wider population and therefore have to be handled with caution.

Kinship networks

Authority and conformism

Kinship relations are an important feature of West-African life as they provide a sense of protection and solidarity. These social systems, which are mainly organized by age and sex, are structured according to relationship expectations that are inherent to a so-called collectivist "we-culture". The main expectations that structure family relationships are manifested in *obedience*, complying with orders of mostly authoritarian persons, *docility,* the tendency of people to fulfil social norms even when they are in conflict with their own opinions, and *conformity,* adjusting to the real or imaginary pressure from the outside world (Matsumoto & Geluk 1997: 142). This roughly means that older brothers have control over their younger siblings and fathers over their children and wives (see also Beuving 2006: 93; Fleischer 2006: 5).[5] In addition, within the household a gendered division of labour places women in charge of domestic affairs, while men are expected to financially take care of their parents and siblings. Especially after the father retires the older sons are expected take care of their elder(s), which often results in them quitting their education and finding themselves a job (see also Mbow & Penda 2006: 59). This was the case for Ibrahima, who decided to leave his education as it was expected of him to financially take care of his father. As many young men in Senegal are dependent on low wage jobs, this *expectation of sharing* puts a lot of pressure on their own lives, as the norms of conformism, obedience and docility does not leave these men much room for making their own (financial) decisions. This process can lead to a high level of frustration, as a friend of Ibrahima explained:

> 'The problem here is that parents don't work and the sons have to take care of the whole family. If the parents would be working, then together we would be able to take care of the household, but that is not how it works here. I am the only one who has to take care of the whole family and you can never say that to your parents that it is like that.'

Migrant consumer culture

The family pressure and the related frustration among young men who have difficulties in building up their own life is reinforced by the wish for social mobility by both family members as well as by the young men. Already settled migrants who have been able to invest their earned money in the construction of a house, a marriage, and the purchase of a car in their country of origin, contribute to the formation of a relatively new 'migrant consumer culture'.[6] The pattern of luxury consumption of successful migrants and their families stands in

---

[5] In Senegal these kinship structures are further complicated by polygamous marriages.
[6] Adesina (2007) has coined the term 'middle-class ideology of consumption' for this phenomenon.

contrast with the lifestyle of those who stay behind (see also Riccio 2001b: 585).[7] Their lack of resources results in a form of *relative deprivation,* in which the perception of poverty is redefined; it does not matter what somebody has, but more what this person does not have in comparison to his wealthier migrant neighbour. Among the ones who are exposed to this highly valued migrant consumer culture, a desire for luxury goods in an attempt to achieve the same status, can become an powerful motivation to migrate (see also Curran & Saguy 2001: 63). It are mainly urban dwellers who are affected by this; they live in the outskirts of the city and belong to the lower regions of society, while on a daily basis they are exposed to the achievements of their more wealthy co-nationals. As they see little alternatives in achieving this standard of living, to them, a move to Europe seems inevitable (see also Salam Fall 2007: 151). In effect, people migrate not so much out of an urge to minimize economic risks for the household, but rather out of a wish to purchase luxury items and social upward mobility.

This process can be seen on both the household as well as the individual level. The expectation for young men to take care of the other household members surpasses the need for the contribution to the daily nourishment as household members might send a younger relative abroad in order for them to achieve a more luxury standard of living. Besides the construction of a house and the purchase of cars, lifecycle celebrations, i.e. baptisms and weddings are important events for showing one's wealth and status. The high amount of money that migrant households are spending on these status symbols contributes to relative deprivation among other households that have to 'compete' with them and, in effect, the pressure on financial resources from sons is high. When they are not able to contribute to social mobility for the household by staying in the country, household members, based on the collective 'we-culture' can decide to send one of their members to Europe.

The other side of the coin is that a combination of the demanding elements of this collectivist culture on young men and the expectations of consuming luxury goods can actually amplify the incentive to migrate for these young men themselves. As one unsuccessful boat-migrant commented:

> 'In Europe it is different, because maybe there it is hard, it is better. There you have work, money and not much expenses, because your wife and your family are not there with you who ask you all the time for money. Here you have to pay for the Grand Magal,[8] the ceremonies and also for the food. When you are the only one in a house of ten that is working on a daily basis than it is hard (...) When you are in

---

[7] It should be mentioned that only the Western wealth and luxury products are positively valued, while Western cultural norms and values are not.

[8] The *Grand Magal* is the annual festival of the Mouride brotherhood, which takes place in Touba (Coulon 1999: 195).

Europe and you cannot pay for something you just do not pick up the phone and you keep on working until one day you have enough money to send home.'

This illustrates that the pressure to share one's revenues with other family members exists next to the urge for individual social upward mobility and an urge for independence. This individual desire for self-satisfaction is not largely discussed in recent migration research in which the focus is more on household incentives (see also Adesina 2007). My data shows that for many young men, influenced by the success stories of other migrants, a higher social status and independence from the family are important reasons for leaving. As one unsuccessful boat-migrant explained:

'I just want to live my dream, to have a beautiful villa and a nice car. That is what I want. I do not want to stay with my family. When you have a nice villa people from the neighbourhood give you respect. They say: "Do you see that villa? The owner is in Italy", and so they know that he has a lot of money. That is why they give them respect. Without money you are nothing here.'

By migrating to Europe these young men from the less advantaged strata of society believe they will be more respected in their social environment as soon as they send money home to their family or start constructing their own house. In addition, as a successful migrant, the chances of getting married increase as their position as son-in law rises.[9] As could be seen from the migrant networks of Ibrahima and Pierre, many of their migrant relations married a woman after they had left Senegal, a result of the status these men were assigned back home even when they were not yet financially successful. However, the expectation that they will be doing economically well in the future has resulted in many parents deciding to have their daughter(s) married to migrants from whom a large dowry can be demanded. Therefore, parental expectations for their daughters' future are not only influenced by the migrant consumer culture, but also motivates future migration (see also Riccio 2001b: 586; Mbow & Penda 2006: 71).

For many young men, leaving for Europe means a possibility to respond to family demands, while at the same time they expect to be able to pursue individual goals in life. These motivating factors are related to the place a person has in the household. For example, older sons will be more pressed to migrate in order to fulfil the familial expectations, while for younger sons this factor is less relevant. Rather, they leave out of a desire to improve their own life and to have as great an extent of independence from other social contacts as possible (see also van Donge 1992: 184). However, in the dominant discourse on collective solidarity, individual success is not highly valued especially not by well-established senior members. Consequently, most young men will never mention in public that they want to pursue their own goals in life. Instead they mention that

---

[9]   Several informants mentioned that their girlfriends had left them for a migrant.

financially taking care of other family members is the most important reason for them to leave.

Transnational family networks and lack of social capital
The preceding paragraphs have sketched the socio-cultural context in which migration decisions are made, which relate to both documented as well as un-documented migration behaviour. Social relationships can also specifically shape boat-migration. When a person has the intention to migrate, the question of how he is going to accomplish this has to be answered. One of the most common means of entering Europe is to travel on a temporary tourist visa, which can be received via a contact in a European member state. Instrumentalist thinkers on social capital argue that membership in certain networks enable a person to make access claims on scarce resources, which in this case would be a travel document. However, when looking at the normative and information content of family net-works it becomes clear that this is not always the case. For example, Ibrahima, who belongs to a large migrant family, is not able to mobilize his overseas con-tacts to accomplish his own migration plans.

When a member of the family migrates he is expected to share his future revenues with the family members who stay behind. Ibrahima's contacts instead told him that their life in the West is difficult and living conditions expensive, in an attempt to justify their inability (or unwillingness) to help. Others have gone a step further and severed all contact with their extended family members. In this way, one avoids being asked for help and from disappointing the relatives. For the ones at home this means that the migrant is not able to move in a legal man-ner to Europe with the financial and/or material support from this network. As this *avoidance* is not what is expected from family members, the behaviour of the migrant by the ones who cannot make use of his/her resources is explained in terms of jealousy, competition and the person becoming *toubab*.[10] The logic behind this is easy to catch. As a result of the optimistic ideas about life in the West it is in general assumed that being a migrant equals having money for those at home. As a result of the *familial obligation to share*, the 'rich emigrant' is expected to share his wealth with other family members. Therefore, the anger and incomprehension that result in a discourse on jealousy and competition derives from the belief that the emigrant is unwilling to help those 'at home'. As one unsuccessful boat-migrant explained about the impossibility to make use of his transnational family contacts:

---

[10] In West Africa *toubab* is used to indicate white persons. However, in this case *toubab* is not related to skin colour but more to character traits that are attributed to Western people, e.g. forgetting those who stay behind and becoming more individualistic.

'My older brothers tell me all the time that life is difficult in Italy.[11] But if life is really that hard, then why are they staying there? If it is really hard they have to come back. They have built nice houses here and they work to help their parents, but they refuse to give us (other family members) money, so we can leave as well. This is because they are afraid that you will become wealthier than them. I know that, because they have the means to help me and they refuse. What else should I think?'

This illustrates that by leaving the country relationship patterns can change when the emigrant abandons the familial obligations. In effect, for the ones at home it becomes more difficult to make use of their transnational kinship networks for their own benefit. Thus, even though a person can be a member of a large migrant family network, this does not automatically mean that he is able to convert these contacts into useful social and financial capital. What makes the difference is the kind of family tie. In most cases migrants do tend to share their resources (when they can) with direct family members (parents and direct siblings) at home. This is probably the result of interfamilial expectations and the fear for social sanctions, especially when this person has the future intention to return to the country of origin. This is illustrated by the case of Pierre and Madeleine, who both expressed that their brother in France will help them within a reasonable amount of time. This can also have consequences for future migration: When already one person of the close family is abroad, there is less pressure for other siblings to do the same thing. Yet, this is only the case when this migrant sends enough remittances to arrange social upward mobility for the ones at home. When the migrant only provides for his own upward mobility, competition among siblings can become an extra incentive for (undocumented) migration.

Friendship networks

Peer pressure
Although friendship relationships have received relatively little attention in migration related research, my data indicates that these networks both at home and overseas can significantly influence the decisions and motivations for undocumented migration behaviour. More so than with family members, a discourse on the possibility of undocumented migration can be found among peers. Talking to friends about the decision to leave does not only occur in order to ask for advice, but also to encourage others to come along, as it is believed that leaving together can form a source of mutual support during as well as after the trip.

