

Challenging masculinities?

Citation for published version (APA):

Strijbosch, K. G. P. (2025). *Challenging masculinities? Senegalese men returning from Europe to Senegal under conditions of deportability*. [Doctoral Thesis, Maastricht University]. Maastricht University. <https://doi.org/10.26481/dis.20250128ks>

Document status and date:

Published: 28/01/2025

DOI:

[10.26481/dis.20250128ks](https://doi.org/10.26481/dis.20250128ks)

Document Version:

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Please check the document version of this publication:

- A submitted manuscript is the version of the article upon submission and before peer-review. There can be important differences between the submitted version and the official published version of record. People interested in the research are advised to contact the author for the final version of the publication, or visit the DOI to the publisher's website.
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Challenging masculinities?

Senegalese men returning from Europe to Senegal
under conditions of deportability



Karliën Strijbosch

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ISBN: 978-94-6506-890-9

Lay out and design: Ridderprint

Cover design: Lisanne den Hollander and Ridderprint

Printing: Ridderprint | www.ridderprint.nl

Challenging masculinities?

**Senegalese men returning from Europe to Senegal
under conditions of deportability**

Dissertation

to obtain the degree of Doctor at Maastricht University,
on the authority of the Rector Magnificus, Prof. Dr. Pamela Habibovic,
in accordance with the decision of the Board of Deans,
to be defended in public on Tuesday 28 January 2025, at 13.00

by

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The research conducted for this dissertation was financed by the Dutch Research Council (NWO) under the Ph.D. in the Humanities grant (project number 322-98-002).

Note on the image of the dissertation

The image of this dissertation is taken by the author during fieldwork.

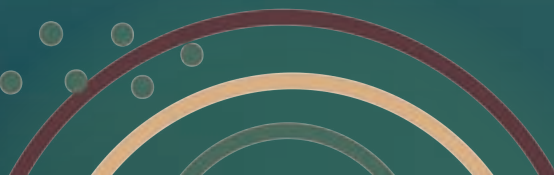
To my grandmother, who showed me the joy and the privilege of education and travel
To my mother, who is with me every day

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1. Introduction

My phone keeps buzzing. I have at least seven missed calls. One is from Modou, a Senegalese returnee I had been in touch with for some time. He has been receiving phone calls and messages from Senegalese people living in Germany. At four in the morning the German police had gone to the houses of Senegalese migrants to arrest them. A charter flight with deportees is currently on its way to Dakar, Senegal's capital!

What time they will arrive and who is on board is unclear. My heartbeat increases and I call Hilda, a German woman in her fifties whom I had met a month earlier in Senegal. She came to Senegal to meet Senegalese people who used to live in Germany. She supports them financially and emotionally. Hilda confirms that people are missing. She has received emotional calls from people in Germany who cannot reach their loved ones. Information is incomplete and scattered. First estimates are that twenty-one people are on the flight; later adjusted to eighteen. Hilda knows of someone who used to be in the deportation prison in Germany. He is unreachable. He might be on the flight. A man who was preparing for his wedding is likewise missing. There is also talk about a man on crutches. Hilda promises to keep me up to date. She thinks the flight should arrive around 14.30 in Dakar.

I go to one of the organizations working with returnees in Dakar funded by European states. I meet Abdulaye, a man in his thirties, who, together with a colleague, is preparing a training mission to the interior of Senegal. He confirms they are expecting a flight, but he does not know whether they are forced or voluntary returnees. He says he can offer more to voluntary returnees than to forced deportees. The number of people he thinks are on the flight is considerably lower than the estimates I received from Hilda. He expects eleven people. He seems to wait calmly for everything to unfold while he continues to prepare his mission to the interior of Senegal.

At eight in the evening, I receive a message from a German woman called Monika: 'Laye just called me. He arrived and is with his mother now. [...] The other passengers on board were men, except for one woman with a child. Three police officers guided each person, and most had their hands and feet cuffed.' Monika is part of a solidarity network of mainly female volunteers who support migrants in Germany, and she helped Laye during his stay in a detention center in Germany.

Monika was very worried about him. 'He arrived at his mother's house in Senegal [and] he had nothing: not even a bag of extra clothes.' She gives me his number and says he needs all the help he can get. She tells me that he knows about me.

I message Laye to introduce myself and tell him he can contact me if he wishes to do so. The next morning I wake up with a voice message from Monika. She says Laye wanted to commit suicide. 'It is very serious, if you can call him... please [do].' I call him. I am relieved when he answers the phone. He tells me his mother has been crying the whole night and this was very difficult for him.

Two days later I visit him. I arrive via sandy roads on the outskirts of Dakar. Laye's older cousin guides me to a stone house. Walking towards the house, I mention it must have been shocking to see Laye back. She does not say much and guides me to a room with a wooden bed and a small television. Next to a big stuffed dog sits the thirty-four-year-old Laye. We shake hands and slowly start to talk. After the cousin leaves, he shares his pain and that of his mother. 'She cannot even look me in the eyes. It is very shameful. I should be taking care of her and now she is taking care of me. [...] I am not a man like this.'

It was because of my research topic and my presence in Dakar that I suddenly found myself in the maelstrom of phone calls from German supporters, friends, family members and lovers of those who might have been on the flight. I knew some of the people who contacted me, while others got my number from people such as Monika¹. The arrival of a chartered deportation flight, although rare in my fieldwork, is not unusual². Such flights are part of the attempts of European states to govern and manage migration. They return unwanted migrants to their country of citizenship through deportation or as part of so-called 'Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration programs' (AVRR). Besides bringing people to their countries of citizenship, AVRR programs may provide limited financial support and sometimes vocational, medical, and psychosocial assistance. The aim is to facilitate a 'sustainable return,' which means, in European political discourse, that migrants stay in their country of citizenship. Senegalese migrant men are often targeted as they are considered to come from a so-called safe country. But despite expansive action from European states to increase cooperation with West African states on the return of illegalized migrants, the official rates of state induced return remain low (Zanker, 2023).

¹ Throughout my dissertation, I use pseudonyms to protect the anonymity of the people concerned.

² At the time of writing in May 2023, another charter flight had arrived in Senegal from Germany.

Studies about return and deportation have blossomed over recent years, yet return and deportation are not a focus of mainstream migration literature (King and Kuschminder, 2022). Much of the migration research that does exist on return and deportation takes a policy-oriented approach and focuses on the countries that are ‘sending people back’ (but see e.g. Cham and Adam, 2023). Scholars who look at what happens within the national borders of the returning countries, try to understand policy changes. This includes the workings and decision making of AVRR programs, or their political implications (see e.g. Bosworth, 2014; Flahaux, 2017; Van Houte et al., 2021; Koch, 2014; Leerkes et al., 2017; Lietaert, 2022; Panizzon and Jurt, 2023; Ruben et al., 2009; Zanker, 2023; Zardo, 2022). While quite a lot is known about post-return outcomes from a policy and development perspective, my aim is to extend understandings of the social, gendered and affective dynamics of such return.

Researchers have persuasively demonstrated that migration, particularly for men, can provide higher social standing and a means of coping with underemployment and unemployment (Degli Uberti, 2014; Ludl, 2008; Prothmann, 2018). This dissertation builds on this literature by investigating what happens when men come back with an aborted migration project after a stay in Europe. My research focuses on how Senegalese men narrate and perform masculinity while grappling with issues of deportability in the context of their return to Senegal. Deportability (De Genova, 2002) refers to the possibility that any of the study participants, despite not all of them being forcibly returned, could have been removed from the nation-state in which they were living in Europe prior to their return to Senegal because of their uncertain legal or illegal status. This dissertation thus contributes to an emerging field of study that investigates the lived experiences of returnees and the social dimensions of restrictive European migration policies outside of Europe.

1.2. Migration and men in West Africa

In West Africa, migration, both within the African continent and beyond, has been part of family histories for centuries (see e.g. Schultz, 2021; Maher, 2017). Almost half of all households in Dakar have a relative living abroad (Beauchemin et al., 2018). The impact of migration is visible throughout urban and rural Senegal in the form of half constructed houses (see e.g. Melly, 2010; Sinatti, 2009), village projects, mosques built by flows of remittances and the regular messages and calls with those abroad (see e.g. Hannaford, 2017). The Senegalese economy also profits immensely from the remunerations of those living overseas (e.g. Diatta and Mbow, 1999; Guermond, 2022; Kabbanji, 2013; Sinatti, 2015). Migratory travel is thus a social practice that meets familial and communal needs and is considered a form of solidarity

(Degli Uberti, 2014). The extended family plays an important role in many aspects of life including in relation to migration as well as after return (Wanki et al., 2022).

Migration has historically been dominated by men in Senegal (Mazzucato et al., 2015; Schoumaker et al., 2018; Toma and Vause, 2014; Sinatti, 2014, but see e.g. Babou, 2008 on female migration). Norms of hegemonic masculinity in Senegal and the broader West-African context entail expectations that men provide for their elderly parents and family, build a house, offer moral guidance, and marry (Hannaford and Foley, 2015; Foley and Drame, 2013; Poeze, 2019; Sinatti, 2014; Zingari et al., 2023). Migration facilitates all of these (Alpes, 2011; Ifekwunigwe, 2013). Researchers have persuasively demonstrated that migration, particularly for men, can provide higher social standing and a means of coping with underemployment and unemployment (Degli Uberti, 2014; Ludl, 2008; Prothmann, 2018). Migration and departure abroad are often termed ‘the adventure.’ Men strive to become someone. They seek to become independent and responsible, to care financially for their wider family, build a house, to become globally connected and able to deal with risks (Alpes, 2017a; Bredeloup, 2017; Kleinman, 2016; Schultz, 2022). In Senegal’s predominantly Islamic society, migration is also considered a moral experience that can lead to spiritual growth (Bredeloup, 2017). Illegalized migration, as the only viable possibility for the majority of Senegalese to travel to Europe, can function as a ‘rite de passage’ in the process of becoming a man. It may bring pain, suffering, danger, obstacles, but it also engenders positive attributes such as courage, personal growth, and increased chances to engage in intimate relationships with women (Pian, 2009; Newell, 2012). Leaving one’s country is thus a means to enhance the masculine status, yet the literature provides limited attention to masculinity after return (King and Lulle, 2022; but see Hansen, 2008; Kleist, 2010; Markussen, 2020; Sinatti, 2014) and even less in the case of aborted migration projects.

Migration is linked to independence, growth and access to resources, but it can also lead to stigmatization and losses for returnees and their social circles in cases of deportation (Turnbull, 2017; Boehm, 2016; Petit et al., 2014). Negative social stigma can see returnees associated with failure, laziness, or criminality (Ungruhe 2010; Buggenhagen, 2011). This applies especially to migrants who went to Europe and the United States as these locations have limited visa possibilities for most Senegalese citizens. The potential for growth is seen as substantial, but likewise, the losses after return are seen as more extensive. Investigating return from European countries allows for an enhanced understanding about the specific tensions and opportunities after return in Senegal and the position of returning men. As Laye in the opening vignette attests, return can also bring a loss of masculine status (Schultz, 2021). Recent ethnographic studies advance our understanding of the social

impact of deportations in the West African context, including the gendered aspects (e.g. Drotbohm in Cape Verde, 2012, 2015a; Kleist in Ghana, 2017a; Plambech in Nigeria, 2018; Maher in Senegal, 2015; Vigh on Guinea-Bissau, 2016; Schultz on Mali, 2022). I build upon and extend this work by paying attention to performances and narrations of masculinity when migrant men return to Senegal after aborting their migration projects from Europe. I aim to understand how returnee men perform return and engage with discourses about migration, return and masculinity that are propagated in Senegalese society and in transnational spaces (see e.g. Venables, 2009; Ndione et al, 2018; Hannaford, 2023; Rodriguez, 2017).

1.3. Research questions

The data for this dissertation was gathered during a year of ethnographic research that I carried out at different periods between January 2017 and March 2021 with Senegalese returnee men. Most research was conducted in Senegal, but I also traced transnational connections in Germany through a partially matched sample of fourteen female volunteers who supported migrants. At the start of the research, I was mainly interested in the stories of deportees or those who came back through AVVR programs, both of which are forms of so called state-induced return. Yet, throughout explorative fieldwork in Senegal, I learned that I needed to broaden my perspective. To understand the possibilities for narration of the participants and their performances of masculinity, I needed to extend my focus and look for returnees, beyond those who came back as deportees and assisted voluntary returnees. This allowed for more dynamic narratives to emerge and opened possibilities for seeing narratives and performances that bring into question the terminology used in migration management. It also allowed incorporating practices of silence into my research as state induced return is sometimes silenced in order not to attract stigmatization in Senegal. My interest shifted during fieldwork to men who, until their return, were living in Europe under conditions of 'deportability' (De Genova, 2002) because they faced the potential threat of deportation (De Genova, 2002; Dreby, 2010; Drotbohm and Hasselberg, 2015; Khosravi, 2017).

How do Senegalese migrants who arrived from Europe to Senegal under conditions of deportability perform and narrate their return as men?

This question is answered through a series of sub-questions, which are addressed separately in the empirical chapters. The sub-questions evolved during the ethnographic process where in moments of serendipity, the learning of practices and codes around migration and masculinity in Senegal, and opportunities to trace the social connections

of returning men guided the research (see the methodological chapter for further specifications). It was an iterative process that required me to change and adapt not only to my participants' rhythms, but also to those of my family and the COVID-19 pandemic. The third subquestion evolved after a chance encounter I had with a German woman who was visiting a returnee in Senegal. Through this encounter, I learned that several German women were involved in supporting returning Senegalese men. These volunteers kept in touch after the men departed to Senegal and they could play a significant role in the men's journeys. To understand the interactions between these two groups better I decided to also include the women's perspective in this research. It led to the following subquestions:

1. How do Senegalese men narrate and perform their return to Senegal in response to social expectations concerning masculinity and migration in Senegal? (Chapter three)
2. How do Senegalese returnees narrate themselves with respect to the stereotype, existing in both Europe and Senegal, that migrant men marry European residents to gain themselves residence rights in Europe? (Chapter four)
3. What role do German volunteers play in supporting Senegalese men as they navigate the often conflicting and emotionally loaded European practices of return and deportation once in Senegal? (Chapter five)

1.4. Theoretical framework, concepts and terminology

My analysis draws on a range of concepts and theories, which I elaborate upon in the sections which follow. Key to understanding return masculinities are the concepts of performativity, narration and hegemony. Also, critical reflection on the categories of deportation and return led me to focus on the notion of deportability. To better understand experiences of return, I also adopt a transnational lens that entails looking beyond Senegal. Finally, I engage with the theoretical concept of affect to account for the tensions, frustrations and emotional dynamics that return and deportation create, not just for returnees but also their family members, friends and connections in Europe, as the various telephone calls in the opening vignette attest.

1.4.1. Studying masculinities: performativity, narration and hegemonic masculinity

Studying masculinities in the context of deportation and return migration, I build on the work of feminist scholars who study how discursive categories produce power effects. In the last decade, scholars interested in migration and borders have started to look at

the relationship between performativity, agency and migration management and the subject positions it creates (Ticktin, 2011; Häkli et al, 2017; Amelina, 2020). Rather than focusing on causes, calculative understandings of migration, the laws of international migration and the policies of sending and receiving states, these latter migration scholars have attended to the power effects of discursive categories. Some have called this the 'reflective turn' in migration studies (Dahinden, 2016; Nieswand and Drotbohm, 2014). By analyzing masculinities, performativity and narrations starting in Senegal, I aim to explore experiences beyond dominant spaces and to understand how European borders are maintained beyond the European continent and relate to gendered identities.