Although friendship networks at home do not have such a large impact on the decision and motivation for undocumented migration, this does not count for transnational friendship relations. Contact with friends is mainly characterized by indirect information, as most migrants restrict contact to their direct family mem-

---

[11] These were the sons from another wife of his father.

bers. This means that membership in these networks does not lead to social capital, a result of complex relationship norms. In contrast to certain family contacts it is an unwritten rule not to ask friends for support. Besides the lack of social capital, friendship networks can influence undocumented migration decision-making through *peer pressure*. First of all, success stories of others who have made it by boat to the Canary Islands triggers future boat-migration, as the perceived chances of arriving in Europe increase.[12] As one unsuccessful boat-migrant explained:

> 'First I was not interested, but then my friends started to leave in October 2006. I thought it was suicide and asked myself, "How are they able to go from Senegal to the Canary Islands?" I did not believe in the possibility to cross the ocean with a pirogue. But my friends arrived and after them many others. Even very close friends left. So I said to myself, "why don't I leave?"'

This suggests that the more persons in one's social network have tried to leave by boat, the more likely this person himself will attempt to make use of the same route. However, this process can also work the other way around; during the time I was doing fieldwork, decreased chances of arrival, mainly due to the large amount of repatriations from the Canary Islands, have caused a decrease in the number of attempts. However, this has not ceased people from making use of undocumented migration routes. Rather, alternative routes are developed for which the chances of success are believed to be higher.

In addition, migrated friends play a large role in the development of relative deprivation, and thereby can motivate (undocumented) migration behaviour. For example, Ibrahima justified his departure to his cousin by telling him that he *had* to leave because many of his friends had done so. As a potential boat-migrant commented:

> 'I have a lot of friends and neighbours that have left and that motivates me to leave as well. These people did not have any education, but after they migrated to Italy they started to construct their own house. So I thought, "Why do I stay here? While my friends with less education can build a house and have a car, while I cannot". That is why I left school and started to work. I said to myself, "If I have a million I can leave and become like them."'

The idea that life in Europe is all positive is further constructed by telephone contact with migrated friends and during return visits. Interactive informal information distribution (worth by mouth) is the dominant way in which country and migration specific issues receive the ones at home, which means a dependency for information on social networks. Contact between friends, mainly weak ties, is characterized by prejudiced positive information of life in Europe in order to live up to what the migrant believes is expected of him. This also counts for

---

[12] Schapendonk & van Moppes (2007c: 14) have called this the 'self-propagandizing process'.

return visits of migrated friends, who have the tendency to show their newly acquired wealth, even when this does not reflect reality. For example, one day a migrant friend of one of my informants came to the house where we had gathered to watch television. His performance stood in sharp contrast with the others in the room and confirmed the stereotypical migrant; wearing large golden neck-laces and fancy clothing. However, when I had a chat with him in Dutch,[13] I found out that his life as a migrant was not all that positive, but his friends in the room all believed that he had become a rich man. Nonetheless, there are also migrated friends who do try to give a more realistic picture of life in Europe, even during return visits. This can sometimes be experienced as problematic, as one visiting migrant explained:

> 'When I tell my friends in Senegal that life in England is hard, they get angry with me and tell me I should not tell them that. They just do not want to believe me.'

Among the receivers information is mostly processed according to the strength of the tie, whereby strong ties are considered to be more reliable sources of information than weak ties, based on perceived trust in the relationship. Both strong and weak ties can contain positive and negative messages of life in Europe, however, when it comes to strong ties, the negative information will be more likely to be perceived as realistic. In order for this to happen, people need to have contact on a regular basis next to a strong emotional relationship. Espe-cially strong relationships with persons who live an informal life in the West can adjust the too optimistic image of 'the migrant'. In effect, the more strong ties a person has, the more realistic his picture of Europe will be, and consequently, the lower the expectations of life as an informal migrant. However, when a person is not a member of a strong migrant network, but instead has only sporadic and indirect contact with transnational contacts, the less trust he will have in the information they bring when it comes to negative images. Consequently, their image of the West will be more positively biased, thereby reinforcing the mo-tivation for undocumented migration. For those with a more realistic idea of in Europe, the likelihood of departure by boat will decrease.

A final remark can be made on the availability of migrant networks upon arrival. Based on migration studies from Mexico to the United States, Massey *et al.* (2005) argued that reliance on transnational networks increase in relation to the height of risks attached to migration. As undocumented migration routes in general can be considered to be more dangerous, due to clandestine border cross-ing as well as dependence on smuggling networks, it can be expected that un-documented migrants rely more on their transnational networks. Surprisingly I found that most of my informants did not prepare anything for arrival in Europe.

---

[13] He happened to live in the Netherlands. By communicating in Dutch I prevented others from hearing our conversation and expected him to give less socially desirable answers.

This was for several reasons. First of all, the majority believed that they could rely on the solidarity of the migrant community in different European countries. Although in some cases reference was made to a strong network tie in a particular European country, in general it was expected that the Senegalese community would be willing to help newly arrived migrants. Secondly, uncertainty of the success of the trip as well as social stigma cause boat-migrants to keep silent towards their transnational contacts, as it is unclear whether this person agrees with this mode of migration. Therefore, many take a phone number of a transnational contact with them, who will be phoned upon arrival in Spain, as it is believed that expected relationships of solidarity are stronger than the social stigma associated with undocumented migration.[14]

Sorcery and social stigmatization

Although there is a dialogue on boat-migration among peers, when the agreement is made with the organizers, the migrant and his family members (when they are aware of the plans) keep this from as many people as possible. An important factor in this is the belief in witchcraft and sorcery. Witches are believed to be ordinary people who possess certain supernatural powers with which they can harm others. Although this is mainly referred to in the context of physical illness (Franklin *et al.* 1996: 325), their role is evident in boat-migration behaviour. It is believed that certain persons possess the 'power of speech', meaning that their words can harm others, and with this can endanger the success of the sea-journey. As the carriers of this power are unknown, nobody can be trusted besides close kin. In addition, people are convinced that sorcery can cause bad fortune for boat-migrants. For example, out of jealousy an acquaintance[15] of the boat-migrant can try to prevent a person from arriving by means of so-called *maraboutage,* spells acted out by magicians or *marabouts* (Ibid.). One unsuccessful boat-migrant explained that 'with magic friends can do anything, they can go to a marabout, that is real'. This belief in sorcery and witchcraft is widespread in Senegal (see also Franklin 1996: 325; Gemmeke 2004: 72) and a reason for boat-migrants and their family members not to communicate their migration plans to others.

Another reason for withholding information is the illicit nature of the phenomenon. When a greater number of persons know about the departure of a boat, the chances of arrest increase, while the chances to make use of this opportunity

---

[14] In reality this is not always the case. During my fieldwork in the Netherlands I came to understand that also within the migrant community a social hierarchy exists between documented and undocumented immigrants. Although out of solidarity the undocumented immigrants are helped by the documented community members, they are expected to keep quiet and not to be a burden to the first group.

[15] This can be a wife, relative, friend or neighbour (see also Gemmeke 2004: 73).

diminish.[16] In addition, fear for social stigma among boat-migrants and their family members keep them from talking about their plans. For example, among Pierre's closest friends a negative attitude towards migration by boat can be observed. Out of fear for social criticism, he does not tell his friends about his departure, in which he perseveres even after his return. Historically extensive use of migration in Senegal (for more detail see Hallaire 2007) has led to a so-called 'culture of migration', meaning that migration has become 'deeply ingrained into the repertoire of people's behaviour, and values associated with migration become part of the community's values' (Massey *et al.* 2005: 47). However, this does not count for undocumented migration routes, not even in areas like Jaraax, where a large part of the population has taken part in this migration flow. In effect, decision-makers, whether this is the migrant or his senior family member, are very careful and selective in distributing information on the migration plans in an effort to avoid social stigmatization. This is also the reason why in most cases potential boat-migrants and their family members do not inform transnational contacts before arrival in Europe.

Smuggling networks

Besides family and friendship relationships, organizational networks of boat-migration from Senegal to the Canary Islands have an effect on the decision-making process among potential boat-migrants and/or other family members. For many people information on the possibility of the alternative sea-route is regarded by potential boat-migrants and their families as an opportunity to leave, especially when they hear of others who have made use of this. For these people, leaving the country in a legal manner has become extremely difficult, while the opportunity to leave by boat is considered to be easier, cheaper and more certain than leaving by plane. In addition, making concrete plans and actually deciding to leave by boat only occurs when information on the departure of a boat had reached my informants. Thus, the availability of this alternative route for those who express the wish to migrate, and the establishment of contact with the smuggling network, comes before the actual decision to leave via the sea-route. The lack of present-day sea-transport from Central Senegal is therefore another reason why attempts to leave by boat for the Canary Islands have decreased in this region during the last few years.

As smugglers want their boats to fill up as quickly and quietly as possible, recruiting clients is mostly done through personal contacts in the area from where the owner of the boat lives, although boats do not necessarily leave from this

---

[16] Schapendonk & van Moppes (2007c: 17) mentioned the same for the reluctance to share migration related information among Sub-Saharan migrants in Morocco.

place. This means that the client is in direct or indirect contact with the owner through friends, neighbours or relatives. As one unsuccessful boat-migrant commented:

> 'A friend of mine introduced me to his older brother, the recruiter, and explained to me that a friend of this brother owns a boat that was preparing to leave for the Canary Islands.'

As most owners are former fishermen, recruitment in the same neighbourhood means that the majority of boat-migrants come from coastal areas. Yet, there are cases in which the potential boat-migrant actively searches for a smuggling network, which mainly occurs when the person does not live near the coast. Nonetheless, these contacts are still characterized by personal contacts, as one unsuccessful migrant from an inner suburb of Dakar explained:

> 'I contacted somebody in Ziguinchor [the Casamance] to ask about the possibilities and price for departure. This is a man who builds pirogues in the Casamance. I asked a friend for the number, because I knew that his brother had left by boat. When I had the number I contacted the owner of the boat and asked him how much it would cost and when he would be leaving.'

The price that has to be paid for the sea-crossing is subject to the negotiation skills of the client[17] and the relationship this person has with the organizers. The closer one is to the owner, the lower the price, which also explains why Ibrahima was able to negotiate a price of 350,000 FCFA, as he was in direct contact with the owner of the boat, while the sister of Pierre, who had to bargain with a recruiter, was not able to go below a price of 500,000 FCFA.[18] This money has to be paid within a very short period of time, as the time between hearing of a boat that is going to leave and the actual departure is no more than a couple of days to one week. Convincing friends to come along can influence the price. In an attempt to fill up the boat as quickly as possible, organizers of the journey might suggest a lower price when the client is able to recruit more people. Yet, differing relationships with other organizers can also be an incentive for friends to leave through varying channels.

One of the advantages of personal relationships in this informal migration organization is its contribution to the (perceived) amount of trust, which is of vital importance for both the smuggler as well as for the client, who have to rely on oral agreements. During the negotiation of the price, the owner 'promises' the client an arrival on the Canary Islands.[19] In theory this means that the migrant can try to reach the Islands as many times as possible without additional payment

---

[17] I use the term 'client' here as this person can be both the potential migrant as well as another person who negotiates the price.

[18] Informants have mentioned prices ranging from 200,000 up to 1,000,000 CFA Francs.

[19] This does not include a transfer to Europe. When the migrant is repatriated from the Canary Islands the agreement is over and he will lose all his money.

for every successive attempt. In return the owner will refund the migrant when the Islands are not reached and he decides not to make any further attempts. Direct or indirect personal contact with the organizers helps to establish these kinds of oral agreements as it heightens the confidence of the client over the owner's trustworthiness. After all, large amounts of money have to be paid. For the owner himself trust is also of importance, not only as a result of the informal and illicit nature of this kind of migration, but also for his reputation. When more people hear that taking the sea-journey through this person has resulted in persons arriving at the Canary Islands, the future economic transactions of the owner will be secured. Therefore, 'doing good' and being trustworthy can be an incentive for owners if they want to continue their activities in the undocumented boat-migration. However, in practice it often turns out that the owner does not refund anything or only part of the money, while only leaving the migrant the option of another free trial, that is, when he has another boat ready for departure. This was the case for both Ibrahima and Pierre, even though Ibrahima knew the owner from the neighbourhood. The owner explained to him that he had spent all the money on the previous trip and therefore was not able to give a refund. However, when the clients feel that they have been mistreated, they can decide to go to the police and in this way put more pressure on the owners to act according to the agreement. There are also many cases in which the owner of the boat flees the country when he can or will not pay a refund and when he has no other boat ready for departure.

Coping with physical risks

One of the factors that make undocumented migration different from its formal variant is the high amount of risk attached to it. In the preceding paragraphs I already mentioned the chance of losing financial resources and how people cope with social stigmatization. Even more obvious and visible are the physical risks. The first question that can be asked is whether the ones that engage themselves in boat-migration are aware of the possibility of dying? In contrast to positive bias on the information that people take on about life in Europe, my data shows that people are generally well informed about the dangers of the trip before departure. From the beginning of the boat-migration, word was spread in the suburbs about people that did not survive the trip. Consequently, many were discouraged by these stories and preferred leaving for Europe by less dangerous routes (see also Schapendonk & van Moppes 2007c: 15). A minority decided to make use of the sea-passage anyway and found certain ways to cope with the physical dangers. Giddens (2003: 40-41) has suggested that people in non-western societies tend to substitute sorcery, luck and the will of god(s), for risk. This is exactly what boat-

migrants do in order to place the negative consequences outside of themselves. As one unsuccessful boat-migrant commented:

> 'Everything is in the hands of God. If he has decided that you will die tomorrow, you will die tomorrow. Than it does not matter whether you are on open sea, lie in your bed, or eat a chicken.'

Consequently, the possibility of dying during the trip is considered to be part of one's destiny ('the will of God') or put in the hands of those that enact sorcery. As I mentioned before, one way of coping with the possibility of sorcery is not to tell others about your plans to leave. Partaking in magical practices is another means of acting out some sort of control over the harm that can be caused by others as well as by the forces of nature.[20] Most boat-migrants see a *marabout* the day before they leave to ask whether the day of departure will be a good day, which in most cases is suggested that it will be.[21] If the *marabout* assures the migrant about the good prospects for the day of departure, or when the person wants to leave anyway, he often takes part in defensive practices, such as wearing amulets (*gris gris*), take baths with special powders (also on open sea), or make a sacrifice assigned to him by the magical-religious leader.[22] This is not only carried out by the boat-migrants, but also by the organizers of the trip, for example, by washing the boat with spiritual water. Making these efforts suggests that prospective migrants and their families are well aware of the risks that they will face during the trip (see also Schapendonk & van Moppes 2007c: 14). In addition, by protecting themselves from these dangers, they make attempts to decrease the costs of boat-migration, in this case the possibility of dying.

Conformist versus opportunistic driven migration

For many young men, leaving for Europe means a possibility to respond to both family demands as well as to the wish for individual success. In this *opportunistic* model of migration decision-making it is the migrant himself who decides to leave by boat. As the case of Ibrahima illustrates, when a person is a member of a large migrant network of weak ties, it is very likely that he will not be able to make access claims on resources in order to migrate in a legal manner. Yet, his membership in these types of networks can lead to relative deprivation and ancillary feelings of social stigmatization as a result of (selectivity of) 'success

---

[20] Protection through magic in any kind of professional or personal situation is practiced among the Senegalese population at large (see also Gemmeke 2004: 72; Franklin *et al.* 1996: 325).

[21] Only one informant mentioned that the *marabout* had expressed that it would not be a good day for departure.

[22] It can be assumed that many *marabouts*, not too concerned with their clients, make use of the opportunity to earn a lot of money. As most are aware, through newspaper articles and word by mouth stories that the water is capricious close to Mauritania, this is what many of them say to the potential boat-migrants.

stories' from migrated friends. For these young men, family demands and the urge for individual social mobility are the ultimate goals for migration. When they hear of alternative routes to leave for Europe and they have contact with organizers, it will be very likely that these men will make use of undocumented migration.

In the process of preparing for departure by boat, the undocumented migrant will deliberately make use of several contacts, depending on their opinion on the practice of boat-migration. Due to hierarchical and authoritarian relationship structures, family members are of special concern. It is expected that younger members of the family ask permission from authoritarian figures, for every action they want to make, as otherwise it is believed that bad fortune will befall upon them.[23] This means that those who think about leaving by boat should ask their elderly for consent in order to safeguard one's luck during the trip. For these young men a problem arises when the authoritarian person does not agree with the migration plans, as could be seen in the case of Ibrahima and his uncle. In this situation the migrant can decide to do several things. First of all, he can try to convince the senior or, when this does not work, decide to skip the plan. However, when one has made the decision to leave and already commenced some preparations, this person is more likely to choose not to inform seniors on the planned trip, which can range from the complete trip to the day of departure. As one unsuccessful boat-migrant explained:

> 'A lot of people that have left from here did not tell their parents about their plans to leave by boat, because they do not agree with this sort of migration because of the physical risks. The second time that I left I did not inform my parents as I knew that they would not agree with me leaving by boat from the first time I had left. So the day of departure I lied to them by saying that I was going to Thies,[24] where the father of my older brother lives.'

Silence and lying is a widely used strategy among boat-migrants in order to act out agency within the authoritarian relationship structures.

As a result of disagreement, which can jeopardize the planned trip, the individual migrant in general will not make use of strong family networks in the preparatory phase. Establishing contact with the organizers mostly runs through direct or indirect friendship relations. In some cases the migrant makes use of a trusted family member, but only when he knows that this person cannot affect the decision-making process, nor disagrees with the migration plans. Being able to collect the amount of money that is needed is sometimes facilitated by strong

---

[23] As a result of these familial relationship structures, younger members of the household are never asked for consent and in most cases not informed about the migration plans as this information can only jeopardize the migration act. The same counts for the wife of a potential boat-migrant, as within conjugal relations it is the husband who holds authority.

[24] Thies is a city situated some 58 km east of Dakar.

family members, at least, when they agree with the trip. For example, one unsuccessful boat-migrant explained that his mother paid for the trip with money she got from a weekly mutual in which she participated. Nonetheless, in most cases the migrant himself is the one who collects the necessary financial resources. This is done by borrowing money from relatives under false pretexts, while other heard stories are about men who sell their luxury goods, i.e., a television, DVD-player or large wooden beds and closets, while some also have savings of their own. Yet, the ability to collect a large amount of money by the person himself can be a plausible reason for keeping silent on the planned trip towards other family members. When the elderly relative does not agree, but knows that the migrant has enough money to pay for migration by boat, the migrant will be expected to distribute the money within the household and therefore will lose his savings as well as the possibility to migrate.

From the data a second decision-making model has emerged, which results from the expectations that structure family relationships. This *conformist* driven migration behaviour is characterized by ambivalence and indicates that not all migrants agree with undocumented migration. This model is illustrated by the story of Pierre; out of a wish for social mobility, rather than minimizing financial risks for the household, authority figures, in his case the older sister, can decide to send a member of the household abroad. The same situation applied to other informants, as one of them explained:

> 'It was my older brother who pushed me to leave by boat. He wanted me to help the family and told me that the big houses belong to migrants. He wanted that as well and that is why he told me to leave.'