Following earlier research on (migrant) masculinities, my starting point is the assumption that identities are relational, multiple and complex and that they differ depending on intersectional variables including, gender, race and personal biography (see e.g. Crenshaw, 1991; Davis, 2008; Datta et al, 2009; Gallo, 2006; Wojnicka and Pustulka, 2017; Huizinga, 2022). As part of a gendered order, the notion of masculinity encompasses those practices and ways of being that serve to validate and create a masculine subject's sense of self as a boy or man (Uchendu, 2008). A relational approach enables me to analyze, for instance, the intersections of masculinity, sexuality, wealth, migration status, age and religion (Shields, 2008). It is important to emphasize that the relational dimension of the male subject position alters depending on for instance, age, culture, religion, belief systems, historical realities and women (see e.g. Markussen, 2020; Morrell, 1998; Ratele, 2021). Masculinities, like other gendered scripts, are not monolithic but are culturally narrated and performed, plural, fluid and therefore variable, contested and historically contingent (Connell, 1995; 2014; Mosse, 1998).

Masculinity, as an embodied and performative identity, involves enacting social norms and reproducing cultural scripts and taboos. But in its performativity, it has an important agentic quality. The concept of gender 'performativity' as introduced by Judith Butler (1988) has been influential in gender studies and beyond. Butler developed the concept of performativity to describe how gender is not an inherent quality of an individual but rather a social construct that is performed and embodied through bodily acts and speech acts. In 'Gender Trouble' (1990), one of their most famous works, Butler sets out to challenge 'essentialist' understandings of gender and shows how essentialist assumptions often have negative consequences for those who are not doing gender 'properly' according to hegemonic norms. Butler argues that performativity is not a voluntary creation of identity, but rather a repetitive enactment of normative practices (Butler, 1988, 1990), and they questions the idea of an autonomous individual. And yet subjects are nevertheless able to

act creatively within structures (Lloyd, 2007: 67). It is exactly the performative repetition that opens room for breaks and inconsistencies, which can create spaces of (subversive) agency. Butler's work on performativity has inspired this dissertation, including more recent work where Butler examines the ways in which people in vulnerable and precarious positions negotiate their identities and navigate social spaces (2009; 2015).

This builds upon John Austin's notion of the 'performative speech act', introduced in his renowned 1955 lectures, in which he argued that language can perform an activity (1962). Language thus not only describes the world, but also works as a practice of social action and negotiation. Besides being performative, masculinity is also narrated. Narrating is a relational process where selves are not only influenced by their social worlds, but also narratively shape those worlds. As the psychologist Jerome Bruner (2003: 223) argues, 'the construction of selfhood (...) cannot proceed without a capacity to narrate.' Following this approach in combination with ethnography, I focus not only on the personal stories of my participants but see their stories as part of narrative practices which come into being in the encounter we have (e.g. Tedlock, 1991: 78). This means that I pay attention to the context in which personal accounts are told. Here, my own positionality as a white European female researcher is significant (see chapter two).

Discourses and performances of masculinity often involve tensions, contradictions and struggles over identity. Masculinity can serve as a contested political battleground. Connell and Messerschmidt's (2005) work on the concept of 'hegemonic masculinity', although subject to critical interpretations (see Messerschmidt, 2012), has been prominent in many academic debates about masculinity. Hegemonic masculinity entails the most 'respectable' way of being a man and requires other men and women to position themselves in relation to hegemonic ideals within a particular context. The notion recognizes that masculinity is diverse but also points to identifiable hierarchies. The concept of hegemonic masculinity helps my analysis because of its relational and contextual emphasis. It allows me to view masculinities as a process, as being made and remade in a specific social, cultural and geographical context. It allows space not only for dominant masculinity types, but also complicit, marginalized, or subordinated masculinities. This can mean, for instance, that disenfranchised and unemployed young men can adhere to a hegemonic norm of masculinity such as being the provider, while they themselves cannot fully perform this hegemonic norm of masculinity (Perry, 2005; Silberschmidt, 2005). Scholars working on gender and sexuality in Africa try to transcend stereotypical colonial images and argue for the 'de-construction' and 'reconstruction' of African gender and sexualities (see e.g. Tamale, 2011; Arnfred, 2004; van Eerdewijk, 2007; Spronk, 2014; Lindsay and Miescher,

2003). Fuh (2017: 238) has argued that men in Africa are often portrayed as ‘troubled and their masculinities troubling’. In colonial ethnographies, they are presented as ‘not men’ enough, lacking in intelligence and unreliable (Uchendu, 2008: 2). Such images served as tools for colonial interests, helping to create unequal ‘others’. In this dissertation, I aim to question simplified and homogenizing understandings of African migrant men as violent, dominant, irresponsible or in danger of emasculation (see also Ammann and Staudacher 2021; Musariri and Moyer 2021). I seek to contribute nuanced understandings of returnee masculinities.

The impact of international migration on gender norms and social life can be significant (Bélangier and Linh, 2011). Pribilsky argues that ‘migration serves to reorient and question taken-for-granted gender roles and ideologies for both men and women, as they work to fit their daily routines into the new rules and priorities’ (2004: 316). The masculinities of men who migrate is an emerging area of inquiry, yet there are fewer studies on men who return (Pribilsky, 2004; Charsley, 2005). A plural and flexible definition of contemporary sub-Saharan African masculinities is necessary to comprehend complex migration dynamics (see also Lindsay and Miescher’s, 2003; Sinatti, 2014) and the process of renegotiating masculinities. This process is ongoing, but it can get intricate in transnational contexts (see Sinatti, 2014:224; Pasura and Christou, 2018). Building on scholars who show the fluidity and, diversity of masculinities (e.g. Gartner, 2021; Kramer and Bowman, 2021; Msibi, 2011; Shio and Moyer, 2021; Teunis, 2001), I aim to show how men adhere to and contest hegemonic masculinity norms once in Senegal in the context of return and deportation. In the following section, I elaborate on what I mean by return and deportation.

1.4.2. Studying return and deportation: concepts and terminology

Deportation is commonly seen as involving the forceful removal of a migrant from one national territory to another. Deportation has legal, political and socio-economic consequences for the migrant and his social circle but also for aspiring migrants (Drotbohm and Hasselberg, 2015). It is an administrative and political intervention that can function to interrupt, stop, redirect but also to deter migrant projects. I follow deportation scholars who have shown that deportation is not a one-time event, but rather a process that impacts upon the condition of people on the move and their social circles. This implies that the impacts can be felt before the actual event of deportation as the possibility of deportation hangs over people before they are ever deported but also years after (Peutz, 2006; Coutin, 2015; De Genova, 2002; Hasselberg, 2018).

Nicolas De Genova's (2002) concept of 'deportability' is influential in the study of deportation and return. It points at the constant possibility of being deported as an illegalized migrant. By focusing on deportability rather than actual deportation, I acknowledge the legal production of migrant illegality and avoid the dubious distinction between forced and voluntary return, as many so-called voluntary returnees have little choice but to return (Cleton and Chauvin 2020). Indeed, not all migrants consider their return as either a voluntary or forced decision, nor do they necessarily return to the places they came from or see their return as the end of the migration cycle. My thesis, therefore, takes as a starting point the *continuum* of voluntary-involuntary return (see also Strasser and Sökefeld, 2024).

To emphasize the work that is needed to render someone an 'illegal' migrant, I use the term 'illegalized' throughout my dissertation. It implies that migration itself has no fixed social meaning, nor is it inherently problematic, but through discourses and laws mobile people are given political and social classifications like 'asylum seeker', 'highly skilled migrant', 'refugee', 'deportable migrant' or 'returnee'. The idea that migrants can be illegalized underscores the categorization process and legal and coercive power to which states and organizations subject people (Andersson, 2014; De Noronha, 2020: 7; Kalir, 2022; Shaidrova, 2022; Marino et al., 2023). Illegalization requires work of transformation, classification and is performative (Hertoghs, 2019). In this context, deportation is also a performative spectacle, which has the symbolic function of deterring potential migrants as well showing to citizens that states are in control (Andersson, 2014). Yet most illegalized and deportable migrants will not actually be deported, as states do not have the capacity nor the desire to deport everyone who breaches immigration restrictions (De Noronha, 2020: 7).

In this dissertation, I distinguish between returns and deportations from African countries and removals from Europe. As elsewhere on the continent, many Senegalese returnees come from other African states, often from Northern African countries such as Libya and Morocco (Vammen, 2022; Rodriguez, 2023). Deportation and return from one African country to another can be seen as part of the externalization of European migration policies, which may involve the EU only providing development assistance if African countries implement border controls and conform to EU migration policy (see e.g. Gaibazzi et al., 2017; Stock et al., 2019). In the European policy context, 'sustainable return' equates with the absence of re-migration (Marino and Lietaert, 2022). I focus on those who made at least one move to Europe and back to Senegal. But I am not concerned with whether their returns were 'sustainable'. During my research, I saw how migrant

trajectories can include various moves to and from Senegal, including after their so-called 'return'. The focus on at least one move to Europe derives from the expected pressure of such a return. As the potential for growth is seen as substantial if one goes to harder to reach destinations such as Europe, the losses after return are also seen as more extensive if one does not stay. Investigating return from European countries therefore allows for an enhanced understanding about the specific tensions and opportunities after return in Senegal and the position of returning men.

While there are legal and political differences between the categories of deportees, voluntary returnees and returnees, I use the terms interchangeably to reflect the fact that the legal division is not strictly followed by my participants. Terms such as 'return' or 'repatriation' are used by institutions and governments (including the Senegalese) to 'neutralize' and underplay their active role in expulsions. The Senegalese government, for instance, was active in the removal of thousands of illegalized migrants from Spain and accepted Senegalese citizens from Morocco and Mauritania (Maher, 2015: 14-15). Return and repatriation suggest being united with your national 'homeland'; the terms suggest returnees are welcomed home and have access to reintegration resources.³ Yet, the notion of 'going home' is problematic because it implies feelings of coziness and happiness (see e.g. Drotbohm, 2012; King, 2000; Vathi et al., 2023). At the same time, it is important also to question the widespread notion in many wealthy Western countries that migrants always want to settle permanently in their destination countries. Instead, many migrants eventually want to return and to reunify with their families, and they plan their lives in their new place around this possibility (Mazzucato et al., 2018; Long and Oxfeld, 2004: 2; Hernández-Carretero, 2017; Hannaford, 2017). They can be reluctant to bring their families together in Europe, preferring to organize their family lives transnationally across borders (e.g. Bledsoe and Sow, 2011). In the following section, I elaborate further upon how a transnational approach features in this dissertation.

1.4.3. A transnational approach to return, deportation and masculinities

Scholars of transnational migration emphasize the need to look beyond the nation state as natural unit of analysis and show how daily life can unfold across borders (Wimmer and Glick Schiller, 2002; Levitt, 2001; Mazzucato et al., 2004; Mazzucato et al., 2015; Amelina and Faist, 2012). They pay attention to processes of geographic mobility and question the idea that populations of nation states can be logically divided into migrants and non-migrants (King, 2002; Wimmer, 2008; Yuval-Davis, 2006). They show how relationships

³ The reintegration resources were for many deportees very limited or non-existent, whereas voluntary returnees from Germany could receive up to 6500 euro.

beyond the nation state are often important, regardless of whether one is considering the country of origin, destination or another country along a person's migration trajectory. In the Senegalese case, transnational migration practices are common, and many migrants remain attached to Senegal through familial and social ties and gendered expectations (Sinatti, 2014; Hannaford, 2017).

Deportation and return are inherently transnational phenomena as they link different countries together and create (forced) transnational connections (see Golash-Boza, 2014; Drotbohm and Hasselberg, 2015 on the deportation corridor). The masculinities of returnees to Senegal can also be understood as transnational phenomena. Focusing on Senegal alone would be insufficient for understanding the masculinities of returnees as one must consider the broader network of actors and ideas to which Senegalese men are connected. Transnational connections with people, such as the German volunteers discussed in the opening vignette of this dissertation are important, but so too are transnational discourses that are 'brought' to Senegal through, for instance, tourism, Europeans living in Senegal, and experiences that are shared by Senegalese men and women who live or used to live in Europe. Senegalese men who return to Senegal thus have to relate to various contexts where visions of what it means to be a man might differ (see also Sinatti, 2014). The transnational aspect in this dissertation is thus not only about the men's continuing relationship to German volunteers and others they met in Europe, but also about how they perform in relation to a transnational space in which discourses from various countries are relevant. The importance of a transnational angle led to the inclusion of a multi-sited research design (see chapter two).

Much research on transnationalism and gender shows the impact of migration on migrants, on women who are left behind in the country of origin and on power relations, but less attention has been paid to the experiences of men and to understandings of masculinities (but see Sinatti, 2014). This dissertation contributes to studies on transnationalism and return by focusing on men from a country whose citizens often have limited entry to the transnational realm due to restrictive migration regimes (see Lietaert et al., 2014). While this group has been less researched in the transnational family migration literature (Kraus et al., 2019; Tiilikainen et al., 2023), experiences of returning men can offer insight into the role of residency status and its consequences in multiple locations.

Transnational relationships and practices have been demonstrated to both help and hinder processes of return and reintegration (Carling and Erdal, 2014; Golash-Boza, 2014). Returnees are often limited in their ability to go back to the destination country (Lietaert et al., 2017). Formalized connections to the former country of residence in the

form of citizenship or a residency permit can stimulate return migration as they allow for transnational mobility back and forth and provide a safety net in cases of unsuccessful return (Mortensen, 2014; Gonzalez-Ferrer et al., 2014). Transnational connections to people in the former country of residence can also open up possibilities for earning a living through tourism, work or trade (Carling and Erdal, 2014). Yet, the use of skills learned abroad such as language and transnational connections can also lead to feelings of isolation and shame, as it reminds returnees of their inability to provide for themselves and of their unfilled migration project (Golash-Boza, 2014: 64; Rodkey, 2018). This shows one of the crucial links to the affective dimension of return and deportation. In the following section, I will elaborate further upon this and its importance for this dissertation.

1.4.4. The affective and emotional dimension of return and deportation

The practice of excluding deportable migrants and returning them to their so-called countries of origin has become increasingly polarized, with emotions ranging from compassion for non-citizens to hate and anger towards deportable people and those who support them (Horsti and Pirkkalainen, 2023). Immigration controls encompass affective, spatial and temporal components, and detention and deportation have been described as entailing highly affective and emotional experiences (Griffiths, 2014; Turnbull, 2015). These experiences are gendered, classed, racialized and dependent on residency status (see e.g. Hiemstra, 2012, 2014; Tilkainen et al., 2023).

Migration scholars have increasingly examined the affective consequences of deportation and return, mainly from the perspective of those subject to deportation or to conditions of deportability and their communities. They have demonstrated how prolonged experiences of being ‘unwanted’ and ‘suspicious’ and long waiting times can give rise to extreme and often contradictory feelings and behaviors (van Osch, 2022; DeBono et al., 2015, Strasser and Sökefeld, 2024). These include feelings of guilt, embarrassment, anxiety and pain, as well as the damaging effects of stigmatization for returnees and their families (Kleist, 2017b; Plambech, 2018; Petit et al., 2014). Emotions and affect are not only relevant for direct experiences of returnees. In West Africa for instance, affect and emotions have been integrated into the information campaigns about migration that aim to deter potential migrants from leaving (see Vammen and Kohl, 2022; Marino et al., 2023; Schenetti and Mazzucato, 2024). In these campaigns, often funded by European states, the dangers, risks and struggles of unauthorized migration are represented. This dissertation adds to scholarly debates by considering affect and emotion in relation to masculinity. By paying attention to how returnees share affective narratives and practices of success, hope, suffering and

courage to uphold or prove their masculinity, I shed light on the ways in which they depend on, question, resist and seek to rectify hierarchies of inequality through affect.

I understand emotions to be manifestations of affect that are created and shared through interactions, practices and cultural processes (Wetherell, 2012: 39). The term 'affect' in this dissertation refers to a person's subjective, arousal and intensity-based physiological and psychological response to events in their surroundings. Displays of affect are derived from and expressive of the biological, psychological, social, economic, and political domains. They differ from focused, passing emotions and from wider temperaments and enduring sentimentalities (Bocagni and Baldassar, 2015). As Wetherell (2012: 4) outlines, the study of affective practices tries to follow what participants do and zooms in on the emotional in the way it comes forward in social life. It allows for shifting, flexible figurations instead of neat and more deterministic emotion categories. I use the terms interchangeably in this dissertation because, among other things, participants use the term 'emotion' to refer to affective experience and because emotion and affective practices are hard to differentiate during research. I incorporate affective practices in this dissertation as it allows for including embodied experiences that have also become part of the control and governance of migration.

Affective practices and emotions are important in institutional discourses and laws that control migration (Borrelli et al., 2021; Daniel and Knudsen, 1995; Hertoghs, 2019; Kalir, 2019; Toubl, 2019). Emotions signpost moral and ethical frames and can act as a means of control. Affect and emotion are also present in institutional discourses and laws related to migration governance. Regulations concerning marriage migration for instance require European bureaucrats to evaluate the genuineness of personal relationships (D'Aoust, 2013, 2018; Eggebø, 2013; De Hart, 2015, 2017; Kringelbach, 2016a), and to do this, narratives and practices of intimacy and love are essential (Maskens, 2015). Ethnographic research has also shown how affect matters in bureaucratic practices. The official portrayal of the visa application process as a clear-cut, unemotional, logical bureaucratic procedure is too simplistic (Alpes and Spire, 2014; Bosworth, 2019; Ellermann, 2006; Scheel, 2018; Vrabiescu and Anderson, 2023; Wissink and van Oorschot, 2021). Feelings of mistrust on the part of both applicants and bureaucrats, for instance, may influence interpersonal interactions and application outcomes.

The affective practices in relation to deportability, return and deportation appear in different forms throughout this dissertation. I investigate how affect matters in performing masculinity in Senegal, as well as how affect can tie together deportable people and citizens of the countries that deport, connections that are often rendered invisible. In the last empirical

chapter, I extend existing literature by exploring how affective norms and discourses in Europe travel to Senegal and how returnees position themselves towards them.

1.5. Outline of the dissertation

This is an article-based thesis. Each empirical chapter can be read as a standalone piece and has been published or accepted in an academic journal. This inevitably leads to some repetition in descriptions of my theoretical and methodological approach.

Chapter two, provides information about fieldwork locations and the methodology employed during data collection, including discussion of the project's ethnographic design and reflection upon my positionality as a young Dutch white European woman researching the return and deportation of mainly men.

The third chapter investigates how practices of silence can become a way of dealing with aborted migration projects and how it corresponds with masculine ideals, such as ideals of being a breadwinner. Despite the numerous difficulties returnee men experience, they narrate success post return and do so by engaging with Senegalese hegemonic masculine discourses. I show how ambiguity and silence about their legal status and conditions of return are common. To perform and narrate their return as an agentic act, even when it may somehow have been forced upon them, can help returnees to become part again of Senegalese society.

The fourth chapter looks at how masculinity ideals present in European marriage migration governance remain pertinent in Senegal after return. Marriage to a European citizen or resident offers migrants a path to a residency permit, and 'marriage migration' is thus highly scrutinized by European states. Despite the limited options for Senegalese migrants to enter or stay in Europe legally, I show how male Senegalese returnees and deportees challenge the idea that men want to marry a European resident at all costs. When returned from Europe to Senegal, they discursively align with the norms of European states around marriage. Their return challenges gendered and racialized narratives about dangerous and hypersexual black Muslim males who prey on European women and at the same time reinforces these narratives by positioning themselves as different from other black men who might marry a European resident.

In the fifth chapter I show how gendered transnational connections between German volunteering women and returning men can continue despite often emotionally charged and conflicting European practices and discourses of removal. The chapter illustrates the significance of "emotion work" (Hochschild, 1979) as volunteers deal with the

multidirectional movement of mistrust and frustration between returnees, institutions and donors in the return migration industry. The circulation of mistrust in these engagements is at times transformed into trust but may also fall back into suspicion.

Chapter 6 is the concluding chapter and provides a synthesis of thoughts and reflections on my research and the contributions that I have made to the literature. These contributions concern my focus on masculinities, transnational connections and affect in the context of deportation and return. At the end of the chapter, I discuss the limitations of my research as well as avenues for future research.



Chapter 2

Methodological chapter

EMBARGO

Chapter 3

Performing return: victims, criminals or heroes? Senegalese male returnees engaging with the stigma of deportation

This chapter is a slightly revised version of the following publication:

Strijbosch, K., Mazzucato, V. and Brunotte, U. (2023). Performing return: victims, criminals or heroes? Senegalese male returnees engaging with the stigma of deportation. *Gender, Place and Culture*, 30(11), 1617-1637. doi: 10.1080/0966369X.2023.2229056

3.1. Introduction

Returning migrants to their so-called countries of origin has become one of the main tools of European migration management via forced and semi-voluntary return programs. Voluntary return is considered less costly, more successful and politically and socially less painful than forced return (Blitz, et al., 2005). Yet, research has shown that the boundaries between voluntary and forced returns are blurry at best, and little is known about how migrants fare upon their return (Hasselberg, 2018). Most studies focus on the impacts of the threat of deportation on migrants while they are abroad (e.g. Hasselberg, 2016). Less is known about the fears and challenges that persist after migrants are deported and the agency that returnees show in navigating these challenges.

In the last decade, studies have begun to focus on the experiences of migrants who undergo deportation or state-assisted voluntary return. These studies tend to foreground intense emotions relating to suffering and distress. Communities and families stigmatize deported migrants who are seen as having failed in the land of opportunity and portrayed as lazy, criminal, stupid or unlucky (Alpes, 2012). Studies have found that deportees, their family members and those in their wider social network often suffer financial, occupational, familial, social and cultural losses (Turnbull, 2018: 39; Boehm, 2016). Including a loss of masculine status (Schultz, 2021). They face a higher risk of psychosocial problems, and the stigma of deportation (Petit et al., 2014). This can lead to additional pressure to migrate again (Schuster and Majidi, 2015). Deportation studies have recently turned to the relationship between deportation and the development discourse that surrounds return migration (Åkesson and Baaz, 2015; Coutin, 2015; Hasselberg, 2016; Leerkes et al., 2017; Ruben et al., 2009; Sinatti, 2015). Migration can increase the social standing of migrants and their families but also lead to stigmatization and suffering in case of aborted migration projects. This applies in particular to males from West Africa who face difficulties in fulfilling the role of breadwinner and household head (Schulz and Janson, 2016; Prothmann, 2018). Migration can therefore be both a stigma and privilege (Andersson, 2014).

Despite the appeals by migration scholars to go beyond a discourse of victimhood (Hasselberg, 2018), few studies analyze the creative repertoires of returning migrants, especially those considered to have returned involuntarily (Piper, 2009, Ruben et al., 2009). Studies started to show the different ways in which returnees depict themselves and the agency and political struggle involved in their self-narrations (see Fine and Walters, 2022; Galvin, 2015; Lecadet, 2018; Sinatti, 2019a), including the ways they sometimes hide their deportation status (Alpes, 2012; Schuster and Majidi, 2015). We aim to contribute to this

emerging field of study by focusing on male Senegalese migrants to Europe who returned to Senegal either because they were deported or because, threatened with deportation, they chose to return. Drawing on data collected during almost one year of ethnographic fieldwork in urban Senegal, mainly Dakar, we explore how men who have lived in Europe under conditions of ‘deportability’ (De Genova, 2002) narrate and perform their migration and return experiences in relation to the different societal expectations about masculinity and returnees in Senegal. All the participants in this study could have been removed from the space of the nation-state where they were residing in Europe before their return to Senegal due to their legal (or soon illegalized) status, though not all were forcefully returned. By focusing on deportability rather than actual deportation, we acknowledge the legal production of migrant illegality and avoid the dubious distinction between forced and voluntary return, as many so-called voluntary returnees have limited choice but to return (Cleton and Chauvin, 2020).

Studying the narrations of deportable returning migrants as they are performed and performative allows us to understand the possibilities and limitations that returnees face when trying to re-establish their lives in Senegal. Such narrations communicate a wide range of experiences that include pain and suffering but also success, gratitude and personal growth. While cases of extreme suffering exist, we expressly analyze non-extreme cases as these were more commonly encountered, and they show the variety of performative acts that returnees engage in after their return. We aim to shed light on cases that are less researched and to build a different story of deportation and return than is commonly found in the literature.

3.2. Studying ‘failed’ migration and masculinities through performativity

In the last decade, scholars have increasingly looked at the relationship between performativity, agency, migration management and the subject positions these interactions (re)create. Most studies exploring migration and performativity focus on the performative acts of emergent ‘refugeeness’, humanitarianism and bureaucratic practices in the countries of arrival (e.g. Huschke, 2014; Ticktin, 2011; Ingvars and Gíslason, 2018). Fewer studies look at the performativity and subject positions of deportees, returnees or rejected asylum seekers (but see, Cleton and Chauvin, 2020; Spathopoulou, Carastathis, and Tsilimpounidi, 2022).

The terms ‘performative’ and ‘performative speech act’ were coined by the linguist Austin (1962) in his famous 1955 lectures, where he argued that language can perform an action. Judith Butler (1988) introduced the term ‘performative’ to feminist philosophy and argued

that gender is not a condition one has, but is the materialization of reiterating practices. The utterance 'It's a girl' is, for Butler, not a statement of fact, but an interpellation that initiates a process of 'girling'. In Butler's (2009, 2015) later work she develops a politics of performativity and transfers the concept of performative gender construction to people in a vulnerable and precarious situation. A central example is provided by illegalized migrants in the United States who, by singing the anthem of the United States and Mexico on the streets, make 'themselves very public, exercising a right that belongs to citizens precisely because they do not have that right' (Butler, 2009: v). Here performativity is no longer an individual matter but a collective practice of resistance and by taking place in public space where migrants become visible, they exercise a 'right to appear' (Butler 2015: 24).

Just as gender, and in our case masculinity, is enacted through repetitive interaction with regulative norms, so too is being a migrant, deportee or refugee. And it is exactly the performative repetition of powerful conventions that can open spaces of subversive agency. In Butler's reading, agency comes from the moments of 'failure' and 'rupture' within the repetition, from resistance to social norms and the subordinating function of discursive political power. The critical task is to locate strategies of subversive repetition, or resignification, in individual self-narration and in embodied performative actions. This provides the first form of agency in this paper, the immanent possibility of contesting the constituted identity (Butler, 1990: 147), and the second form of agency of making politically visible what is deemed invisible (Butler, 2009, 2015).

Saba Mahmood (2001) builds on Butler's early work but emphasizes that agency involves more than the sort of political transformation Butler was concerned with. In line with Goffman's (1959) reading of performativity, Mahmood allows more room for intentionality and the framing of self. She thereby pays attention to the individual desires and possibilities that come from a specific subject position. Mahmood (2001: 212) argues that 'agentical capacity is entailed not only in those acts that result in (progressive) change but also that aim toward continuity, stasis and stability.' This includes the capacity to 'endure, suffer and persist' (ibid, 217). In this paper, we therefore not only focus on forms of agency that aim at 'rupture' but also those that enact specific relations of subordination and do not necessarily aim for transformation. Such forms of agency arise when people endure an ascribed status and is the third form of agency in our analysis.

Häkli et al. (2017) analyze a fourth form of performativity and agency in their study of how migrants and asylum seekers in Cairo employ political subjectivities related to 'becoming refugee'. Migrants show a heightened awareness of the discursive 'figure of the refugee' and the performances they are expected to enact to achieve refugee status,

such as the need to create certain narratives about their flight. They therefore individually use performative acts to engage with the discursive and institutional expectations of the international refugee regime. The authors interpret these actions not merely as performing what is expected as sites of governmentality (Zagor, 2014), but also as ways that asylum seekers show political agency by being attentive to their positions. Being attentive to their positions enables a 'subjective distance' to the figure of the refugee (Häkli et al., 2017: 7). They (ibid, 14–15) also emphasize the role shared awareness of their precarious situation plays to mobilize the social potential of embodied performative politics and subjectivity. This shared understanding has the potential to encourage dissenting agency among asylum seekers, including organizing public demonstrations where they fight for their position in public spaces. This is the fourth form of agency in our analysis, one which is close to Butler's later theory of the performative. It focuses on the capacity for action that the shared awareness of subordination creates and simultaneously enables individual distance and collective acts of resistance.

We thus explore four forms of performativity and its related agency in this paper: contestation of negative norms of 'the deportee' through narrative acts of 'subversive reiteration'; embodied political performances of resistance; acts of 'enduring'; and performative 'self-distancing'. We connect masculinity to the 'figure of the returnee' and investigate their interconnected performative production. In doing so, we aim to capture the multilayered experiences of male returnees in Senegal. We focus on diverse narratives and performative acts and how these help returnees to deal with post-deportation and return and to create meaning and (regain) agency.

3.3. Discursive regimes about migrants, men and returnees

Migration has been part of the lives of Senegalese families for centuries, both within Senegal and internationally (see e.g. Maher, 2017). Migratory travel is a social practice that meets familial and communal needs and is considered a form of solidarity (Degli Uberti, 2014; Sinatti, 2011). In predominantly heterogeneous Islamic Senegalese society, it is also considered a moral experience (Bredeloup, 2016). Being a migrant offers an alternative form of social prestige and a way of dealing with unemployment and underemployment (Ludl, 2008; Prothmann, 2018). Senegalese migration flows have historically been and still are male dominated (Mazzucato et al. 2015). Norms of masculinity entail expectations of men being wealthy, providing for the family, building a house and marrying. This applies especially to male migrants who went to Europe and the United States (Diatta and Mbow, 1999; Sall, 2011). Furthermore, in Senegal there is a strong discourse of the migrant as a development actor (Kabbanji, 2013). This reflects the myriad of foreign-funded initiatives

by the Senegalese state, national and international non-governmental organizations, and European states that propagate images of migrants as entrepreneurs and potential developers of their country. Since the early 2000s, pirogue migration, which has seen young men especially trying to travel by boat to Spain, has been common (Poeze, 2013). Such migration has resulted in many deaths, a criminalization of illegalized migration, and practices of silencing and secrecy surrounding migrants' journeys (Gueye, 2020).

In European discourses, the 'illegal migrant', especially when black and male, is both a pitiable object of rescue and a massing threat at the borders' (Andersson, 2014: 280). He is a daunting, sly intruder who needs to be repatriated but also an innocent ill-informed victim. In Senegal, this discourse has resulted in enhanced border controls, return and readmission agreements, and numerous awareness-raising campaigns, funded by European states, that aim to reshape the aspirations for mobility of potential migrants and local communities by demonstrating the risks and dangers of irregular migration, especially pirogue migration (Bouilly, 2008). The pirogue migrant is portrayed as 'kamikaze', 'victim' or a 'naïve adventurer' driven by unrealistic expectations about Europe and the possibilities of gaining economic wealth (Degli Uberti, 2014). Various studies have looked at the effectiveness and side effects of campaigns and the role of returnees in them (see Rodriguez, 2019; Vammen, 2022). However, few studies look at the roles of return migrants outside of these activities or migrants who do not want to be associated with them. In addition to migration campaigns, repatriates who return empty handed are considered to serve as the ideal advertisement against illegal migration (Andersson, 2014). Interestingly, assisted return from Europe to Senegal is relatively rare, and removal of undocumented immigrants seems to involve a limited, although not insignificant, number of migrants in Europe (Schoumaker et al., 2018: 39).