When another family member has decided on the migration, it is also this person who takes care of all the arrangements that makes the departure possible. He/she takes care of the contact with the owner or the recruiter, which mostly is a friend or acquaintance from the neighbourhood. In addition, the authority figure arranges a useful contact in Europe in order to support the migrant once he has informed this person about his arrival. Subsequently, the decision-maker is the one who collects the necessary financial resources that has to be paid to the owner or recruiter. This mostly results in them handing in their savings, and in the case of women, the selling of jewellery. In return for their investment remittances are expected, which puts a lot of pressure on the migrant, especially when he fails to make it to Europe. In this situation, the disappointment among the other household member(s) can be so pressing for young men that they might decide to leave again even when they do not agree with it themselves. However, most will try to avoid this when the opportunity arises. Even though these young men operate in the same social context of hierarchical and authoritarian family relations as opportunistic boat-migrants, they show a reluctance to take part in

undocumented migration. This can be explained by the type of social networks. Young men, like Pierre, who are not a member of large migrant networks, are less likely to be affected by relative deprivation. In addition, he finds himself in an environment in which his strong friendship network at home disagrees with this kind of migration. These factors in combination with the perceived dangers of the trip, most likely will result in a reluctance to leave in an informal way. Nonetheless, when they are chosen by an authoritarian family member (or multiple), the possibility of social sanctions gives them little freedom to act otherwise, a consequence of their embeddedness in a family structure in which it is expected of younger persons to obey their seniors. This is reinforced when they are financially dependent on this person. However, despite the authoritarian nature of family relationships, chosen migrants are not "cultural dopes" of the social system. Instead, they are able to process information about the rules of their social relationships and based on this knowledge they will find their own space to act. For example, before his departure Pierre made several attempts to convince his sister to revise her decision, albeit without the desired effect. Even though he did not agree, his migration behaviour can be said to be based on a knowledgeable and rational decision. He was aware of the social sanctions, his sister turning against him and possible repudiation from the family, if he would have chosen not to obey his sister. Not only is conformist behaviour learnt and internalized, the negative consequences of it are perceived to be higher than the possible risks of the sea-passage – social stigma and physical dangers. Consequently, these young men choose actively, with the little freedom they have to act otherwise, to leave. However, when possible, meaning when action does not result in social sanctions, individuals will try to surpass the norms that structure the familial system. This was illustrated by the case of Pierre, who lied to his sister about the possibility of a second attempt, in this way creating his own freedom to act by basing his disobedient behaviour on another person, the owner of the boat, and thereby preventing social sanctions.

In this chapter I have suggested that the motivations and decisions to migrate by boat from Senegal to the Canary Islands are much more complex and heterogeneous than micro- and macro-economic theories would like us to believe. I have sketched the socio-cultural context in which general migration decisions are made. To explain the motivations and decisions of boat-migrants in particular, I have focused on the varying roles played by family-, friendship- and smuggling networks. My analysis shows that the presence of these networks and the type of ties influences differential undocumented migration outcomes. Two decision-making models followed from this, of which the basis of both is the pressure to respond to family demands for social mobility. However, the final outcomes differ as a result of membership in or exclusion from certain social networks

upon which decisions are based, albeit from an actor perspective. On the one hand this has resulted in an opportunistic driven migration model, in which the migrant, due to his membership in certain social networks, is eager to leave in order to respond to family demands and to pursue his own success and independency from the family. In order to make undocumented migration possible he deliberately and selectively uses his social contacts. On the other hand a conformist model suggests more ambivalent migration behaviour. Yet, young men who are ordered by an authoritarian figure to leave and who do not agree with this will act otherwise when possible. Both models can thus be explained from an agency perspective, but only when taking into account the knowledge people have of social relationships upon which they base their action.

7

Conclusion: Structure and agency
in undocumented migration

In the preceding chapters I have presented two undocumented migration models, which are distinctive in their unit of decision-making, the individual versus the household. If these cases would have been analyzed according to a rational choice or structural approach, both models would leave many questions unanswered. Conformist driven migration seems irrational from a rational choice perspective based on universal axioms. After all, for these men it would be more beneficial to run the risk of exclusion from the family, which could have been the social sanction when disobeying the decision of the authority figures, instead of the possibility of dying during the trip. Also the structural models would not have been able to explain why there are differences in migration outcomes among people with a similar standard of living. The simple and one-sided views of these approaches do not bring us much further in understanding differential outcomes, but can be overcome be applying an actor-oriented analysis, as Long (2001: 13) has argued:

> One advantage of the actor approach is that one begins with an interest in explaining differential responses to similar structural circumstances, even if the conditions appear relatively homogeneous. Thus one assumes that the differential patterns that arise are in part the joint creation of the actors themselves.

In this final chapter I will argue that undocumented boat-migrants from Senegal to the Canary Islands do not make decisions as atoms outside of their social context, nor do they adhere slavishly to impersonal social forces that are set out

for them. Instead, their migration behaviour can be better understood by embedding their action in systems of social relationships, while recognizing the central role played by the migrants themselves.

Revisiting socially constructed migration models

Social norms and the relative freedom to act
The model in which another member of the household selects a person to take part in undocumented migration can be regarded as a typical case of the collective decision-making model. In this case, a senior member of the household does not only decides who leaves, but also makes the arrangements for the trip and in return expects remittances from the migrant. However, in contrast to the *new economics of migration* theory, in which it is argued that the household decision of migration is based on minimizing economic risks for the household, my study shows that it are not the poorest households which make use of boat-migration, while the costs of sending a member of the family abroad – emotional as well as possible funeral costs – are high. Moreover, remittances are not expected to contribute to absolute income, but rather to a higher level of social status, a result of the norm for middle-class consumption. The desire to achieve this status is internalized and transmitted in power relations and brought into real life by networks of responsibilities and expectations, whereby the family is the most important socializing agent. Consequently, the hierarchical family structures that give the senior the power to make decisions over a younger member of the household can result in migration action. This is motivated by social sanctions which are attached to these relations, whereby few space is left for the younger member to act otherwise, as would have been the case when these social forces were not at work. Although Giddens (1984) has argued that sanctions which result from informal rules are weak (as opposed to the sanctions attached to formal rules) my data shows that they can indeed be very strong and effective. In fact, in some cases the subordinate agent is unable to resist the social forces that impinge upon him. However, and this is important, in contrast to the *new economics of migration*, the decision of the parent does not lead to a slavishly following of the pressure of the social structure on the person with a relatively low household status, when he does not agree with the decision. Instead the person over whom power is exercised will try to create his freedom to act by making up lies and excuses. This is an often neglected element in the existing migration literature in which it is mainly assumed that authority figures send a person of the household abroad, who cannot do anything but confirm to the dominant structure. This view is voiced by Fleischer (2006: 24) in a study among Cameronian documented migration behaviour: '(…) in some cases the parents make the [migra-

tion] decision and the child in question has little choice other than to follow the parental decision'.

Ambivalence

The case of the individual migrant shows that undocumented migration decision-making processes are more heterogeneous than the *new economics of migration* would suggest. For these young men, the act of migration in itself can be considered as a form of agency and a way to act *against* the dominant system of social expectations. Migration decisions are not always conditioned within households, nor based on absolute economic cost-benefit calculations by the individual (rational choice perspective). Rather they are motivated by the urge for personal autonomy and individual success, in combination with the possible prospect of responding to family demands. This means that individual decisions are based on the embeddedness of these persons in specific social relationships. The socially valued idea of individual success, which is a result of the emerging modern middle-class consumer culture, stands on an inferior place next to the master narrative of solidarity with the collective. Therefore, no person will openly claim that they want to migrate out of a wish to become independent from the family (see also Riccio 2000). Consequently, the possibilities to act according to it are relatively small, especially when staying in the country, as a result of the dominant narrative of solidarity values. Because this social norm bites deep into time and space, it is for the individual agent difficult to make changes to it (Giddens 1984: 171). Therefore, for young Senegalese, changing the existing rules of the institution of collectivism and its related networks of expectations is extremely difficult and they believe that migration is one of their limited possibilities to create space for their individual wishes and choices. This illustrates that people do not slavishly adhere to a dominant value system, but instead find creative ways of creating space for their individual wishes and choices. Or in the words of Long (2001: 16):

> '(…) the notion of agency attributes to the individual actor the capacity to process social experience and to devise ways of coping with life, even under the most extreme forms of coercion.'

Towards a heterogeneous actor-oriented decision-making model

This analysis of the undocumented migration decision-making process among Senegalese boat-migrants suggests that some adjustments have to be made to the *new economics of migration* theory, which implies that the migration decision is made by the household (or other larger unit) as a strategy to minimize economic risks. Although this model has had some explanatory power for my study, I would like to argue that this model overemphasizes the role of social structure in

which migrants are embedded, while it does not leave much room for agency of the individual undocumented migrant. My study therefore proposes several changes to the model. First of all, (undocumented) migration is not in all cases a household decision nor a purely collective motivated act. Instead, people do not only migrate as a result of accepted norms and existing power relations, but also out of self-interest, even when it clashes with the dominant discourse. This means that decisions are not solely defined by social constructions of rationality, but also by desires, self-interest and motivations, which in turn are in mutual relation with the social structure and available discourse (see also Long 2001). Second, when the household is the decision-making unit, this does not mean that the individual migrant slavishly follows the social structure. Instead, in a relatively freedom of space, a person acts out his/her own agency. Finally, households in Senegal that send one of their members abroad do not act so much out of a desire to minimize economic risks, but more out of a motivation for social upward mobility. Based on these findings I suggest that further research should not only pay attention to the social structures in which migrants are embedded, but also to the agency of the individual migrants themselves. In an effort to better understand this duality between structure and agency, future research needs to collect information on the social sanctions in case a person refuses the seniors´ migration decision.

In addition to family relationships at home, which are the so to speak 'foundations' for migration behaviour in general, social networks at varying geographical localities can influence the motivation and decision for undocumented migration more specifically. In what follows I will discuss the role of these networks in the undocumented migration decision-making process in relation to existing social network models.

Strong ties provide social capital

Membership in strong migrant networks, such as household members and close friends, can provide people with important resources. As a result of family networks of obligations, strong migrant contacts (only close relatives), are expected to share finances and make future migration possible for other family members. Research among Mexican migrants to the United States indicated that strong transnational ties were one of the most important predictors of undocumented migration behaviour (Cohen 2004; Massey *et al.* 2001). Based on these studies and the functioning of social networks from my data, I suggest that the presence of transnational contacts increases the likelihood of documented migration, while it can be expected that the chances of undocumented migration diminish. This is the result of the expectation of the ones at home to make use of future benefits from this contact(s), who thereby safeguard the possibility of documented mi-

gration. Yet, the absence of such a tie, or the inability to make use of its resources can influence the motivation and decision for undocumented migration, provided that the person is a member of a large migrant network and has access to organizational networks (see below). Nonetheless, strong relationships do not all function the same. While close family members might provide finances and help with documented migration, close friends mainly provide information. In addition, it depends on the 'sending-side' of the migrant tie and his/her access to certain resources, if the 'receiver' can mobilize these resources. Therefore, membership in a migrant network does not equal access to social capital. It can be said that boat-migrants mainly circulate in migrant networks from which no resources can be obtained, as a result of the type of tie or because the migrants ´simply´ does not have access to the demanded resources himself.