Besides the international migration regime, returnees respond to implicit cultural modes, including gendered ideals, in their narrative acts of self-making (Bruner, 2003). We use Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) theory of hegemonic masculinity to investigate how male Senegalese migrants perform their return as gendered event. Though contested (Messerschmidt, 2012), the theory of hegemonic masculinity is useful for its relational and contextualized approach to cultural masculinities. Hegemonic ideals of masculinity refer to the highest-status way of being a man and require other men and women to position themselves in relation to this hegemonic ideal (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). Connell and Messerschmidt's approach complements Butler's theory of performative gender constitution and enables us to study masculinities as relational and dynamic, made and remade in their specific social, cultural and geographical position. The concept of hegemonic masculinity thus accounts not only for dominant masculinity types but

also subordinated, complicit or marginalized masculinities (see e.g. Brunotte, 2022). The way in which individuals conduct, narrate and perform their intimate lives leads to rights to claim privileges or to social marginalization. For instance, disenfranchised and unemployed young men can adhere to a hegemonic form of masculinity, but they might not fully perform manhood based on it (Perry, 2005; Silberschmidt, 2005). We aim to understand how male returnees perform their return and engage with discourses about migration, return and masculinity that are propagated in Senegalese society and in translocal and transnational spaces such as international and non-governmental organizations working on migration. Doing so, we aim to challenge simplified and homogenizing understandings of African migrant men as violent, in crisis or in danger of emasculation (see also Ammann and Staudacher, 2021; Musariri and Moyer, 2021) and contribute to nuanced understandings of returnee masculinities.

In light of the criminalization of illegalized migration and secrecy surrounding migrant's journeys, we investigate practices of discretion and silencing through the lens of *sutura* to analyze the repertoire of narrations and performativity of male returnees. *Sutura* is a term in Wolof, the main group in Senegal and the dominant language, that signifies 'discretion, modesty, privacy, protection, and the happiness that the previous terms are said to ensure' (Mills, 2011, 2–3). It serves to differentiate between the state of honor and dishonor. *Sutura* is connected to Muslim forms of morality and is considered to apply across the different ethnic groups of Senegal. *Sutura* protects information about the household, its residents, the extended family and ensures the reproduction of an honorable life within the hierarchically structured family and the community (Pfeil Gretchen, 2020). It involves forms of active self-silencing and of being silenced by others. Those who are not classified as honorable cannot make the same claims to the right of protection and care of the community (Mills, 2011). Maintaining *sutura* is a form of self-protection. If a bad deed is not visible to others, it does not lead to disgrace (ibid). It creates communities of secrecy and engenders practices that keep one invisible or unspoken to outsiders. While the notion of *sutura* has mostly been used to analyze the gendered experiences of women (Sow 1985, Oudenhuijsen, 2021; Pfeil Gretchen, 2020), we find it useful to investigate discretion practices by Senegalese male returnees and their performances of masculinity.

3.4. Methodology

Data were collected by the first author during almost a year of ethnographic fieldwork in urban Senegal, conducted between 2017 and 2021, and ongoing online contact. She spoke with 40 men and five women who had a migratory experience in Europe. We opted to focus on men who lived in Europe under conditions of deportability, i.e. on those

who risked deportation due to their immigration status, to underline the continuum of return and deportation. Thus we explore the experiences of both deportees and those who returned to Senegal voluntarily but who could have been deported. At least fifteen of the 40 men had direct experience of deportation to Senegal at some point of their lives. Twelve out of the 40 became our core participants as the field researcher interacted with them various times. We focus on men to reflect the reality that most returnees are men.

Participant observation, interviews and informal conversations were conducted in participants' homes, workplaces, recreational spaces, at NGOs and organizations working with returnees, and at cultural events such as religious celebrations, naming ceremonies and marriages. In addition to talking with men who returned from Europe, interviews and informal conversations were also conducted with Senegalese returnees from the United States, Brazil, Mauritania, Gambia, Libya and Sierra Leone. Besides migrants and their family members, people from (international) organizations that work with returnees were interviewed. The results were supplemented by participant observation with Senegalese who do not have migration experience.

To gain insights into the diversity of returnee experiences, we approached participants through a variety of entry points: via colleagues at the Cheikh Anta Diop University in Dakar and the University of Maastricht, through NGOs working with returnees, fellow researchers, volunteers, friends, acquaintances both in Europe and in Senegal, and chance encounters in Senegal. Fieldwork was interspersed with periods of analysis during which participants' narratives and performances were coded to discern themes related to social expectations about masculinity and return. These themes were further investigated once back in Senegal. Prominent themes that emerged include silence and the role of remigration. These were subsumed within larger themes about migration, return and masculinity.

Fieldwork was mostly conducted in the cities of Dakar and Thies. Occasionally the field researcher went to other regions of Senegal, for instance when she accompanied migrants during family visits. In between stays the researcher maintained contact with participants via social media. Most data collection occurred between February and August 2019 and from December 2020 to March 2021. Communication was mostly in French and sometimes in English, German and/or Dutch. Three interviews were conducted with the help of an interpreter in Wolof and one in Italian. The field researcher is a Dutch woman who many Senegalese considered young due to her unmarried and childless status. While this often facilitated access to men, including returnees from Europe, at times it also solicited mistrust and assumptions that she was working for a European NGO, government or migration campaign.

We obtained ethical approval from the Ethics Review Committee (ERCIC) of Maastricht University and all names used in this article are pseudonyms. We see informed consent as a process and therefore the first author regularly verbally reminded participants of her position as researcher, the purposes of the study and stayed open to any wish to withdraw from the study. The researcher was supported locally by Prof. Papa Sakho at Cheikh Anta Diop University who informed her of common practices for ethnographic fieldwork.

3.5. Engaging with discursive regimes: producing migrants, returnees and men

We analyze two cases, those of Amadou and Oumar that together show a variety of agentic acts, complicities and ambiguities of return also performed by returnee participants in our wider sample. Their narrations and performative acts encompass the four types of performativity and related agency explained above. The same person can perform these forms at different times. Through an in-depth account of the performative acts and narrations of Oumar and Amadou, we show that a combination of factors leads them to perform in particular ways. Oumar and Amadou are both in their mid-thirties and lived in Europe for over ten years, yet they engaged in different types of migration. Oumar arrived as a student by plane and Amadou as a pirogue migrant. According to European migration categories, they are opposites: one, the ‘wanted’ highly educated migrant; the other, the ‘unwanted illegalized’ migrant. Yet we will see that such distinctions do not correspond to their experiences, narrations and performances back in Senegal.

3.5.1. Amadou

Amadou (36) and I met in Dakar via a shared contact. With a big smile, he playfully asks where I am from in Wolof to test my language skills. Three months before, he was deported. For the last month, he has been living in his room in Dakar. In 2008, Amadou was repatriated for the first time from Spain to Senegal after three years in Europe. About a year later, he left again to Mauritania and Morocco. After three failed attempts to get to Europe from Morocco, he succeeded. He stayed about 8 years until he was deported for the second time to Senegal. Despite his experience of deportations, he wants to return to Europe. Just after his second return to Senegal, this feeling dominated and he did not want to hear of people who said he must stay. Now, about two years later, this aspiration to return to Europe has not disappeared, but Amadou seems pickier about the conditions of his return: he only wants to go if he is invited. (Fieldnote extracts, March 2019; February 2021).

3.5.1.1. The public interview: contesting the image of the deportee as a man

In this section, we zoom in on a broadcasted interview Amadou gave to a Senegalese reporter about his deportation experiences a couple of weeks after his second return to investigate the performative acts it enables. The reporter contacted Amadou because his case was known due to public protests against his deportation in Europe. Representing the collective, mostly disregarded and silenced group of fellow-returnees, Amadou used this opportunity to talk publicly and performatively embody the cause of deportees. By sharing his story in Wolof to a Senegalese audience, he aimed to improve the situation for Senegalese citizens abroad and to question common views of deportees in Senegal.

In the interview, Amadou resists stereotypical portrayals of the deportee and ‘failed masculinity’ by refusing the repetitive performances that are expected (Butler, 1990, 2009, 2015). Rather, through the interview, he engages in a public performative act of appropriating a ‘space of appearance’ (Butler 2015: 48). He resists the political norms of the migration regime and aims for transformation. By speaking up as a deportee on camera, he questions the perception that deportation represents an individual failure and a threatened masculinity due to laziness, criminality, stupidity or bad luck. Rather, he shows the social injustices inflicted upon deportees by both European states and the Senegalese state. Instead of warning against the danger of illegalized migration and serving moral migration governance, as often done in information campaigns and AVRR programs (Fine and Walters, 2022), he questions the state’s roles in the migration regime. While he accepts the category of a deportee, and in so doing reiterates the norms of the migration regime, he uses the interview as an opportunity to question the stereotype of the deportee. He emphasizes that he was doing well in Europe: he was integrated, worked hard, sent remittances, learned the language and was not deported due to criminal acts. Amadou’s act of speaking up publicly also enables him to distance himself from negative and gender coded views about the ‘figure of the deportee’ (Häkli et al., 2017).

Amadou uses various hegemonic discourses to contest negative views of the deportee, such as by referring to Islam, the dominant religion in Senegal that he also adheres to in everyday life beyond the public interview. He invokes the image of the good citizen and Muslim:

I can swear on the Koran that during the seven years in [country in Europe], I never had any problems with the police, except once.

By swearing on the Koran, Amadou creates a performative utterance, appeals to the moral authority of the Koran and aims to be taken seriously as a Muslim man. His aim to challenge

the migration regime is visible when the television interviewer asks Amadou why he applied for political asylum even though he knows Senegal is not at war. He responds:

There are many countries which are not at war but who [whose citizens] live well in Europe. [...] Other states take care of their nationals. Only the Senegalese state does not care.

Amadou invokes the responsibility of the Senegalese state and questions the idea of deportation as an individual failure. To show the weakness of the Senegalese state and the social injustice of deportation, Amadou points to the violence inflicted on him and others by the Senegalese state in collaboration with European states and urges the Senegalese state to do something about this. He sees it as his duty to protect others to whom this happened or might happen to. When the interviewer asks why he was deported, Amadou says that to this day he does not understand:

The only thing I can say is ... Macky Sall [president of Senegal] was there for a conference, he told us [migrants] to stay calm and not to worry. I believed his speech.

Amadou invokes Senegalese masculine ideals. Amadou re-narrates and re-interprets his masculine role as protector and provider of the family. Not only is he adversely affected by his untimely and unjustified return, but a whole group of people are:

The fact that I am deported to Senegal does not hurt me personally. But when I think about my family members who count on me, who want me to succeed, that hurts. I am not married, but I have a father, a mother, sisters who count on me. But I admit, it is not easy.

Rather than being de-masculinized by the vulnerability and precariousness that might come with deportation (Butler, 2009), Amadou portrays himself as a selfless person who wants to do good for others while invoking notions of social justice. This makes it possible for him to be celebrated for his solidarity and manliness. He might not be able to fulfil all masculine expectations now, but he used to do so, and he is aiming to do so in the future. He explains in the broadcast interview:

Everyone who needed help was at my door [while in Europe]. But [in Senegal] it is the contrary. That is what hurts me, but not being back in my own country.

Besides questioning the migration regime in the interview, Amadou contests the Senegalese value of *sutura* in discussions with the researcher and problematizes the

common practice of protecting oneself and the family through silence. He explains to the researcher why it is better to talk than to remain silent:

You have to talk your history. It is your own. [...]. If you stay [silent] like this, the people think badly or they think that you sold drugs or made something bad in Europe. That is why they bring you [deport you].

3.5.1.2. Visiting the hometown: performing the successful migrant and faithful Muslim

While the public interview described above shows Amadou's performative act of resistance against his deportation, at other times he showed ambiguity vis-à-vis talking about his deportation status. He rather emphasized hegemonic Senegalese masculine norms, including those related to the successful migrant. Here we continue the analysis of Amadou's performative acts by focusing on a visit to his hometown some months after his deportation and interview. Waiting for transportation to his hometown, Amadou met an old friend. The friend was unaware that Amadou was back and did not directly recognize him due to his new hairstyle. They greeted, laughed and exchanged updates. After the conversation, the researcher asked Amadou what he told his old friend. He explained:

I told him the entire story; I do not want to lie about it. But when people do not ask, I will not tell them about it.

Even Amadou, who questions the practice of deportation and who spoke up publicly as a deportee, admitted that there are times when keeping silent about one's reasons for return may be the best option. Keeping silent and portraying one's return as temporary were common performative narrative strategies for managing information about aborted migration projects among our participants. Participants suggested they were back in Senegal for a holiday, a business trip or, more recently, a prolonged stay due to COVID-19. During this trip home, Amadou embodied the successful migrant. He wore fashionable clothes, had a smartphone, generously donated to a wedding, gave watches to the children and bought tickets for various events. These performative acts all invoke Senegalese masculine ideals. Despite being a victim of deportation, Amadou expressed his streetwisdom, worldliness and craftiness through material signs of success, cosmopolitanism, modernity and masculinity (Scheld, 2007). These were acquired partly through migration even when his migration project was aborted.

The researcher shared her surprise about the relative ease with which Amadou seemed to deal with the difficult situation he found himself in. She knew several stories about the tough circumstances of deportees. He said that coming back was not easy but that

difficulties such as starting over again, dealing with negative views of others and leaving his European life behind are part of life:

God has sent me to there and now he sent me to Senegal. I cannot sit with my arms crossed. I need to make a plan.

By transforming dangers and sufferings into tests, migration experiences can become spiritual experiences where Muslim migrants demonstrate their faith (see also Packer, 2019) and manliness. Amadou's comments above can be understood as part of Sufi Mouride brotherhood ideals where migration is seen as training, an 'initiation rite' through which men grow and develop themselves (Riccio, 2004; Kaag, 2013; Timera, 2001).

Amadou's various performative acts can thus be seen as aiming towards continuity and stability with regards to masculine ideals of being a provider, protector and good Muslim (Mahmood, 2001). But he also challenges and interrupts repetitive norms with regards to migration categories through performatively appropriating public space (Butler, 1990, 2009) and by creating subjective distance from the 'figure of the deportee' (Häkli et al., 2017).

3.5.2. Oumar

Oumar (35) and I met at an international NGO. He had studied in Europe and had been back in Senegal for almost three years. He listened carefully to my ideas for my project, gave me tips on what to research, and talked about how people migrate not just for money but also status. Two days later, we were, to my surprise, on the way to the airport as his new student visa had been approved. In three hours, his flight to France was leaving! The trip to Europe also came as a surprise to most of his family and friends: he had prepared his trip in silence and only showed his bags to his family on the day of departure. Two and a half years later, I met Oumar again. Oumar's story is one of success: he finished his studies, came back to Senegal on a voluntary return program and obtained funding to start his own sustainable agricultural business. It was only after some time that an unspoken part of Oumar's journey came out: Oumar had partly lived in Europe as a 'sans papiers,' an unauthorized migrant, and he had been deported the first time he came back to Senegal (Fieldnote extracts, January 2017; June 2019; December 2020).

3.5.2.1. Meeting the researcher: keeping silent and distancing from illegalized migration
Oumar's hiding of his first deportation experience from the researcher allowed him to accentuate other categories within the migration regime: student, entrepreneur and

voluntary returnee. He performed the young smart student who was back in Senegal to work. His attentiveness to available migrant positions and subjectivities enabled him to distance himself from the 'figure of the deportee' (Häkli et al, 2017). He did not look like a deportee with ruffled clothes or in a mental state of stress, as deportees are often depicted by other migrants, NGO workers and in Senegalese society at large. On the contrary, Oumar was well dressed, spoke eloquently, and expressed himself in a nuanced way. He embraced the discourse about return migration and development where migrants are seen as entrepreneurs who come back to invest in their country (Kabbanji, 2013). Oumar's performative act of keeping silent in front of the researcher shows how politicized categorizations of migration such as voluntary and involuntary return can be used in agentic ways and silence can be a meaningful absence. Oumar did not aim to change the migration regime or to challenge migration categories. Instead, he engaged with existing discursive categorizations and used available subject positions.

Notwithstanding his experiences as an illegalized migrant in Europe and being deported, Oumar dissociated himself from other migrants, such as Amadou, who left Senegal for Europe without the appropriate papers. At one point, Oumar narrated what Kleist (2017) calls the safe migration position: if one studies hard, works and thinks of innovative ideas, one can migrate legally. Oumar emphasized how he was patient and smart enough to deal with migration rules without putting himself and his family in danger and how he acted therefore as a responsible adult man. He distanced himself from the 'naïve' 'irresponsible adventurers' often linked to pirogue migration:

They don't have the same profile [as me]. They take enormous risks. They take the boat and leave their families behind. That is not human. If you are able to take the boat and go there [to Europe], I think you are also able to resist the pressure here and have the means to live here and to create an activity or business.

Connell (2005) recognizes more than one kind of masculinity and argues that masculinities are relational. In the quote above Oumar narratively performs distance from other migrant men. This could be seen as a compensatory strategy where he serves as an ideal exemplar and creatively reduces other men's masculinity. However, he ignores the fact that for many migrants, the legal opportunities are limited, and he negates the experience he shares with them of being a migrant without the appropriate documents to stay in Europe. Migration, according to Oumar, should not be discouraged, but risky migration should. Through his performative narration of difference, he distances himself from other deportees by viewing his deportation as a calculated risk. He successfully managed to navigate his insufficiently documented status in Europe for a long time and was even at ease doing so. He was ready to go back to Senegal, even when he was deported the first time.

3.5.2.2. Being silenced by family and friends: distancing and enduring pain as a man

The researcher was not the only one with whom Oumar didn't share his full story. For him, his deportation was 'unspeakable' to close family members. He was expected to keep silent, even though they probably knew. Oumar explained: 'Everybody knows but nobody knows. Until we say it, we do not know.'

Secrecy and silence are a mutually constituted interaction between the returnee and the people around them. Both sides play an active role, not just the party concealing knowledge (Bakuri et al., 2020). But not speaking about his experiences was difficult for Oumar. He described being seen as a deportee, the imposed silence and the looks others gave him as acts of violence.

Today you are not the same person. You have grown, developed things. But why do they [family] not see this? Instead, they just see the deportation, like it is written [points at his forehead]: 'deportee' [...]. That is a very violent view. It is VERY violent.

Despite a culture in which emigration is often seen as training for young men, the value of his journey was not recognized by the people around Oumar. He explained to the researcher:

For them it [talking about his experiences of deportation to Senegal and his previous life in Europe] is like you are complaining. You are complaining about your situation, but no, it is just like that you want to share.

By keeping silent about his experiences, he performatively re-constitutes and materializes his manliness in the capacity to 'endure, suffer and persist' (Mahmood, 2001: 217). Oumar sees himself as a victim, but he does not internalize this view completely as he also narratively performs how he grew and developed himself. He thus distances himself from the deportees while at the same time embracing part of the pain associated with deportation.

3.5.2.3. Leaving to Europe again in silence: challenging the personal stigma of deportation

To show to those around him that he remained a person, not merely a deportee, Oumar prepared his second return to Europe in silence. He wanted to show he was capable of going to Europe again and erasing his deportation experience and the contagious shame deportation brought to him and his family. With this third silence, Oumar re-invented himself. Through the performative act of leaving again in silence, Oumar challenged the stereotype of deportees as incapable of doing things. Due to his capacity to endure (Mahmood, 2001), he carved out a new path for himself and his family and erased the stigma of deportation. Oumar explained:

It leaves aside the shame and everything, so they forget the situation [the deportation] and think of the current situation [that he left Senegal again and is back in Europe].

Oumar's story shows how sutura in combination with masculine ideals can be painful and empowering at the same time. Oumar's silences aim at continuity and stability (Mahmood, 2001) with regards to masculine ideals of being a protector, being a good Muslim and being able to suffer and endure for the sake of the family, but his silences also challenge his experiences of deportation and are self-distancing (Häkli et al., 2017). Contrary to Amadou, Oumar does not engage in public action for progressive change in the discursive migration regime in which there is a strong differentiation between illegalized pirogue migrants and non-pirogue migrants in Senegal, but he applies his awareness of migration categories to distance himself and his family from them. He acknowledges the existing categories but explains why they do not apply to him.

Both Oumar and Amadou position themselves and their experiences within the existing hegemonic norms of masculinity in Senegal. They performatively reinforce these norms with minor differences and the responsibilities that come with them. Like Oumar, Amadou reiterates masculine ideals of being a provider, protector and a good Muslim (Mahmood, 2001). On the other hand, in publicly claiming solidarity with his fellow returnees, he uses the normative stereotypes of masculinity to challenge and 'undo' the norms and regulations (Butler, 1990) of migration and the stigma attached to deportees (Butler, 2009). Both men distance themselves from stereotypical notions about deportees and, despite their deportable status, attribute agency to their return by explaining how they were at ease and well connected in Europe.

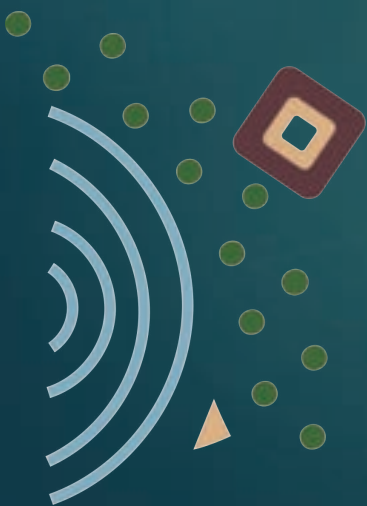
3.6. Conclusions

In this article we have analyzed the multilayered experiences and performative narrative acts of male returnees in Senegal. We argued that returnees move beyond stigmatizing notions about deportees as victims or criminals. Despite the numerous difficulties that migration can bring and the pain experienced when migration projects are aborted, returnees such as Oumar and Amadou also perform and narrate success. This helps them to feel that they belong to Senegalese society, to create meaning and to assert agency.

By focusing on deportability rather than deportation, thus avoiding the dubious distinction between forced and voluntary return, we were able to identify how migrants who would often be categorized in opposition to each other (e.g. an illegalized pirogue migrant, Amadou, and a highly educated legal migrant, Oumar) use similar performative

acts to navigate normative discourses once back in Senegal. Although their emphasis was different, both men exemplify two forms of agency: they engage in acts of continuity and stability (Mahmood, 2001) with regards to normative models of Senegalese masculinity that have to be repeated (Butler, 1988) and they engage in acts of performative 'self-distance' in relation to other migrants and the stereotypical image of the deportee (Häkli et al., 2017). In addition, Amadou's performative act of speaking out in a public interview illustrates a third form of agency: he shows his awareness of shared grievances and embodies the possibility of a collective performativity of resistance or 'rupture' of the norms in the migration regime (Butler, 1988, 2009, 2015). Oumar's case, and Amadou's to a lesser extent, show how ambiguity and the performative act of keeping silent as a fourth form of agency can help to reconstruct their belonging as men in Senegal after their return. Even though Amadou spoke publicly about his deportation experiences, he admitted there were times and places both in the public and private sphere when keeping silent was preferable. Being discrete and presenting one's return as temporary were common performative narrative strategies that our participants and their families enable to manage information about their aborted projects.

Methodologically, stories like those of Oumar and Amadou show that researching return migration and deportation is a delicate endeavor. Researchers should remain aware of agentic practices of silencing and the limits of politically loaded categorizations, also in a less studied geographical setting such as in the country of origin. Seeing a migrant's return as one stage of a complex migratory trajectory, instead of the end of the migration cycle, encourages a longitudinal approach. Understanding that someone can migrate and return multiple times in various politicized categories helps to turn attention to the nuances of returnees' stories and the agentic elements within their performances and narrations, thus challenging a single story of deportation. Researchers have acknowledged agentic practices of discretion, ambiguity and silence in other return contexts (e.g. Alpes, 2012; Schuster and Majidi, 2015; Schultz, 2021). We have extended such research by differentiating between the role of self-silencing, imposed silence and public secrecy. To advance the study of deportation and return and to improve understanding of its situational, temporal and collective dimension further, more scholarly attention needs to be given to the existence and functions of agentic silences. We have also shown in this paper how hegemonic masculine ideals can be empowering as well as painful. This questions the assumption of European states that deportation is an ideal encouragement against illegalized migration, as not all deportation has to result in a loss of masculine status. This opens up avenues for further research into the gendered nature of return.



Chapter 4

‘I could have married in Europe, if I wanted to’ How black migrant men challenge moralizing and racializing discourses when returning to Senegal

This chapter is a slightly revised version of the following publication:

Strijbosch, K. and Mazzucato, V. (2024) “I could have married in Europe, if I wanted to” How black migrant men challenge moralizing and racializing discourses when returning to Senegal, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 48(1), 142- 163. doi: 10.1080/01419870.2024.2320775.

4.1. Introduction

Mamadou was deported to Senegal after spending several years in Europe. In Germany, I met one of Mamadou's old friends, Rebecca. She showed me a lake where Mamadou used to volunteer for a local organization. A couple of months later, I recalled this joyful afternoon while sitting with Mamadou on a foam mattress on the floor of his family house in Senegal's capital Dakar. I shared how Rebecca was teasing Senegalese men, including Mamadou, about being 'saï saï' a term that is hard to translate but means, a kind of 'trickster' 'player', 'swindler' or 'bandit' in Wolof in the most common language in Senegal and suggests powers of seduction. Mamadou was upset about Rebecca's remark: If I had been like that, why did I not marry over there? Why did I not have children there? It would have been possible, with my tall body and features. No, she is the 'saï saï!' (Fieldnotes, Dakar, January 2021)

In the vignette above, Mamadou responds indignantly to stereotypical images of black migrant men in Europe to the field researcher. In European discourses, black migrant men are often portrayed as being hypersexual and marrying for selfish or strategic reasons. Legal options to enter and stay in the European Union (EU) are limited, especially for those coming from the Global South (Gemmeke, 2013; Kringelbach, 2016a). Marriages between an EU citizen and a partner from outside the EU often appear in European media accounts and policy discourses as 'scam marriages' or 'fake marriages' on the assumption that migrants are only after a residence permit (D'Aoust, 2018; Eggebø, 2013; Vandenbroucke, 2020). Research on marriage migration has shown how agents of the state identify fake relationships and how, through their practices, informal hierarchies have created that result in different treatments depending on intersections of class, race and gender (Lo, 2015; Scheel and Gutekunst, 2019: 859; De Hart and Besselsen, 2021: 38). Muslim and black men, in particular, are often represented as dangerous, patriarchal and strategizing, rather than physically or emotionally vulnerable or reliable, committed and trustworthy (De Noronha, 2020; Gallo and Scrinzi, 2019; Yurdakul and Korteweg, 2021). Mamadou, in the vignette above, reverses the narrative: he explains that he had to watch out for Rebecca as she was the 'saï saï' who was going after men for sexual relationships, not him.

Research on intimate ties and the moral economy of European marriage migration has hitherto focused on justifications about who can come to the destination country (Moret, et al., 2021; Scheel and Gutekunst, 2019), how romantic or sex tourism can lead to marriage migration (Cabezas, 2004; Fernandez, 2019; Jacobs, 2009), the impact of migration

and marriage on actors outside Europe (Acedera and Yeoh, 2020; Buggenhagen, 2012; Hannaford 2017; Hannaford and Foley, 2015; Niang-Ndiaye, 2020) or, more recently, how various state and non-state actors are coming to converging positions with regard to marriage norms (Longo 2022; Partridge 2008). In discussions on marriage migration, there is an inclination to concentrate on how non-citizens seek stable and secure juridical status. Yet, there is relatively little research on migrants who refute marriage as a way to gain stability, rights or dignity (Andrikopoulos 2019; Ingvars 2023). This applies even more so in relation to return and deportability (Groes 2016 on women in Mozambique; Mai and King, 2009; Plambech, 2017), and in particular for men (Van Houte and Davids, 2018).

This paper investigates how men who have returned to Senegal, often in the context of deportability, narrate their experiences of relationships in Europe. It draws on twelve months of ethnographic fieldwork on Senegalese migrant men and masculinities conducted by the first author. It explores how Senegalese men navigate the different contextual logics of morality and masculinity related to intimate relationships and marriage just before and after return to Senegal. Some Senegalese men choose to return rather than marry, and some divorce a partner before gaining an independent residency permit. In so doing, they contest stereotypical European notions of black Muslim masculinities and the moral economy they are based on. As the opening vignette of this article suggests, they produce morally dignified masculinities by reversing stereotypical narrations about black migrant men and by claiming normality. And they capitalize on their return to show themselves as honorable and dignified men by arguing that if they had wanted to stay in Europe, they could have, due to a (white) desire for black men.

In what follows, we engage with literature concerning the intimate relationships of black men in relation to European migration discourses. In the main analysis, we explore the narratives of two returnees and their immigration-related experiences in Europe. We encountered narratives such as these often during fieldwork in Senegal. Norms and assumptions about masculinities that underpin the moral economy of European marriage migration management.

4.2. Norms and assumptions about masculinities that underpin the moral economy of European marriage migration management

In European discourses, most African migration is seen as a “problematic” type of migration that needs close monitoring and regulation. Following understandings of the moral economy (D’Aoust, 2018; Fassin, 2005; Longo, 2022), we pay attention to how legislation

and state practices of marriage migration are not neutral but entangled with values and norms, feelings and stereotypes. Dominant forms of masculinity do not portray migrant men as victims and vulnerable instead, they are often seen as deceptive, hypersexual, opportunistic or even criminal (Griffiths, 2015; Partridge, 2008). Besides normative assumptions of masculinity, immigrations regulations reflect a moral understanding of who constitutes a family and “how people ought to live their family life” (Pellander, 2015, 473; see also Wray, 2006). Moral understandings of the family thus help to shape regulations of who can enter and stay in a national territory. Such moral frameworks also apply to forming and maintaining a family through marriage (Strasser et al., 2009, 169; Bonjour and de Hart, 2013). Those who fall outside the dominant norms and values of the family come under additional scrutiny (D’Aoust, 2018), and understandings about family often intersect with those about class, gender and race (Yuval, 2011; Anderson, 2017: 1532; Pellander, 2021). This produces some unsavory stereotypes of in particular migrant men.

4.2.1. Tension between “love” and “interest”

In the current moral economy underlying marriage rules in Europe, love is assumed to be a crucial aspect of marriage. Yet, migrants are assumed to be motivated by self-interest and their alleged affective lives and emotions are viewed with skepticism and disinterest (Griffiths, 2024). Bonjour and de Hart show how “the representation of migrant and Dutch women as passive victims rests on the representation of migrant men as oppressive, violent, deceiving and motivated by material gain – never by love” (2013, 73). When men are cast in these terms, it becomes easy to justify suspicion towards them, which can lead to non-admission or deportability. Regulations regarding migration therefore require European bureaucrats to assess the authenticity of private relationships, including narratives of intimacy and love (Eggebo, 2013; Maskens, 2015; Salcedo Robledo, 2011). They are charged with evaluating the genuineness of the union through documents such as marriage certificates, love letters, photographs showing the couple spending time together, and more. In addition, the non-European partner needs to earn enough money not to be a burden on the state, and often have a minimum level of the European country’s language. After marriage, enquiries can continue, with officials seeking evidence that the couple is still living together (Kringelbach, 2016a). In countries, such as the Netherlands, any form of marriage that is judged as not based on romantic love is considered contrary to national values (Bonjour and de Hart, 2013; Fair, 2010). This creates an inherent tension between an individual’s right to have a family and the state’s wish to secure its borders (Carver, 2016; D’Aoust, 2022). Forms of marriage, such as “forced”, “arranged” or “sham” marriages, are portrayed as dangerous for European women and made questionable in

state discourses (Moret et al., 2021). Marriage is portrayed as the “weak” link in European migration management as spouses become involved in decision-making processes about who enters the national territory (Wray, 2006).

4.2.2. Legitimatization of the state as a protector against “dangerous foreign men”

The state, in this logic, becomes a protector of “vulnerable” or even “disabled” female citizens (Carver, 2016; Maskens, 2015; Pellander, 2015). This is used to justify the monitoring, securitization and intrusion of the state in private lives, despite its paradoxical (Tran, 2021), patronizing and disempowering effects on (female) citizens (Block, 2014; Kwak, 2019; Odasso, 2021). With the legitimacy of a marriage always at issue, migrant families are often perceived as suspicious. This is particularly true of Muslim families, where migrant men are considered traditional, patriarchal, oppressive or even dangerous and violent (Bonjour and Kraler, 2015: 1409). Furthermore, black and other men of color are perceived as hypersexual (Partridge, 2008). This too is seen as posing a threat to European women and by corollary represents European men as modern and emancipated (Scheibelhofer, 2017). Through intimate ties, migrants might be able to get out of a deportable situation, but intimate relationships are also places where deportability can be felt (Luibhéid, et al., 2018: 18). In this article, we investigate the perspectives of migrant men who returned to their country of origin, Senegal, and how they respond to the masculinities that underpin the moral economy of European marriage migration management.