Family relations can also be of importance in other aspects of the undocumented migration decision-making process, especially when the household is the decision-making unit. In this case the household is the unit that provides for financial resources, information and makes contact with the organizers in order to make the migration act possible. In return, the household becomes the consumption unit for remittances.

Cumulative causation through weak ties
Networks between more distant contacts, i.e., friends, extended family and colleagues, function differently and therefore also have a differential effect on undocumented migration outcomes. Weak ties mainly distribute migration related information. Granovetter (1973: 1370) has called this their strength, as weak ties are 'the channels through which ideas, influences, or information socially distant from ego may reach him'. Due to relationship rules it is not accepted to make access claims on resources from these kinds of persons, i.e. visa requests and money. Although weak ties do not provide one with social capital, through cumulative causation they shape future undocumented migration action, which occurs on the personal, e.g. friends and colleagues, as well as on the community level. This means that the more people in a person's network migrate (this is even stronger when they make use of undocumented routes), the more likely a person is to do the same thing, a result of the exposure to the modern desire for individualism and social upward mobility that are transmitted through these networks (see also Curran & Sugay 2001). In addition, when a person is not a member of such networks, which is even more likely in the interior of Senegal, he is less pressed to leave, as he will not feel the urgent desire to belong to the status of middle-class nor have that much confidence in the expected remittances (Ibid.: 67). For a great part this is the result of the information that is distributed, whereby positive information about the West that comes from weak ties is fil-

tered out. In contrast, as a result of trust among strong ties,[1] negative information is more accepted, thereby shaping a more realistic picture of life in Europe. This means that the perceived benefits of undocumented migration for people with strong ties decreases, which in turn reduces the likelihood of emigration.

The need for a more sophisticated theory on social networks
Social network models, as it is used in migration related research, suggest that potential migrants can make access claims from their migrant networks in which they deliberately invest for future benefits (Staring 2001: 12). This does not hold for undocumented boat-migrants from Senegal. Although they are a member of multiple transnational networks, they are not able to mobilize the resources that could be provided by these networks, which is the result of the norms and value judgments that are inherent in these relationships. Not every person who has access to a social network automatically has access to social capital. Instead, the 'giver' in most cases avoids contact with anyone besides his close kin, thereby making a selection to which persons certain scarce resources are distributed. This means that the place of an individual in a social network determines his access to scarce resources (see also Wellman 1983: 157).

Based on my data I suggest that the idea of solidarity among social networks is too much taken for granted in the existing migration literature and it is neglected that different types of transnational relationships have varying influences on the (undocumented) migration decision-making process. Therefore, a more sophisticated view on the influence of social networks in future research is needed, whereby different types of relationships should be analyzed on the basis of their norms and resources in order to better understand their impact on migration outcomes.

What makes the difference?

Having discussed the differential roles played by personal contacts, I will attempt to further explain how undocumented migration selectivity takes place. In other words, why do some leave by boat, while others don't? Besides the influence of embeddedness in particular social networks and the overall desire for upward mobility, some other factors have to be mentioned. First of all, peer pressure appears to be an important aspect in the boat-migration decision-making process. Being surrounded by friends and neighbours who have plans to leave, or have left already, and who communicate these plans with each other can be an important incentive for a person to leave himself. In contrast, when one is embedded in

---

[1] Curran & Sugay (2001: 67) have suggested that the high level of trust among family members is based on past experiences that foster confidence.

a peer group in which undocumented migration is not accepted, emigration by boat will be less likely. However, more research is needed to better understand how peer groups at home shape undocumented migration behaviour. Access to organizational networks constitutes a further, albeit very important differentiating factor in migration outcomes. My data shows that the undocumented migration decision-making takes place within a short period of time and only when the supply of transport via undocumented routes is available. This is reinforced by the personal relationship between the organizers and the clients, which increases trust as well as the confidence in the chances of success. The proximity between the client and the organizer does not only count on the personal level, but in most cases also on a geographical level. This suggests that the majority of boat-migrants live in the same area as where organizers operate, who are mainly former fishermen in coastal regions. For people from more inland regions boat-migration will be a less reliable option and they will be more likely to opt for alternative means of migration. Finally, the financial resources of a future migrant or a household can greatly influence migration behaviour. Besides having access to financial resources to pay for the trip, having no access to a financial resource base can put poor families out of reach of migration. In addition, when households have access to more finances, alternative and more expensive forms of migration will become relevant. Nonetheless, my research suggests that in cases when the individual is the decision-maker, the household resources do not automatically influence migration behaviour, as a result of the urge for autonomy from the family and for individual success.

Conclusion

This study indicates that the reality of the undocumented boat-migrant is more complex than some theoretical models have suggested. For those who are instructed by a senior family member to leave, the dependency on this person in addition to familial relationship expectations can leave a person with little freedom to act otherwise, even when he would have done so if the social forces were not at work. Migrants who are 'forced' by their family members are very well aware of these relationship rules and make purposive decisions based on this knowledge. For these persons leaving can be a result of self-interest, considering the consequences of social sanctions if they would refuse to migrate. Based on this knowledge the boat-migrant will also try to find his freedom to act otherwise.

Also in the case in which the individual migrant himself makes the decision to leave, other factors, who can be found in the social environment of the potential boat-migrant, are of central importance in mediating differential undocumented migration outcomes. I have argued that the strength and content of transnational

network ties, peer pressure, access to undocumented migration possibilities, besides access to financial resources, are important influencing elements in undocumented migration-decision making. These factors have to be placed in the socio-cultural context of the desire for middle-class status, social collectivism and the contrasting desire for autonomy from the family and individual success.

I have argued, in contrast to the idea of undocumented migration support programmes, that boat-migrants are very well aware of the costs of migration and have found different ways to cope with them. It is believed that it is possible to protect oneself against physical risks at sea by certain magical practices, while at the same time these risks are placed outside of the migrant and put in the hands of those that enact 'witchcraft' and 'sorcery' or explained to be 'the will of God'. One way of dealing with this is to keep silent about the departure to others besides close kin. Social stigma is another possible cost, especially when the boat-migrant fails to arrive in Europe. Again people attempt to decrease the social consequences by keeping silent to others. The possibility to lose financial resources when the trip is unsuccessful is narrowed down by trust based on the personal relationship between the client and the organizer, in addition to the oral agreement in which as many successive attempts are ´promised´ when the trip is unsuccessful. This suggests that the costs of boat-migration, of which people are very well aware, are constricted. In effect, the benefits of migration – status enhancement, autonomy from the family and the possibility to respond to familial demands at the same time – are more motivating factors to leave. These social forces can make a seemingly illogical decision, from a rational choice perspective, understandable and shows that undocumented migration decision-making is not solely based on individual economic cost-benefit calculations, but should include desires, self-interest and status. This also explains why people will try to leave by boat as many times as (financially) possible, as for them the perceived benefits and the social forces that are at work outweigh the costs of migration, even when this might lead to death.

Future research is needed to collect information on undocumented migration behaviour in other areas in Senegal to confirm the results of my research, for which the Casamance (South Senegal) can be suggested to be a suitable region, as participation in boat-migration has developed here over the last years. In addition, research in the interior and rural regions from which there is not much involvement in boat-migration can be of interest to explain how they perceive boat-migration and what social factors shape this perspective.

References

ADEPOJU, A. (2005), 'Migration in West Africa', Paper prepared for the Policy Analysis and Research Programme of the Global Commission on International Migration.

ADEPOJU, A. (2006), *The challenge of labour migration flows between West Africa and the Maghreb*. Geneva: International Labour Organization, International Migration Papers 84E.

ADESINA, O.A. (2007), '"Checking out": Migration, popular culture, and the articulation and formation of class identity', Paper to African Migrations workshop on 'Understanding migration dynamics in the continent', Accra, Ghana.

AFRONEWS (2007), 'Spain, Senegal fail to reach migration deal', http://www.afrol.com/articles/21864 (visited, August 5, 2008).

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL (2005), Amnesty International statement to the 90th Session of the Governing Council of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), URL: http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/IOR30/017/2005/en/dom-IOR300172005en.html, December 1 (visited, December 15, 2008).

ANDERSSON, J.A. (2006), 'Informal moves, informal markets: International migrants and traders from Mzimba district, Malawi', *African Affairs* 104(420): 375-397.

APDHA (2007), *Droits de l'homme à la frontiére sud.* Asociación Pro Derechos Humanos de Andalucía. URL : http://www.apdha.org/media/frontierSud2007.pdf (visited July 21, 2008).

AU-SENEGAL (2007), *L'ASAPP exposait sur l'émigration clandestine*, URL : www.ausenegal.com, September 7 (visited November 4, 2007).

AVEN, T. & O. RENN (2009), 'On risk defined as an event where the outcome is uncertain', *Journal of Risk Research* 12(1): 1-11.

BAXTER, J. & J. EYLES (1997), 'Evaluating qualitative research in social geography: Establishing "rigour" in interview analysis', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 22(4): 505-525.

BERTAUX, D. (1981), 'From the life-history approach to the transformation of sociological practice.*, In: D. Bertaux, ed., *Biography and society. The life history approach in the social sciences.* London: Sage, pp. 29-45.

BEUVING, J.J. (2006), Cotonou's Klondike. A sociological analysis of entrepreneurship in the Euro-West African second-hand car trade. Unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Amsterdam.

BLEEK, W. (1987), 'Lying informants: A fieldwork experience from Ghana', *Population and Development Review* 13(2): 314-322.

BOISSEVAIN, J. (1974), Friends of friends: Networks, manipulators and coalitions. Oxford: Blackwell.

BOYD, M. (1989), 'Family and personal networks in international migration: Recent developments and new agendas', *International Migration Review* 23(3): 638-670.