Following earlier research on (migrant) masculinities, our starting point is the assumption that identities, including migrant masculinities, are relational, multiple and complex and that they differ depending on the intersectional variables including, gender, race, personal biographies and space (Crenshaw, 1991; Gallo, 2006; Huizinga, 2022; Wojnicka and Pustulka, 2017). In the upcoming analysis, we pay particular attention to how migrant men reverse stereotypical narratives about themselves. We then explore how they capitalize (Jensen, 2011; Yurdakul and Altay, 2023) on their return to position themselves as honorable and dignified. In doing so, we extend the literature on migrant masculinities and the institution of marriage in the context of migration by focusing on the country of origin.

4.3. Studying migrant masculinities and intimate relationships

This contribution draws on twelve months of ethnographic fieldwork. Fieldwork consisted of six stays in Senegal between January 2017 and March 2021, ongoing online contact, and two weeks of fieldwork in Germany amongst volunteers who support migrants,

friends and (former) partners of Senegalese migrant men. In Senegal, the first author spoke with forty men and five women who had a migratory experience in Europe. Twelve men out of the forty became core participants and were followed over several years. The two-week field trip in Germany focused on a matched sample of fourteen women who maintained connections with the male returnees to Senegal. Communication was mostly in French and sometimes in English, German and/or Dutch. In a few cases, an interpreter helped in Wolof or Italian. To gain insights into the diversity of returnee experiences, we approached participants through a variety of entry points: via colleagues at Cheikh Anta Diop in Dakar and the University of Maastricht; through NGOs working with returnees; through fellow researchers, friends and acquaintances both in Europe and in Senegal; and via chance encounters in Senegal. Fieldwork was interspersed with periods of analysis during which participants' narratives were coded to discern themes related to social expectations about masculinity and return. These themes were further explored once back in Senegal.

All Senegalese participants had been or were in relationships with women. None specified their sexuality, except for one who self-identified as bisexual. Practices and discourses of (regaining) masculinity and morality prevalent in Senegal informed the research findings. Contemporary ideologies and practices of intimacy and love are, in Senegal as elsewhere, a product of complex historical processes and practices (Cole and Thomas, 2009). In Senegal, to achieve social adulthood, a heterosexual marriage is necessary (Adjamagbo and Koné, 2013). Polygamy is permitted and practiced with up to four wives (Dial 2008), which can create tensions in relationships with European women (Kringelbach 2016a). Davids, et al., (2011) point to the contradictions of the moralities surrounding masculinities in Senegal. On the one hand, one is considered a "real" man, especially by peers, if one has penetrative sex with women, while on the other, "a good man" is seen as a heterosexual male who is in control of himself, serious and responsible, and who only has sexual relations within marriage. Senegalese men who marry European women may be less likely to be stigmatized for doing so than Senegalese women who marry European men (Kringelbach, 2016b; Rodríguez-García, 2006). A possible reason for this is that it is believed that children born of a Senegalese father can still be raised as "proper" Muslims, as the religion of the father is key. Islam prevents marriage with a non-Muslim man but allows marriage with a non-Muslim woman as long as she is Jewish or Christian. Fieldwork interactions occurred in relation to the broader European border regime present in Senegal but also in relation to international tourism and the development sector in which many Europeans come to Senegal for leisure, work or

volunteering. In Senegal, it is well known that marriage could be a way to go or remain in Europe and also those working in the tourist sector are often suspected of engaging with Europeans as a way to travel. Participants would therefore share how fellow Senegalese had asked them in response to their mostly unforeseen return: “Why did you not marry or get a child in Europe?”

The field researcher’s positionality as a white, European, highly educated woman in a committed relationship, yet who was unmarried and alone in Senegal, played an important role in interactions during the fieldwork and highlighted frames of reference about black masculinities used in European migratory discourses. It sparked many questions, jokes and at times marriage proposals – to become a first, second or third wife – during her stays in Senegal and Germany. These could be uncomfortable, tiring, at times funny, but the questions and jokes also opened opportunities to discuss relationships in each other’s “home” contexts and to share vulnerabilities and ways to deal with them. As performativity influences every form of interaction, including interviews and observations, it is likely that interlocutors’ narratives about intimate relationships, love and affection for their now mostly exes was itself part of the performance of strategic intimacy (Meier, 2020). They could tactically position themselves as desirable and safe conversation partners towards the field researcher. While keeping this in mind in data interpretation, we see the field researcher’s positionality as an opportunity to observe emotional border work (Ingvars 2023), which comes into play when returning to Senegal and studying migrant masculinities. Like any interaction, these processes are dynamic and dialogical.

4.4. Producing moral and dignified masculinities by returning to Senegal

We analyze the stories of two returnees, Mamadou and Mas, to show how returnees to Senegal can challenge gendered and racialized European narratives about black Muslim men. Despite their unique return experiences and their different migration trajectories – one an unauthorized migrant and one a former marriage migrant – Mamadou and Mas resist dominant discourses in various way but also reproduce stereotypes in relation to black Muslim men. We focus on two cases to provide detailed and contextual information on instances where returnees are confronted with and react to stereotypical masculine images. Similar narrations were found amongst other returnees in our wider sample. While the gendered and racialized narratives are part of European migration discourses, the negotiations and narratives of the men we studied were performed in Senegal.

4.4.1. Refusing stereotypes about migrant men by reversing narratives

Mamadou, who we introduced in the opening vignette, met the field researcher in Senegal via his friend Rebecca. Mamadou's asylum application was denied, and after over eight years in Europe, he was deported back to Senegal. Mamadou experienced his deportation as a humiliation and demonstrated a lack of respect towards him. After this deportation he hardly went out, and Rebecca was very worried about him. Mamadou initially distrusted the researcher, and he only wanted to talk because Rebecca encouraged him.

As the opening vignette attests, field interactions could be ambiguous. Social and research exchanges are part of complex social positions as well as interactions between persons (Jensen 2011, 6). In some situations, the researcher, as well as participants in the research, speak and react to each other not as persons, but in relation to positions they are put in. Rebecca's jokes in Germany had, from Mamadou's point of view, mistakenly placed him in the category of the hypersexual, bad black male. In response to the mocking, he reversed the narrative and shared to the field researcher how white European women, like Rebecca, could subject African men to a sexual gaze. He mentioned how he had kept her a bit at a distance as he thought she might have been interested in him. He also emphasized to the researcher that he was a good communicator and had many friends. He showed Facebook pictures of him and his friends together, including one with a European female professor. Perhaps he wanted to show the researcher that friendships with him were possible and safe, something that would not likely be an issue if he would be talking to Senegalese peers. He further articulated the possibility of friendship by sharing his experiences with one woman whom the researcher had met in Germany after Mamadou was deported: Jessica. Mamadou knew the researcher had met Jessica, and he was worried that the researcher might have gotten the wrong impression about him after talking to Rebecca. It seemed like Mamadou did not want the researcher to think his intentions were merely sexual or related to the possibility of obtaining papers through her. He elaborated how Jessica and he were very close and other people often thought they were a couple. Mamadou explained how he was helping Jessica to de-stress, as she was having a rough time following her divorce. They would go on bike rides on Sunday afternoons, and he would take and pay the train to visit and help her. Mamadou did not understand why Jessica had moved out of her house and not her husband. Their possessions were under her name, and yet she found herself paying the rent for a new apartment, and she took the train while her former husband used their car. Mamadou advised her to go back to her family and to talk to her husband about her struggles and not pursue something with him. Mamadou explains:

I made a sacrifice. I thought rationally [about the situation] and told her she has to go back to her house, find a solution. [...] I want the best for her. (Conversation, Dakar, January 2021)

By sharing this story, Mamadou emphasized how he was putting Jessica's interests above his own. He contested discourses that white women need to be protected from African men. Instead, he explained how he was taking care of Jessica, protecting her against her former husband and sacrificing things for her. Yet, he did not question the idea that white European women are vulnerable and need protection. He reversed the dominant narrative about migrant men and suggested that women did not have to be protected from him, but from other (European) men. He performed a form of "desirable masculinity" (Ingvars, 2023) and distanced himself from the stereotype of the dangerous migrant man.

Mamadou was not the only participant who challenged stereotypical portrayals of black Muslim migrant men. The case of Mas also shows how stereotypes are questioned. Mas had been back in Senegal for over five years and was in his forties when the first author met him in Dakar through a mutual connection who told her that Mas would be relevant for her study about return and deportation. Being in Senegal is not easy for him due to the economic situation and the responses he received from his surroundings due to his unexpected return. Yet, he is getting by together with his Senegalese wife. He explains how he met his European ex-wife Ella when he was in his mid-twenties in Senegal while she was on holiday. Before leaving Senegal, Mas earned a decent living by managing holidays for tourists. In 2006, when Mas arrived in France, stricter laws and regulations regarding mixed marriages were implemented. Under the new laws, after three renewals of a temporary one-year permit, spouses could apply for a ten-year permit, conditional on the couple validating that they had been living together uninterrupted since the visa was approved (Kringelbach, 2013). After a number of years that Mas was married to Ella in Europe, their relationship became strained. Mas challenged the stereotypical image of the instrumental migrant who marries for a residence permit and argued that, instead, it was his wife who was the troublemaker and who had taken advantage of him. Mas felt mistreated, like a "tennis ball" being hit from left to right without much say of his own. Like other research about husband migrants showed, his marriage undermined his sense of self, his feelings of independence and his understanding of what it means to be a man and a husband (Charsley, 2005; Hoogenraad, 2021). Eventually, Mas and Ella got divorced, which meant the end of Mas's residence permit. While Mas wished to stay in France, he drew a moral boundary for himself and did not want to be in a relationship just for the residence documents. He explained:

It is not the papers that make me live. I have worked enough. [...] She always takes advantage of me. Of my presence, physically, morally, financially, everything! (Interview, Dakar, February 2021)

Mas here actively reverses societal ideas present in migration discourses of danger and vulnerability, in which European women are vulnerable and African men are dangerous and seek to use them. For Mas, Ella was using him.

There were other ways that Mas reversed the narrative about black African men. Ella regularly attended a sports club where he would often go to pick her up. During one of their disputes, Ella told him that a woman at the sports club said she would “commit suicide” if her daughter came home with someone with a black skin like Mas. Mas was tired of stories like this, and the atmosphere of alcohol at the club did not help, as he did not drink himself.

She would stay until 2, 3 o'clock in the morning. I would wake up from her message on my phone and go there, search for her. [...] then I said, ‘when you have been drinking, I will not look for you anymore. I will not search for you, [I will] not drop off anyone. The song has ended.’ (Interview, Dakar, February 2021).

During evenings like this, there would sometimes be other problems:

Such nights, she would be in need of sex. She would wake me up while I wanted to sleep. The police came afterwards because we would have an argument. Every Sunday it was like that. (Interview, Dakar, February 2021)

Instead of the hypersexuality that is often associated with black men, Mas emphasized how he became an object of desire and was in need of protection from Ella.

While Mas felt that he could be vulnerable in relation to dangerous white women, he refused stereotypical notions of migrant or refugee men as only vulnerable, incapable or ignorant. In one interview, he spoke of a situation with Ella just after his arrival in Europe. Ella was showing Mas the city, including a part where there were prostitutes from African countries. Ella remarked to Mas: “all the prostitutes used to be married with French men”. This insulted Mas as it emphasized his dependency and the geo-political power inequalities in their relationship (Griffiths, 2015). Mas said he did not even look, as he was ashamed to watch the women. He explained:

I am not in need of instructions. I am not from the countryside. I saw things she did not even see. (Interview, Dakar, February 2021)

He disliked the way Ella assumed he needed explanations about the situation and needed to be instructed on how things worked in Europe as a “fresh” migrant. Mas distanced himself from this and wanted to be recognized for his knowledge and cosmopolitanism. He refused to be seen as marginalized, uncomfortable and refused the idea that his masculinity was under threat, something that other research among migrant men in Europe has found (Charsley and Bolognani, 2017; Gallo, 2006; Leutloff-Grandits, 2021). Coming from a high-status family in Senegal and growing up mainly in Dakar, he wanted to be seen as a man from the city, which in the Senegalese context implies knowledge, power and worldliness. Earlier during the interview with the field researcher, he had emphasized that he had a good life before leaving Senegal, questioning the idealization of Europe as the ultimate destination for migrants. Furthermore, by highlighting that he saw things Ella did not even see, Mas emphasized his life experience and questioned Ella’s assumption that as European, she had more knowledge about the situation.

Mas and Mamadou furthermore challenge the prevalent narrative in European discourses of migrant masculinity as predatory and dangerous by showing their roles as father and son. Mas shared how he fulfilled his masculine duties vis-à-vis his daughter in Senegal. Mas minimized his vulnerability and explained how he was a morally honorable man by finding a job not too long after his arrival in Europe, paying his share of the bills, having a car, providing remittances to his daughter in Senegal, and contributing to the household in France.

She [my daughter] had to have the money. [...] Nothing was missing. €350 was the minimum that I sent. (Conversation, October 2019)

He presented himself as the breadwinner, an ideal which is an important part of hegemonic masculinity and fatherhood in West-Africa (Poeze, 2019). In practice, men do not always manage to provide for their families, especially when they were not together with the mother (Bouland, 2021), which served to signal Mas’ commitment as a father. Sending remittances helped to justify his separation from his daughter and showed responsibility. Furthermore, by sharing that he was working, he emphasized that he was not making use of the welfare institutions in Europe.

Mamadou also talked about how, despite the limited opportunities to work in Germany as a Senegalese national, he would still earn a little bit and send this to his mother, thereby fulfilling some of his responsibilities as a son. Both men adhered to a hegemonic masculine ideals in the context of inequalities and migration. By presenting themselves as responsible men as part of a family, they counted the idea that they were different from other men and appealed for sympathy and understanding (Jensen, 2011; Griffiths, 2015). Where Mas

questions the dominant narrative of vulnerable white women in need of protection by portraying Ella as dangerous and disrespectful, Mamadou emphasizes female vulnerability and reinforces his own masculinity in his protection of Jessica. In addition, their stories show that although racialized ideas in the couple's surroundings can put relationships under pressure, both do not want to see themselves as merely vulnerable. It is important to acknowledge that Mas and Mamadou are narrating themselves to a European female field researcher, which might have emboldened this narrative. Both had previously asked the researcher if Senegalese men did not approach her in Senegal with sexual intentions. The researcher shared her experiences which may have opened space for them to share their own experiences. In conversations with peers, they may have emphasized other aspects such as in Mas' case his ex-wife disrespectful behavior towards him.

4.4.2. Capitalizing on return: being a dignified and honorable man despite hardships

Research on return migration has shown how moral ambiguities, intense emotions, suspicion from various sides and negotiations are part of the experience of return (Onoma, 2021; Riccio 2005; Wanki, et al., 2022). When a migration project is aborted, there is potential for a returnee to be considered a hero, criminal or a loser who is coming back without enough means (Kleist 2017; Strijbosch, et al., 2023). The ambiguities that surround return and the need to reposition oneself were visible in the stories of Mas and Mamadou.

When the relationship between Mas and Ella eventually broke down, they faced each other in court, a scenario which other migrants have found to be humiliating (Ingvars, 2023). The judge asked Mas if he was aware that a divorce would mean he had to leave the country. Mas explained his response to the judge:

I said: 'Yes. I know. I know.' Then he asked me what I was going to do, divorce or not. I was in the middle. I could not yet, I did not want to go back [to Senegal] yet. But I did want a divorce. (Interview, Dakar, February 2021)

Through his performative sentence (Austin, 1962) in front of the judge, Mas shared his dilemma: he wanted to stay but not under existing conditions. He placed himself outside the stereotypical image of the calculating African man who just marries for papers, which he knew he would have obtained if he had been more submissive towards his wife and stayed in the relationship without speaking up against his experiences of emasculation and racial stereotypes towards African men. He explained:

I did not tell the story of all Africans. This is a story of love. I am not the one who did all this shit. It is not me who wants to go back to the country. [...] I

came to explain my situation. Not the situation of others. Did I want to go back?
No, I did not want. But you tell me I have to go back, that's the law. (Interview,
Dakar, February 2021)

By agreeing to the divorce, Mas acknowledged his vulnerability in relation to state authorities and made himself visible to bureaucracies as a deportable subject, but he also held to the masculine ideal of staying in control of his life. He mentioned how he went to the deportation center himself, despite his jobs and his new girlfriend. Earlier he had said that he had “become a child” through his relationship with Ella, as she kept him under a sort of surveillance. Ingvars (2023) shows how the migrant men in her study were conscious of a loss of masculine autonomy through the regimes of white desire and its sexual scripts but had difficulties articulating such loss. By returning to Senegal, it seems to be easier for Mas to articulate this loss and to justify return, even if returning was hard.

Mas challenged the idea that obtaining documents was his only goal in life. He spoke of the risk of being treated with disrespect in a context where the European wife has a considerable advantage over the African migrant man. While he disagreed with the reading of his situation by the state, he did not oppose or resist the law or the idea that one needs to love the person to whom one is married to be granted the right to stay. Instead of being against ideals of marriage represented in the law, he wished that enforcers of the law could let go of direct and implicit stereotypes against non-European men that are intertwined with the moral economy of European migration management (Strasser et al., 2009; Turner, 2020). Mas' case demonstrates that instead of the state and migrants existing in antagonism to each other, there is a dynamic relationship between them where sometimes their interests diverge and at other times converge. Mas did not really wish to go back to Senegal, yet he did not want to remain an undocumented migrant in Europe despite invitations by friends to join them in Italy or his relationship with his new girlfriend.

His return to Senegal did not go as planned, yet he did not come entirely unprepared as he had worked and saved money. He insisted on going in December, as this is the month many Senegalese migrants come back for holidays from Europe. Mixed in with this group of diasporic tourists (Akombi Ankobrey, 2023; Wagner, 2019), he did not stand out as he also came back with presents and money. He and his family kept quiet about his state-assisted return and the duration of his return, reflecting the importance of silencing narratives about state-induced return (Strijbosch et al., 2023). It was not easy for him because he did not want to come back, he could no longer access all his belongings in

France, and he had to start from scratch again. Luckily, he did not have debts to his family, as they did not finance his trip, and he did not have to directly pay rent upon return.

Mamadou felt like, a failure, after his deportation but at least an honorable failure in that he did not marry for residency papers. He used his handsome features and perceived racial hypersexuality (see also Nyanzi et al., 2005) to argue in Senegal that if he had wanted to marry he could have: “I am very tall and black”. He shares that he attracted quite a lot of attention from women. By saying this, he was confirming that he knew what (white) women look for and he could have made use of this knowledge to stay in Europe if he had wished to do so. When he found himself back in Senegal, he turned it to his advantage on return and distanced himself, like Mas, from other migrants who did marry and were dependent on it for their papers. As Hernandez-Reguant (2006) has argued about black Cuban men, Mamadou undermined a sexual Western gaze by claiming a position of power rooted in his racialized heterosexual masculinity. He made clear he had refused to marry for papers, despite the fact that he could have and despite his precarious legal situation. Putting his hand on his heart, he said:

I am not like the others, I cannot just give myself like that [for papers]. Marriage is important and something you do for your life. I do not joke around with that. If I did, then I would not be in my current situation, right? (Conversation, Dakar, January 2021)

Mamadou both reproduced and contested the norm, which is also present in European migration law, that marriage is founded on deep emotions. He emphasized the seriousness of marriage and the need not to take it lightly. He did not deny that some use it instrumentally, yet he questioned whether that was appropriate for him personally. Though his return was unwanted, it provided evidence of a decent morality. In Senegal, he used his morality as a compensatory strategy to self-valorize his masculinity (Kukreja, 2021) and to deal with his feelings of failure as a man in other realms. He also refused the sexual objectification of by white Europeans where black men are treated as temporal objects of desire and not as full persons who have diverse social engagements and desires beyond sex or papers (Ingvars, 2023). He said:

I have my own ideology: not going to clubs to look for a woman and all that. My ideology is to find freedom for myself. You go clubbing and find a woman [...] after I got my papers, what am I going to do? I will leave her. Afterwards she will tell me, all Africans are the same. Me, I am not like that. When I am with you, I aim to be there forever. (Conversation, Dakar, January 2021)

Mamadou distanced himself from narratives of the “scam marriage” and referred to masculine dignity to justify his vulnerability. He did not contest the norms surrounding the spousal visa. Yet, he questioned why someone who was willing to work, was well integrated and spoke the language was excluded from working and eventually deported. By distancing himself from other migrant men, Mamadou, like Mas, also reinforced dominant stereotypes within the European majority society about migrant men being “macho” and “bossy” towards women and thus strengthened the boundaries between members of ethnic minorities and the majority in Europe (Leutloff-Grandits 2021). He also referred to negative aspects of marriage with a legal resident of Europe, such as the ongoing dependency. Similar to other Senegalese men (Kringelbach, 2016a), Mamadou was weary of European women who were overly interested in African men. He mentioned they could be “a bit lost” and you could get stuck in a bad relationship. Mamadou also wished to be honest with people:

I do not want to deceive people. If I am the being deceived, that is no problem.

But if I cheat on someone, it hurts me. (Interview, Dakar, January 2021)

He talked about women who could be dangerous or make you vulnerable. Like in Germany, he thought that in Senegal there were also many “Hommenizers” (mbaraan in Wolof), women who seduce men, have several boyfriends at the same time and are impressed by material things and money and deplete your resources (Foley and Drame, 2013).

Migrants who came back in Senegal, were viewed with caution as they could be a threat to Senegalese culture, norms and values and they risked contaminating their “homeland” (Angotti, McKay, and Robinson, 2019; Fouquet, 2008; Riccio, 2005). While migration is celebrated in Senegal, there is also suspicion that migrants bring bad influences from outside such as radicalized ideas about Islam or too Westernized ideas about gender and sexuality (M’baye, 2019). Mamadou was also careful and avoided places in Dakar that were considered to be “too European” or where “bad” behavior took place, such as smoking, drinking and “loose” interactions. Senegal has a thriving development cooperation sector with many (white) female workers and volunteers who might seek sexual encounters with (black) men in the leisure or tourist spaces of Dakar. Men who interacted with European tourists and international, so-called “expat”, workers in Senegal could also have a bad reputation (Venables, 2009). Mamadou was thus renegotiating suspicions about his morality in Senegal as well as in relation to European discourses that traveled to Senegal.

Mas and Mamadou thus both made the most of their return by presenting themselves as “good” men and reinforcing moral hierarchies about the importance of “authentic” relationships, love and companion marriage implied in European migration regimes. In doing so, they reinforce the moral economy of European marriage migration management, yet they also deploy morality differently. By adhering to norms contained in European and Senegalese discourses, they questioned stereotypical notions about non-European migrant men but also reinforced stereotypes regarding other migrants. Yet, they were both critical of European migration policies. Their narratives thus are not only individual responses to particular norms of masculinity, but are shaped by the broader moral economy of migration management that is created in Europe and travels to Senegal.

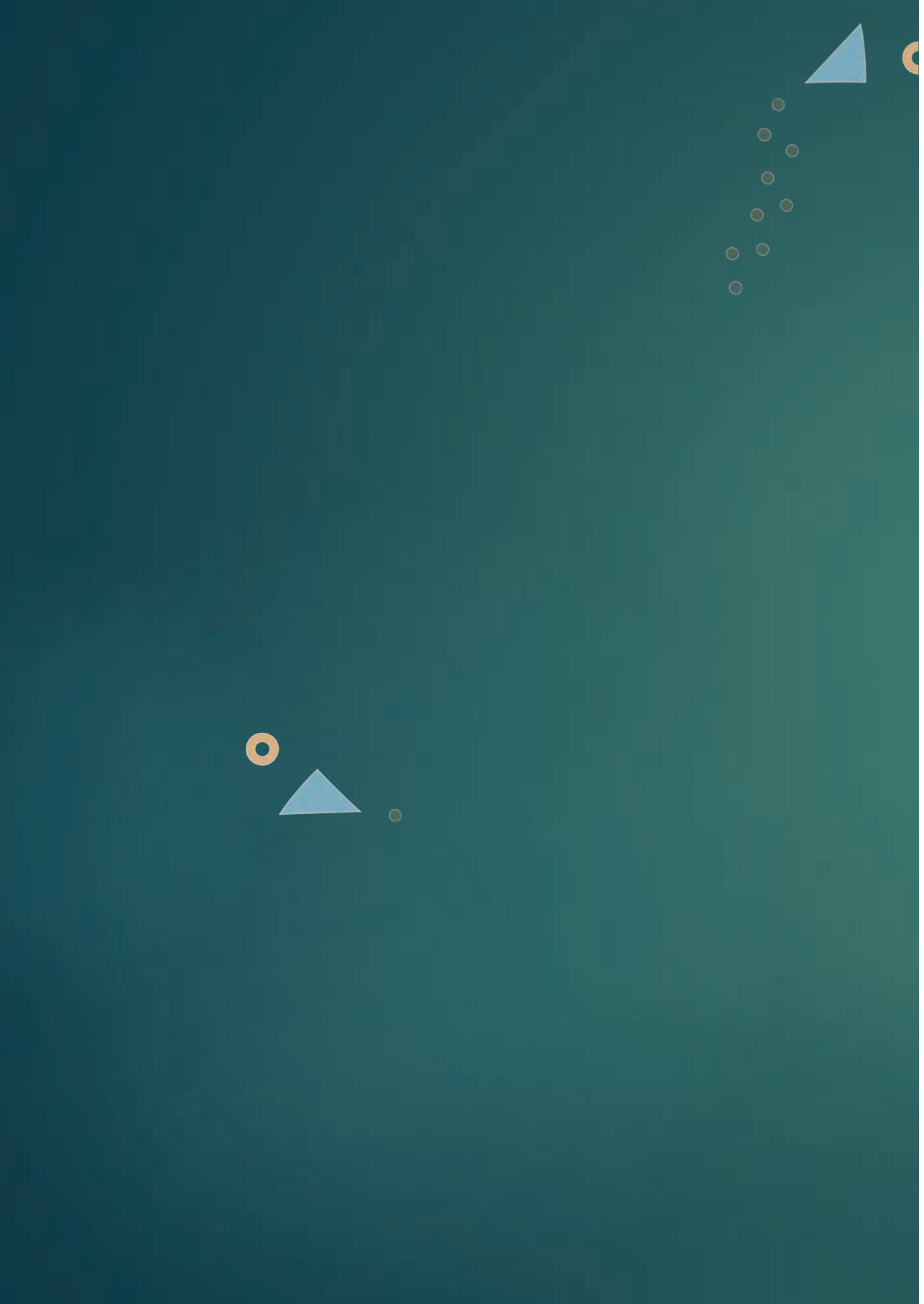
4.5. Conclusions

Marriage migration and deportation are topics that are highly politicized and where gendered and racialized understandings about migrant men flourish. Research on migrant masculinities has shown the difficulties migrant men face and their possible vulnerabilities, in particular with regard to marriage migration. We extend this research by exploring the ongoing connections between the European discourses of marriage migration in interactions in the country of origin. We show that despite wishing to stay in Europe, Senegalese men do not marry or stay married under all circumstances, thus contesting but also reinforcing European stereotypes of black migrant men. In so doing, we connect heretofore separate literature on marriage migration and migrant masculinities to literature on return and deportation.

We find that men who come back following aborted migration projects can capitalize on their return and express their morality through stories of their non-marriage or divorce. It is by returning to Senegal that men challenge stereotypical notions about black migrants in the moral economy of European marriage migration and at the same time reinforce moral hierarchies about love and marriage. These moral hierarchies are relevant in Senegal as some norms coincide with Senegalese ideals of what it means to be a good, responsible and honorable man. Moreover, European residents and members of the diaspora come and go for instance as tourists, workers in the international development sector, marriage partners or researchers. By reversing the narratives about dangerous men and presenting themselves as responsible and moral in comparison to other men and white women, they maintain their masculinity. These feelings and moral narrations are not only expressions of self-reinvention away from the pain experienced in Europe and after return to Senegal, but also show how gendered and racialized discourses about

migration can continue to play a role outside Europe as returnees use similar narratives of romantic love and genuineness to explain their return. As research has shown (Luibhéid, 2020: 33), this strategy can be fraught with risk because it implies that only some black Muslim migrants are capable of the correct behavior it does not question underlying (historical) inequalities in relation to racial privilege, economic means or the criminalization of illegalized migrants.

The stories of those who have ended relationships and returned to their country of origin or who did not engage in trajectories of marriage migration are important because they help us to understand connections between migrant masculinities, deportability and the moral economy of marriage migration. These stories are often hidden as most research on marriage migration takes place in Europe and has concealed the ways in which migrants, through return, contest European discourses, while also strengthening moralistic discourses about “the good man”. Such stories offer an entry point to explore the potentially contradictory roles men (and others) play after return in relation to migrants in Europe, and they help us to reflect upon power hierarchies within intimate relationships.



Chapter 5

Multidirectional mistrust: German female volunteers' emotion work in the context of male deportation and return from Europe to Senegal

This chapter is a slightly revised version of the following publication:

Strijbosch, K. (2024). Multidirectional mistrust: German female volunteers' emotion work in the context of male deportation and return from Europe to Senegal. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 1–19. Advance publication online. doi: 10.1080/1369183X.2024.2377861

5.1. Introduction

Deportation triggers intense emotions, tension and stress that can accumulate and circulate, not only for the people who are removed and their kin, but also for the wider support networks in the countries from which they are deported (Sökefeld and Strasser, 2024). During the so-called 'refugee crisis' in 2015, many volunteers, mostly women, from diverse backgrounds actively helped migrants in Germany (Braun, 2017; Sandri, 2018; Fleischmann, 2019). Research on migration management and civil society initiatives of humanitarian support in the field of migration show that these initiatives are loaded with emotions, dilemmas and ambiguities which are mitigated in various ways (e.g. Sinatti, 2019b, 2023; Rosenberger et al., 2018; Kalir, 2019; Vandevordt, 2018; Moghaddari, 2021; Hjalmarson, 2024).

Conducting almost one year of ethnographic fieldwork in Senegal among Senegalese who had had a migration experience in Europe, I learned that transnational connections with volunteers of refugee support networks in Europe can be important sources of emotional and financial support for returnees. Additionally, these connections can influence volunteers' lives and the conduct of organizations involved in return migration. However, little is known about volunteers' emotional responses and emotion work after migrants leave Europe, as most studies about solidarity networks focus on 'destination' or 'transit' countries (see e.g. Doidge and Sandri, 2019; Jumbert and Pascucci, 2021; Montes and Paris Pombo, 2019). Migrant's post-return and deportation experiences can be influenced by support of non-governmental organizations and professional social workers (see e.g. Gerlach, 2018; Plambech, 2018). Research on transnational care provided by migrants and diasporic communities has also shown how care across different sites is constantly adapting and how care is a moral practice that highlights the existence as well as type and quality of the relationship (Drotbohm, 2015b: 101). Mistrust is also present in these kinds of constellations and it requires emotion work to uphold the connections and deal with the gendered expectations of care (Poeze et al., 2016). Other forms of transnational connections from the countries of departure (see e.g. Rodkey, 2018) are documented, but to my knowledge, research does not look at the role of volunteers. Yet, these connections can make a difference in the experiences of return.