BRACHET, J. (2005), 'Constructions of territoriality in the Sahara : The transformation of spaces of transit in African Migrations. Historical perspectives and contemporary dynamics'. In: V. Bilger & A. Kraler, eds, *Stichproben. Vienna Journal of African Studies*, vol. 8 (special issue), pp. 237-253.

BRETTELL, C.B. (2000), 'Theorizing migration in anthropology: The social construction of networks, identities, communities, and globalscapes'. In: C.B. Brettell & J.F. Hollifield, eds, *Migration theory. Talking across disciplines.* New York: Routledge, pp. 97-135.

CIA (2008), *The world factbook: Senegal*, Central Intelligence Agency, URL: www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/sg.html (visited August 24, 2008).

CHANFRAULT-DUCHET, M.F. (1991), 'Narrative structures, social models, and symbolic representation in the life story'. In: S. Gluck & D. Patai, eds, *Women's words: The feminist practice of oral history.* New York etc.: Routledge.

CHIN, K. (1999), Smuggled Chinese: Clandestine immigration to the United States. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

CHOLDIN, H.M. (1973), 'Kinship networks in the migration process', *International Migration Review* 7(2): 163-175.

COHEN, J.H. (2004), *The culture of migration in Southern Mexico.* Austin: University of Texas Press.

COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES (2006), *Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament. The Global Approach to Migration one year on: Towards a comprehensive European migration policy.* Brussels.

COULON, C. (1999), 'The *grand magal* in Touba: A religious festival of the Mouride brotherhood of Senegal', *African Affairs* 98: 195-210.

CURRAN, S.R. & A.C. SUGAY (2001), 'Migration and cultural change: A role of gender and social networks?', *Journal of International Women's Studies* 2(3): 54-77.

DE HAAS, H. (2005), 'Morocco: From emigration country to Africa's migration passage to Europe'. In: *Migration Information Source*, Migration Policy Institute, October 2005.

DE HAAS, H. (2007), Myth of invasion. Irregular migration from West Africa to the Maghreb and the European Union. Oxford: University of Oxford, International Migration Institute.

DE HAAS, H. (2008), Irregular migration from West Africa to the Maghreb and the European Union: An overview of recent trends, International Organization for Migration, Migration Research Series no. 32.

DER STANDARD (2007), 'Flucht auf die Kanaren kostete 2006 über 1100 Menschen das Leben'. January 16, 2007.

DUTCH EMBASSY DAKAR (2005), Illegale migratie in West Afrika. Met detailstudie Senegal en Mauritanië.

ENGBERSEN, G. & J. VAN DER LEUN (1998), 'Illegality and criminality: the differential opportunity structure of undocumented immigrants.' In: K. Koser & H. Lutz, eds, *The new migration in Europe: Social constructions and social* realities, pp. 199-223. Basingstoke: Macmillian Press.

ENGBERSEN, G., J. VAN DER LEUN & R. STARING (2000), 'How illegal immigrants settle and survive: The social embeddedness of illegal immigrants in ethnic communities'. Rotterdam: Unpublished paper.

EVANS, M. (2002), 'The Casamance conflict: Out of sight, out of mind?', *Humanitarian Exchange Magazine* 20. Humanitarian Practice Network, URL: www.migrationinformation.org/Feature/display.cfm?id=605 (visited September 24, 2008).

FLEISCHER, A. (2006), 'Family, obligations, and migration: The role of kinship in Cameroon', Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research, Working Paper WP 2006-047.

FOX, R.C. (2004), 'Observations and reflections of a perpetual fieldworker', *The Annals of the American Academy* 595: 309-326.

FRANKLIN, R.R., D. SARR, M. GUEYE, O. SYLLA & R. COLLIGNON (1996), 'Cultural response to mental illness in Senegal: Reflections through patient companions. Part 1. Methods and descriptive data', *Social Science & Medicine* 42(3): 325-338.

GASSON, S. (2004), 'Rigor in grounded theory research: An interpretive perspective on generating theory from qualitative field studies'. In: M.E. Whitman & A.B. Woszczynski, eds, *The Handbook of Information Systems Research*, pp. 79-102. Hershey: Idea Group.

GEMMEKE, A.B. (2004), 'Maraboutage in Senegal: Femininity, Enchantment, and Urbanization', *CODESRIA Bulletin,* Nos 1 & 2.

GIDDENS, A. (1979), Central problems in social theory: Actor, structure, and contradiction in social analysis. Berkeley: University of California Press.

GIDDENS, A. (1984), *The constitution of society*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

GIDDENS, A. (2003), Runaway world: How globalization is reshaping our lives. New York: Routledge.

GCIM (2005), *Migration in an interconnected World: New directions for action*. Report of the Global Commission on International Migration.

GRANOVETTER, M.(1973), 'The strength of weak ties', *American Journal of Sociology* 78(6): 1360-1380.

GRANOVETTER, M. (1985), 'Economic action and social structure: The problem of embeddedness', *American Journal of Sociology* 91(3): 481-510.

GRASMUCK, S. & P.R. PESSAR (1991), *Between two islands: Dominican international migration.* Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press.

HALLAIRE, J. (2007), L'émigration irrégulière vers L'Union européenne au départ des cotes sénégalaises. De l'exemple précis des migrants sénégalais de Yoff à l'analyse plus large de migrants subsahariens d'origines diverses, Mémoire présenté en vue de l'obtention du Master de géographie GAELE.

HARBISON, S.F. (1981), 'Family structure and family strategy in migration decision-making'. In: G.F. de Jong & R.W. Gardner, eds, *Migration decision making. Multidisciplinary approaches to microlevel studies in developed and developing countries*, pp. 225-251. New York: Pergamon Press.

HARDWICK, S.W. (2003), 'Migration, embedded networks and social capital: Towards theorising North American ethnic geography', *International Journal of Population Geography* 9: 163-179.

HATTON, T.J. & J.G. WILLIAMSON (2003), 'Demographic and economic pressure of emigration out of Africa', *The Scandinavian Journal of Economics* 105(3): 465-486.

HERNÁNDEZ-CARRETERO, M. (2008), 'Risk-taking in unauthorized migration', Master Thesis, University of Tromso.

HUGO, G.J. (1981), 'Village-community ties, village norms, and ethnic and social networks: A review of evidence from the third world'. In: G.F. de Jong & R.W. Gardner, eds., *Migration decision making. Multidisciplinary approaches to microlevel studies in developed and developing countries*, p. 224. New York: Pergamon Press.

IÇDUYGU, A. & S. TOKTAS (2002), 'How do smuggling and trafficking operate via irregular border crossings in the Middle East? Evidence from fieldwork in Turkey', *International Migration* 40(6): 25-52.

IÇDUYGU, A. & T. UNALAN (2001), 'Tides between Mediterranean shores: Undocumented migration in the South of Europe', conference paper presented at the IUSSP General Population Conference XXIV, Brazil: Session S26.

IOM (2007), *Afrique et le Moyen Orient. Combattre les migrations irréguliers*, International Organisation for Migration, URL : www.iom.int (visited November 4, 2007).

JENKINS, T. (1994), 'Fieldwork and the perception of everyday life', *Man* 29(2): 433-455.

KITAMURA, M. (2007), *To the Canary Islands and back: Going nowhere in Senegal..,yet.* Immigration Here and There, URL: www.immigrationhereandthere.org/2007/02/post_11.php (visited, July 14, 2008).

KUKAH, M.H. (2007), 'Christian–Muslim relations in Sub-Sahara Africa: Problems and prospects', *Islam and Christian–Muslim relations* 18(2): 155-164.

LAHLOU, M. (2005), *Les migrations irrégulières entre le Maghreb et L'Union européenne: évolutions récentes*, Florence: Institut Universitaire Européen, Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies.

LONG, N. (2001), Development sociology: Actor perspectives. London etc.: Routledge.

LUKES, S. (1977), 'Power and structure'. In: S. Lukes, ed., *Essays in social theory.* London: MacMillan.

LUPTON, D. (2006), 'Sociology and risk'. In: G. Mythen & S. Walkante, eds, *Beyond the risk society: Critical reflections on risk and human security.* Maidenhead: Open University Press.

MACGAFFEY, J. & R. BAZENGUISSA-GANGA (2000), *Congo-Paris: Transnational traders on the margins of the law.* London and Bloomington: Indiana University Press and James Curry.

94

MADDISON, A. (2002), *Human Poverty*. Map 174, URL:
   http://www.wacra.org/WORLD%20POVERTY%20MAP.pdf (visited July 14, 2008).
MAGONI, R., C. ROOS & D. BUDA (2007), *Migration from Africa: A case study on root causes
   and factors contributing to migration from Senegal to the EU.* Brussels: European
   Commission, Directorate General Joint Research Centre. Draft version.
MASSEY, D.S., J. ARANGO, G. HUGO, A. KOUAOUCHI, A. PELLEGRINO & J.E. TAYLOR (2005),
   Worlds in motion: Understanding international migration at the end of the millennium.
   Oxford: Oxford University Press.
MASSEY, D.S., A. PALLONI, M. CEBALLOS, K. ESPINOSA & M. SPITTEL (2001), 'Social capital
   and international migration : A test using information on family networks', *American
   Journal of Sociology* 106(5): 1262-1298.
MATSUMOTO, D. & H. GELUK (1997), Mensen: Psychologie vanuit cultureel perspectief.
    Baarn: Intro.
MAY, T. (2001), *Social research. Issues, methods and process.* Buckingham etc.: Open
   University Press.
MBOW, P. & M. TAMBA (2006), *L'emigration clandestine. Le profil des candidats.* Mouvement
   citoyen en partenariat avec l'ambassade des Pays-Bas.
MCCORKEL, J.A. & K. MYERS (2003), 'What difference does difference make? Position and
   privilege in the field,' *Qualitative Sociology* 26(2): 199-231.
MIGRATION NEWS (2006), *Southern Europe*, URL:
   http://migration.ucdavis.edu/mn/more.php?id=3210_0_4_0 (visited September 14, 2007).
MFAS (2006), 4ème edition des journées de la coopération décentralisée. Theme: De Saint
   Louis à Mélilla: La problématique de la dynamique migratoire. Dakar: Ministry of Foreign
   Affairs.
MITCHELL, J.C. (1973), 'Networks, norms and institutions', Monograph Number 2, in
   J. Boissevain & J.C. Mitchell, eds, *Network analysis. Studies in human interaction*, pp. 2-35.
   The Hague etc.: Mouton.
MITCHELL, J.C. (2006), 'Case and situational analysis'. In: T.M.S. Evens & D. Handelman, eds,
   The Manchester School. Practices and ethnographic praxis in anthropology, pp. 23-42. New
   York: Berghahn Books.
MOFOKENG, C. (2005), *The informal economy in Africa and its impact on women*. Paper
   presented at Symposium on women's right and the role of women in Africa.
MUUS, PH. (2001), 'International migration and the European Union. Trends and
   consequences', *European Journal on Criminal Policy and Research* 9: 31-49.
NRC HANDELSBLAD (2007), 'Migratie thema verkiezingen in Senegal', February 24.
OECD (2008) *Members and partners.* Organization for Economic Co-operation and
   Development, URL:
   www.oecd.org/pages/0,3417,en_36734052_36761800_1_1_1_1_1,00.html (visited July 14,
   2008).
PADILLA, B. (2006), 'Brazilian migration to Portugal: Social networks and ethnic solidarity',
   CIES e-Working paper No 12.
PELS, D. (1989), Pierre Bourdieu: Opstellen over smaak, habitus en het veldbegrip. Amsterdam:
   Van Gennep.
PIDGEON, N. & K. HENWOOD (2004), 'Grounded theory'. In: M. Hardy & A. Bryman, eds,
   Handbook of data analysis, pp. 625-648. London: Sage.
POLFLIET, F. (2007), Overstromingen in West-Afrika wijzen op noodzaak preventie
   maatregelen. Early warning-systemen en noodplannen moeten catastrofes voortaan
   beperken. URL: http://www.bevrijdewereld.be/images/img276_1.gif (visited December 15,
   2008).
PORTES, A. (1998), 'Social capital: Its origins and applications in modern sociology,' *Annual
   Review of Sociology* 24: 1-24.
PRADHAN, A. (2007), *A pilot research on irregular emigration from Ghana: The contemporary
   profiles*, Report submitted to the International Organization for Migration.

RAPID (2008), 'The Frontex agency: Evaluation and future development', Press Release, URL: http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/08/84&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en, February 13 (visited July 15, 2008).

RAVENSTEIN, E.G. (1889), 'The laws of migration', *Journal of Royal Statistical Society* 52: 245-301.

RICCIO, B. (2000), 'A peculiar trade diaspora: Senegalese transnational identities and activities in Emilia-Romagna', Paper presented to the colloquium on New African Diasporas, School of Oriental and African Studies, London.

RICCIO, B. (2001a), 'Disaggregating the transnational community. Senegalese migrants on the coast of Emilia-Romagna', WPTC-01-11.

RICCIO, B. (2001b), 'From "ethnic group" to "transnational community"? Senegalese migrants' ambivalent experiences and multiple trajectories', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 27(4): 583-599.

RICCIO, B. (2005), 'Talkin' about migration – some ethnographic notes on the ambivalent representation of migrants in contemporary Senegal', *Stichproben. Wiener Zeitschrift für kritische Afrikastudien* 8(5): 99-118.

RYAN, A. (2008) Learning from the cayuqueros: What the African "boat people" are teaching Spain – and Europe – about immigration policy. Geneva: International Catholic Migration Commission.

SAHEL AND WEST AFRICA CLUB/OECD (2006), The socio-economic and regional context of West African migrations. Working Document.

SALAM FALL, A. (2007), Bricoler pour survivre. Perceptions de la pauvreté dans l'agglomération urbaine de Dakar. Paris: Éditions Karthala.

SCHAPENDONK, J. & D. VAN MOPPES (2007a), 'The migration process. The balance between migrants' flexibility and dependency', Working Papers Migration and Development Series, Report 17, Radboud University, Nijmegen.

SCHAPENDONK, J. & D. VAN MOPPES (2007b), 'Migration as booming business', Working Paper Migration and Development Series, Report 19, Radboud University, Nijmegen.

SCHAPENDONK, J. & D. VAN MOPPES (2007c), 'Migration and information. Images of Europe, migration encouraging factors and en route information sharing. Working Paper Migration and Development Series, Report 16, Radboud University, Nijmegen.

SCHLOENHARDT, A. (1999), 'The business of migration: Organised crime and illegal migration in Australia and the Asia-Pacific region', paper presented at the University of Adelaide Law School, Adelaide.

SCHLOENHARDT, A. (2003) Migrant smuggling: Illegal migration and organised crime in Australia and the Asia Pacific region. Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers.

SCHOORL J., L. HEERING, I. ESVELDT, G. GROENEWOLD, R. VAN DER ERF, A. BOSCH, H. DE VALK & B. DE BRUIJN (2000), *Push and pull factors of international migration: A comparative report, Theme 1: General Statistics*. Luxembourg: Eurostat.

SIMON, J. (2006), 'Irregular transit migration in the Mediterranean: Facts, figures and insights'. In: N. Nyberg-Sorensen, ed., *Mediterranean transit migration*. Copenhagen: Danish Institute for International Studies.

SOW, F. (2003), 'Fundamentalisms, globalisation and women's human rights in Senegal', *Gender and Development* 11(1): 69-76.

STARING, R. (2001), Reizen onder regie. Het migratieproces van illegale Turken in Nederland. Amsterdam: Het Spinhuis. PhD thesis.

STONES, R. (2005), *Structuration theory*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

STRAUSS, A. & J. CORBIN (1998), Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques. Newbury etc.: Sage Publications.

SUD QUOTIDIEN (2007), '140 jeunes gens du Fouladou périssent en haute mer', URL: www.seneweb.com/news/article/12796.php, October 22 (visited October 22, 2007).

THE DAILY MONITOR (2007), 'Senegal's big plans to banish hunger', URL: www.monitor.co.ug/artman/publish/features/Senegal_s_big_plans_to_banish_hunger_printer shtml, May 7 (visited August 29, 2008).

TIMEANDDATE.COM (n.d.), *Current local times and distance from Dakar,* URL: http://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/distances.html?n=74, visited November 12 2008.

TOMKINS, S. (2008), *Pirogues: Time-tested craft for hunters and fishermen*, URL: www.pirogue.com/article2.htm (visited July 28, 2008).

TOUBAB.COM (2008), *Dakar the capital of Senegal,* URL: www.toubab.com/.../Dakar/dakar-map.gif (visited December 15, 2008).

UNDP (2008), *Human Development Indices: A statistical update 2008 - HDI rankings,* United Nations Development Program, URL: http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/ (visited August 24, 2008).

UNHCR (2008), *All in the same boat: The challenges of mixed migration,* United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, URL: www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/asylum?page=home (visited December 10, 2008).

UNODC (2006), Organized crime and irregular migration from Africa to Europe. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

U.S. EMBASSY DAKAR (2001), *Senegal's fishing industry faces critical transition*. Fishing report, URL: www.seaaroundus.org/Dakar/scienceDocs/Doc_Gen_06-EN.pdf (visited July 11, 2008).

VAN DALEN, H.P., G. GROENEWOLD & J.J. SCHOORL (2003), *Out of Africa: What drives the pressure to emigrate?*, The Hague: NIDI, Working Paper.

VAN DONGE, J.K. (1992), 'Walguru traders in Dar es Salaam: An analysis of the social construction of economic life', *African Affairs* 91(363): 181-205.

VAN VELSEN, J. (1967), 'The extended-case method and situational analysis'. In: A.L. Epstein, ed., *The craft of social anthropology*, pp. 129-149. London: Travistock.

VAN WIJK, J. (2007), Luanda-Holanda: Irreguliere (asiel)migratie van Angola naar Nederland. Nijmegen: Wolf Legal Publishers. PhD thesis.

WEDDING, K.W. (n.d.), 'Illegal migration and trends in human smuggling: A case study of Mexico', URL: www.american.edu/traccc/resources/publications/students/weddin01.doc (visited June 18, 2007).

WELLMAN, B. (1983), 'Network analysis: Some basic principles', *Sociological Theory* 1: 155-200.

WERELD IN WOORDEN (2006), Quick scan on international migration: Worldconnectors thematic background document. Worldconnectors. December.

WIESBROCK, A. (2010), Legal migration to the European Union. Ten years after Tampere. Nijmegen: Wolf Legal Publishers.

WILSON, T.D. (1998), 'Weak ties, strong ties: Network principles in Mexican migration', *Human Organization* 57(4): 394-403.

WINTERS, P., A. DE JANVRY & E. SADOULET (2001), 'Family and community networks in Mexico–U.S. migration', *The Journal of Human Resources* 36 (1): 159-184.

WOLF, M. (1992), A thrice-told tale: feminism, postmodernism, and ethnographic responsibility. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

WORLD BANK (2007a), *Gross national income per capita 2007,* URL: http://siteresources.worldbank.org/DATASTATISTICS/Resources/GNIPC.pdf (visited August 24, 2008).

WORLD BANK (2007b), *Senegal at a glance*, URL: http://devdata.worldbank.org/AAG/sen_aag.pdf (visited August 24, 2008).

WORLD BANK (2008), Senegal: Country brief, URL: http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/AFRICAEXT/SENEGALE XTN/0,,menuPK:296312~pagePK:141132~piPK:141107~theSitePK:296303,00.html (visited August 24, 2008).

ZAPATA-BARRERO, R. & N. DE WITTE (2007), 'The Spanish governance of EU borders: Normative questions', *Mediterranean Politics* 12(1): 85-90.

ASC BOOK PUBLICATIONS

Copies of all the publications listed below in the African Studies Collection and the earlier Research Reports Series may be ordered from:

African Studies Centre
Email: asc@ascleiden.nl
Tel: +31 (0)71 527 3490
Fax: +31 (0)71 527 3344

For prices, check the ASC website [www.ascleiden.nl] under Publications.

African Studies Collection

27 *In search of greener pastures? Boat-migrants from Senegal to the Canary Islands*
Miranda Poeze   (2010)

26 *Researching Africa: Explorations of everyday African encounters*
Mirjam de Bruijn & Daniela Merolla, editors   (2010)

25 *Wartime children's suffering and quests for therapy in northern Uganda*
Grace Akello   (2010)

24 *Bodies in action. The influence of culture on body movements in post-conflict Sierra Leone*
Anneke van der Niet   (2010)

23 *Ghanaian nurses at a crossroads. Managing expectations on a medical ward*
Christine Böhmig   (2010)

22 *Coping with cancer and adversity: Hospital ethnography in Kenya*
Benson A. Mulemi   (2010)

21 *Ominous Calm. Autochthony and sovereignty in Konkomba/Nanumba violence and peace, Ghana*
Martijn Wienia   (2009)

20 *Advances in coastal ecology. People, processes and ecosystems in Kenya*
Jan Hoorweg & Nyawira Muthiga, editors   (2009)

19 *Creating space for fishermen's livelihood. Anlo-Ewe beach seine fishermen's negotiations for livelihood space within multiple governance structures in Ghana*
Marloes Kraan   (2009)

18 *Families in movement. Transformation of the family in urban Mali, with a focus on intercontinental mobility*
Janneke Barten   (2009)

17 *Pastoralistes et la ville au Bénin. Livelihoods en questionnement*
Théophile Djedjebi   (2009)

16 *Making decentralization work for women in Uganda*
Alfred Lakwo   (2009)

15 *Food security and coping mechanisms in marginal areas: The case of West Pokot, Kenya, 1920-1995*
Anne Kisaka Nangulu   (2009)

14 *'Beyond their age'. Coping of children and young people in child-headed households in South Africa*
Diana van Dijk   (2008)

13 *Poverty and inequality in urban Sudan. Policies, institutions and governance*
Muna A. Abdalla   (2008)

12 *Dilemmas of Development: Conflicts of interest and their resolutions in modernizing Africa*
Jon Abbink & André van Dokkum (eds)   (2008)

11 *Teaching peace, transforming conflict? Exploring participants' perceptions of the impact of informal peace education training in Uganda*
Anika May   (2008)

10 *Plantations, power and people. Two case studies of restructuring South Africa's forestry sector*
Alice Achieng Ojwang   (2008)

9 *Coming back from the bush. Gender, youth and reintegration in Northern Sierra Leone*
Janneke van Gog   (2008)

8 *How to win a football match in Cameroon. An anthropological study of Africa's most popular sport*
Arnold Pannenborg   (2008)

7 *'Prendre le bic'.* Le Combat Spirituel *congolais et les transformations sociales*
Julie Ndaya Tshiteku   (2008)

6 *Transnationalism, local development and social security. The functioning of support networks in rural Ghana*
Mirjam Kabki   (2007)

5 *Tied to migrants: Transnational influences on the economy of Accra, Ghana*
Lothar Smith   (2007)

4 *"Our way": Responding to the Dutch aid in the District Rural Development Programme of Bukoba, Tanzania*
Adalbertus Kamanzi   (2007)

3 *Transition towards Jatropha biofuels in Tanzania? An analysis with Strategic Niche Management*
Janske van Eijck   (2007)

2 *"Ask and you shall be given": Pentecostalism and the economic crisis in Cameroon*
Robert Mbe Akoko   (2007)

1 *World and experiences of AIDS orphans in north central Namibia*
Mienke van der Brug   (2007)

Research Reports

85 *Microfinance, rural livelihoods, and women's empowerment in Uganda*
    Alfred Lakwo   (2006)

84 *Trade liberalization and financial compensation. The BLNS states in the wake of the EU-South African trade and development agreement*
    Sam van der Staak   (2006)

83 *The rock art of Mwana wa Chentcherere II rock shelter, Malaŵi. A site-specific study of girls' initiation rock art*
    Leslie F. Zubieta   (2006)

82 *Bibliography on Islam in contemporary Sub-Saharan Africa*
    Paul Schrijver   (2006)

81 *Bridging the urban-rural divide: Multi-spatial livelihoods in Nakuru town, Kenya*
    Samuel Ouma Owuor   (2006)

80 *Bleak prospects: Young men, sexuality and HIV/AIDS in an Ethiopian town*
    Getnet Tadele   (2006)

79 *"The angel of death has descended violently among them." Concentration camps and prisoners-of-war in Namibia, 1904-08*
    Casper Erichsen   (2005)

78 *Sahelian pathways. Climate and society in Central and South Mali*
    Mirjam de Bruijn, Han van Dijk, Mayke Kaag & Kiky van Til (eds)   (2005)

77 *Gacaca: Grassroots justice after genocide. The key to reconciliation in Rwanda?*
    Arthur Molenaar   (2005)

76 *The assertion of rights to agro-pastoral land in North Cameroon: A cascade to violence?*
    Ruth Noorduyn   (2005)

75 *Urban agriculture in Tanzania: Issues of sustainability*
    Dick Foeken, Michael Sofer & Malongo Mlozi   (2004)

74 *"We're managing!" Climate change and livelihood vulnerability in Northwest Ghana*
    Kees van der Geest   (2004)

73 *Community-based conservation in an entitlement perspective. Wildlife and forest conservation in Taita, Kenya*
    James Gichiah Njogu   (2004)

72 *Witchcraft and policing. South Africa Police Service attitudes towards witchcraft and witchcraft-related crime in the Northern Province*
    Riekje Pelgrim   (2003)

71 *The solidarity of self-interest. Social and cultural feasibility of rural health insurance in Ghana*
    Daniel K. Arhinful   (2003)

70 *Recent advances in coastal ecology. Studies from Kenya*
    Jan Hoorweg & Nyawira Muthiga (eds)   (2003)

69 *Structural adjustment: Source of structural adversity. Socio-economic stress, health and child nutritional status in Zimbabwe*
    Leon Bijlmakers   (2003)

68   *Resisting reforms. A resource-based perspective of collective action in the distribution of agricultural input and primary health services in the Couffo region, Benin*
Houinsou Dedehouanou   (2003)

67   *Women striving for self-reliance. The diversity of female-headed households in Tanzania and the livelihood strategies they employ*
Anke van Vuuren   (2003)

66   *Démocratisation en Afrique au sud du Sahara: Transitions et virage.
Un bilan de la littérature (1995-1996)*
Klaas van Walraven & Céline Thiriot   (2002)

65   *Democratization in sub-Saharan Africa: Transitions and turning points.
An overview of the literature (1995-1996)*
Klaas van Walraven & Céline Thiriot   (2002)

64   *Sharing a valley. The changing relations between agriculturalists and pastoralists in the Niger Valley of Benin*
Antje van Driel   (2001)

63   *Pathways to negotiate climate variability. Land use and institutional change in the Kaya region, Burkina Faso*
Mark Breusers   (2001)

62   *"We think of them." How Ghanaian migrants in Amsterdam assist relatives at home*
Daniel K. Arhinful   (2001)

61   *Pastoralists and markets. Livestock commercialization and food security in north-eastern Kenya*
Abdirizak A. Nunow   (2000)

60   *Rural development and agricultural policy in central western Zambia.
The case of Kaoma-Nkeyema tobacco scheme*
K. Hailu   (2000)

59   *Secrecy and ambiguity. Home care for people living with HIV/AIDS in Ghana*
Maud Radstake   (2000)

58   *Urban agriculture in Africa: A bibliographical survey*
R.A. Obudho & Dick Foeken   (1999)

57   *Changing security. Livelihood in the Mandara Mountains in North Cameroon*
Annette van Andel   (1998)

56   *Catholic mission, colonial government and indigenous response in Kom (Cameroon*
Jacqueline de Vries   (1998)

55   *Eritreo-Ethiopian studies in society and history: 1960-1995.
A supplementary bibliography*
Jan Abbink   (1996)

54   *Commodity auctions in Tropical Africa. A survey of the African tea, tobacco and coffee auctions*
John Houtkamp & Laurens van der Laan   (1993)

53   *Land and labour in Myjikenda agriculture, Kenya, 1850-1985*
Henk Waaijenberg   (1993)

52 *Democratisation en Afrique au Sud du Sahara. Un aperçu de la littérature*
Rob Buijtenhuijs & Elly Rijnierse   (1993)

51 *Democratization in Sub-Saharan Africa. An overview of literature*
Rob Buijtenhuijs & Elly Rijnierse   (1993)

50 *Women in Bamenda. Survival strategies and access to land*
Adri van den Berg   (1993)

49 *Pratiques foncières à l'ombre du droit. L'application du droit foncier urbain à Ziguinchor, Sénégal*
Gerti Hesseling   (1992)

48 *Power and privilege in the administration of law. Land law reforms and social differentiation in Cameroon*
Cyprien Fisiy   (1992)

47 *Staatsvorming, rurale ontwikkeling en boeren in Guiné-Bissau*
H. Schoenmaker   (1991)

44 *Popular Islam in Tunisia*
Kees Schilder   (1991)

43 *Seasons, food supply and nutrition in Africa*
Dick W.J. Foeken & Adel P. den Hartog (eds)   (1990)

42 *Socio-economic development of women in Zambia*
A. Touwen   (1990)

41 *Enduring crisis, refugee problems in Eastern Sudan*
Henk Tieleman & Tom Kuhlman   (1990)

40 *Marketing policies and economic interests in the cotton sector of Kenya*
Tjalling Dijkstra   (1990)

39 *The IMF-World Bank's stabilisation and structural adjustment policies and the Uganda economy, 1981-1989*
D.W. Nabudere   (1990)

38 *Economic management in neo-colonial states: A case study of Cameroon*
N. Jua   (1990)

34 *Aspects of the Apartheid state. A bibliographical survey*
Ineke van Kessel   (1989/91)

33 *Scenes of change: Visions on developments in Swaziland*
Henk Tieleman (ed.)   (1988)

32 *State formation, religion and land tenure in Cameroon.*
A bibliographical survey
Kees Schilder   (1988)

30 *Irriguer pour subsister*
Geert Diemer & E. van der Laan   (1987)

29 *Economic management in Cameroon: Policies and performance*
W.A. Ndongko   (1987)

28 *Leven en werken in een Nyakyusa dorp*
Nel van Hekken   (1986)

27 *Muslims in Mango*
Emile van Rouveroy van Nieuwaal   (1986)