By investigating 'emotion work' in the return migration industry, particularly in relation to the gendered connection between elderly female volunteers and younger male returnees, I seek to contribute to the field of migration and affect in the context of multidirectional mistrust. With 'multidirectional mistrust', I refer to the feelings of

mistrust and uncertainty that exist among the various actors engaging with return and deportation, including organizations, volunteers and migrants. The gendered dimension in this highly unequal social field deserves attention, as women predominate among volunteers and solidarity workers while Senegalese returnees are often men. Migrants who are women and children are considered deserving of help more often than those who are men. This obscures the suffering of men (Freedman, 2018) and makes men more suspicious (Strijbosch and Mazzucato, 2024). Women who support them can be equally questioned, especially because they are suspected of erotic longing for West African men (Nyanzi et al., 2005; Venables, 2009).

The sociologist Arlie Hochschild defined 'emotion work' as a conscious effort to change or control emotions in others or oneself to meet communal guidelines in a specific context (Hochschild, 1979: 561). These guidelines vary across contexts and 'are likely to exhibit cultural differences associated with, for instance, gender and ethnicity' (Hochschild, 1979: 572). Communal guidelines on how to address emotions are also present in the return migration process. In this article, emotion work likewise refers to activities concerned with the enrichment of others' emotional wellbeing and the provision of emotional support, including work to maintain positive relationships, including behaviors such as addressing problems, praising, supporting or sharing inner thoughts and feelings. This type of emotion work is often feminized and/or made invisible by the assumption that women have expertise in emotion management (see e.g. Arcy, 2016; Erickson, 2005). I develop this concept further by exploring the circulation of emotions between the different agents, including volunteers, which can be seen as a form of emotion work. It shows how mistrust can be changed into trust in the circulation of emotions, but it can also slip back into suspicion.

Both deportation and assisted voluntary return are part of the return migration industry, which, following van Houte (2022:155) is an 'expanding field of professional actors who earn an income from the facilitation and/or removal of the mobility of people, which implies that they have an interest in creating the demand for their own services.' Those involved in the refugee and deportation system, including the various authorities, migrants, NGO workers and volunteers display or develop some degree of mistrust towards one another (Borrelli et al., 2021; Daniel and Knudsen, 1995; Griffiths, 2012; Hertoghs, 2019; Maskens, 2015; Toubøl, 2019; Scheel, 2018). Many scholars find that trust is important for well-functioning relationships. Adding to this literature, I am focusing on relationships that are maintained or come into being despite a lack of full trust. Using

Carey's (2017) approach to mistrust, I zoom in on the social dynamics that come into being in the context of mistrust as they can highlight processes and under-researched actors in the contested return migration industry. Thus, it is necessary to examine not only what mistrust hinders, but also what it produces - especially in relation to deportable and deported people, in which ample feelings of mistrust prevail as previous research noted (see also Mahar, 2024 on faith; Peutz, 2010).

5.2. Methods and context: Studying volunteers in the context of deportation and return from Germany to Senegal

During almost twelve months between January 2017 and March 2021, I conducted ethnographic fieldwork in urban Senegal among Senegalese with migration experience in Europe. There, I met a German volunteer who was visiting a Senegalese returnee. As contemporary societies are invariably and inevitably linked within larger wholes (Falzon, 2009:3), we stayed in touch online and via phone calls from 2018 onwards and I became connected with her network of volunteers. In the autumn of 2020, I visited Germany for two weeks to learn more about the experiences of these volunteers. Through snowball sampling, I met other volunteers in Germany who were involved in solidarity networks connected with Senegalese returnees. I conducted interviews, informal conversations and one focus group conversation with fourteen female volunteers who remained supportive to male returnees to Senegal. Three of them I also met in Senegal when they were visiting migrant men they supported in Germany and later in Senegal. Eleven of the fourteen women knew at least one of the male research participants I was connected with during my fieldwork in Senegal. Though three other volunteers did not know the same Senegalese migrants I did, they could still share their experiences and teach me about dealing with return migration to Senegal and the context in which it occurred. In addition, this analysis is informed by encounters with employees of organizations working with Senegalese returnees in Germany and Senegal. Prominent themes that developed during fieldwork in Senegal but especially when talking to volunteers in Germany were the importance of emotions, tensions and mistrust among various parties. This also included feelings of unrecognized work and providing 'genuine care'. These were subsumed within larger themes about deportation, return, affect and gender.

The majority of the fourteen volunteers were white women of German nationality between forty and seventy years old. Most of the Senegalese migrant men the volunteers interacted with used to have a 'Duldung', a specific legal status that tolerated their presence in German territory until their deportation (Fontanari, 2015). The skewed selection of male

returnees and female volunteers reflects the fact that migration flows from Senegal have historically been and remain male dominated (Mazzucato et al., 2015), whereas historical notions of German feminine bourgeois charity (Braun, 2017) still remain present in contemporary efforts to support refugees in Germany.

Data collection took place during the aftermath of the ‘refugee crisis’ of 2015. In Germany, citizens from various walks of life provided support to refugees (see e.g. Fleischmann and Steinhilper, 2017). At the same time, there were xenophobic tendencies and the perceived need to differentiate between ‘real, deserving refugees’ and ‘bogus refugees’ to keep the incoming migration manageable (Holmes and Castañeda, 2016). European governments made increasing efforts to return those whom they considered undeserving to stay. Senegal is formally considered a safe country of origin in Germany; therefore, Senegalese nationals were most often not considered to be refugees. They were thus ineligible to stay and encouraged to leave with so-called voluntary return programs or deported (for a critique on this differentiation, see e.g. Blitz et al., 2005; De Genova, 2002; Cleton and Chauvin, 2020; Tecca, 2024; Walker, 2019). The focus on return and on preventing undesirable migration was not only present in European countries receiving migrants (Mouthaan, 2019). In Senegal, various local and European NGOs and international organizations created campaigns to halt ‘illegal’ migration (Rodriguez, 2017; Vammen, 2022), fight the ‘root causes’ of migration, and reintegrate returnees. The German Corporation for International Cooperation (GIZ) also financed projects focused on migration. German volunteers, mostly women, followed the work of organizations by supporting returnees, mostly of their own accord. Among Senegalese migrant men, returning successfully is often a motivation for leaving Senegal and making a risky journey to Europe (Sinatti, 2011). Yet, they are less willing to take chances and deal with uncertainty in relation to returning, as a failed, empty-handed return, can lead to shame and exclusion of the community (Hernández-Carretero, 2017).

5.3. Female volunteers’ emotion work in a context of multidirectional mistrust

All volunteers who engaged with Senegalese migrants following the ‘refugee crisis in 2015’, stated they were somewhat skeptical about the work of official institutions and provided care by personally engaging with returnees. In this section, I present an in-depth analysis of three collaborations between female German volunteers and male Senegalese returnees. As the emotion of mistrust was widespread throughout my fieldwork in both Senegal and Germany, the three cases below illuminate dimensions of the circulation of multi-directional

mistrust that I observed in the larger matched sample of returnees and volunteers. The examples show how 1) the circulation of mistrust can intensify relationships between volunteers and returnees based on the lack of recognition of emotion work, 2) How the acceptance of some mistrust and ambiguity can lessen emotional pressure in relations between volunteers and donors and 3) how mediated mistrust can improve collaboration.

5.3.1. How unrecognized emotion work and circulating mistrust intensifies the relations between volunteers and returnees

'Hello from Senegal, I am Mohammed and I lived a few years in Europe. But my asylum request was rejected, and I returned to Senegal. There, the Senegalese-German information centre for employment, migration and reintegration advised me and I found a job as a technician [...]. Young people can participate in courses and trainings. Myself, I participated in training on solar technology after work. It is really my thing!' (Postcard, Fieldwork Germany, September 2020)

This postcard featuring a picture of Mohammed, a Senegalese returnee, was displayed on the premises of an organization that supports migrants in Germany in returning to their so-called countries of origin. On the postcard, Mohammed, standing in an office environment, wears a neat shirt and appears to concentrate. Below his picture is the caption 'a story of new hope'. Mohammed's story suggests that building a life after returning to Senegal is possible and that jobs, support and success are available to returnees. The card supports the narrative propagated by European governments that they are eliminating the 'root causes' of migration and that Senegal is a safe country of origin wherein 'sustainable reintegration' and success are feasible (Kabbanji, 2013), especially with a little help. Furthermore, it suggests that Senegal is the natural place for Senegalese citizens to reside.

I showed the postcard to Bea when I visited her in Germany. Bea, a German volunteer in her sixties, had supported Mohammed for several months with language training and other activities during his stay in Germany. After Mohammed had to return to Senegal, she visited him more than five times and helped him get in touch with a returnee organization and find a job in Senegal. Bea became upset when I showed her the postcard: 'Someone else has written that for him!' I told Bea that perhaps Mohammed did not tell his entire story to the person who wrote the card, thinking that it might be better for him. I met several returnees in Senegal who did not share the exact reasons for their return and their suffering to protect themselves and their families from being seen as failures,

not living up to hegemonic masculine ideals or criminals due to their aborted migrations (see also Schultz, 2021; Strijbosch et al., 2023). Bea responded:

Yes, perhaps, but I think it is simply not correct. They use him. [...] We fight so that they have a good program, are honest, and treat people well. Not that they just make up stories. They have to look beyond this façade and wonder what really happened to Mohammed. He did not receive courses and training. He was not a few years in Europe but ten years! (Conversation with Bea in Germany, September 2020)

Bea's trust in German institutions was vastly shaken when, during Mohammed's stay in Germany, he did not show up to work and she could not reach him. Several hours later, she received a phone call: Mohammed had been torn from his bed by the police and imprisoned to be eventually sent back to Senegal. Bea felt shocked that her country had done this. She also felt guilty about not anticipating what would happen and therefore not warning Mohammed. He had shown her a letter from the German Foreigners' Registration Office, and she and other volunteers had thought they would have time to discuss it with his lawyer. This turned out not to be the case. Her feelings of connectedness and guilt towards Mohammed as well as her disturbed trust in German institutions brought her closer to Mohammed.

Several years later, this postcard reminded Bea of those events, upset her again and intensified her mistrust towards institutions, not only in Germany but also in Senegal. Through her commitment to Mohammed, Bea experienced the violence of the German immigration system, and she recognized the privilege of her German citizenship (Glick Schiller and Salazar, 2013) and the unequal distribution of exposure to emotional harm between German citizens and migrants (Meier, 2020). These feelings and experiences encouraged Bea and other volunteers to connect with German state-funded organizations based in Senegal to see what they could offer (see Perl, 2024 on affective labor of volunteers in a detention center in Spain). For Bea, the postcard was a Potemkin village (Mühlfried, 2021), a falsely positive, substance-less depiction of the work carried out by the return organizations. As a suspicious observer, Bea was able to see beyond the façade. She was angry, as the postcard eclipsed both the hardships Mohammed had experienced and her own emotion work. This annoyed Bea:

The total situation [after return] was very unfortunate. [...] This person was broken, done. This is something the [organization] does not inquire about; they mainly make a beautiful story. I do not want to claim too much, but [...] I was very important for him [in terms of support]. The [organization] did not do that.

Bea questioned the narrative on the postcard, not in the sense that she did not believe it was possible to rebuild a life in Senegal, but in the sense that the narrative overlooked the nuances and struggles in Mohammed's story. It annoyed her that the emotion work done by Mohammed, herself and other volunteers was hidden and unrecognized by the postcard. Instead of being acknowledged, this work was made invisible by the mention of only the more hopeful aspects of Mohammed's story. To Bea, this confirmed the point that she and other volunteers differed from professional organizations such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM) or GIZ in that they were guided by genuine care and deep emotion work. Regarding emotion work, Hochschild (1983) differentiated between 'surface acting' and 'deep acting'; in the former, actors show the emotions that are expected, for instance, in a specific work context (e.g. a waiter smiles when someone complains despite their feelings of unease). During 'deep acting', by contrast, actors feel the emotions the job requires (e.g. a waiter feels like smiling despite customer complaints). Bea considered organizations with paid employees to be engaged in surface acting only: they are distanced, impersonal, bureaucratic and therefore not trustworthy for really helping Mohammed (for a discussion of this the context of migration, see e.g. Hertoghs, 2019; Vandevordt, 2018; Wissink and van Oorschot, 2021; Barone, 2024 on potential returnees in Morocco dealing with institutions). This is visible in Bea's explanation of why she decided to support Mohammed:

We [the volunteers] have to take them by their hand. It is not easy to go back. I would like to know how it really is. The [organization] gives a training, but that is often only for one week. Next to that, they give a flight ticket and a little bit of money. Is that enough? [...] I would like to know how Mohammed is doing and also the other men who went back. (Fieldnotes, Senegal, February 2019)

Several people around Bea, including returnees insinuated that Bea's support was a kind of maternal guardianship, through which she helped Mohammed and others to land on their feet in Senegal. The maternal guardian figure is a gendered moral imperative based on an essentializing notion of motherhood that emphasizes natural caring capacities, compassion and goodwill. The perception that care work comes naturally to women renders such work invisible and endorses the idea that this work is unskilled (see also Daniels, 1987; Sahraoui, 2018). These notions are not uncommon in development aid projects and migrant integration initiatives (e.g. Choo, 2017; Heron, 2007), but they are less often pointed out in relation to deportation and return. Furthermore, scholars (e.g.

Braun, 2017) have noted that a risk of reproducing colonial tendencies and infantilizing migrants is implicated in this kind of work. Sara Ahmed (2004: 22) for instance argued that charitable discourses of compassion that include narratives of pain and suffering involve complex power relations. She argued that the giver can become empowered, as the giver is the subject who provides the receiver with the possibility of overcoming pain. Compassion can thus go hand in hand with repression (see e.g. Fassin, 2005; Kalir, 2019). Several volunteers, including Bea, recognized the need to avoid power imbalances and not to treat migrants as children. At some point, Mohammed asked Bea to stop connecting him with journalists and reporters because he was tired of telling his story over and over again. Bea respected this, and this was an important reason why she suppressed her wish to complain about the postcard to the organization that had produced it, despite her anger. When I met Mohammed back in Senegal several months later, I asked him what he thought about Bea's response to the postcard. He explained that the inaccuracies written on the postcard by a journalist on behalf of the organization did not really matter to him:

Maybe she had misunderstood me. At that moment, I did not follow the training yet, but I knew I would be able to follow the training [...]. Later I did follow various trainings, marketing, solar energy and ICT. It is not a problem but Bea gets angry quickly. (Fieldnotes, Senegal, January 2021)

Thus, instead of discrediting the organization that put up the postcards, Mohammed left room for ambiguity by saying that there might have been a misunderstanding between himself and the journalist. Regarding Bea's feelings, he mentioned that she had a 'good heart' but was sometimes too emotional and overprotective. Mohammed perceived it as natural for Bea to care and did not question her intentions. This corresponds to an idealization of the maternal figure, who sacrifices her own needs for the wellbeing of others; in this case, Bea also mitigated power imbalances by listening to Mohammed's wishes. This example showed how the ongoing circulation of mistrust can intensify relations between volunteers and returnees. Bea's earlier feelings of mistrust towards the organization were confirmed because of the lack of acknowledgement on the postcard of the need for emotion work after Mohammed's return. The experience of Mohammed's deportation up close made her skeptical towards the German state-funded organization and let her to conclude they cannot be fully trusted to do the required emotion work. This strengthened the connection between Bea and Mohammed, despite some skepticism towards Bea by Mohammed. Feelings of mistrust can thus lead to an increase of the experienced need for emotion work.

5.3.2. How the acceptance of some mistrust and ambiguity can lessen emotional pressure in relations between volunteers and donors

Dewe, a returnee, arrives in his car with the logo of the business he has recently started. We first met three months earlier, when he was in Germany and about to leave for Senegal. During his farewell party, we toasted to the new chapter of his life with a small group of volunteers of a foundation that supports him and other returnees in setting up business projects in Africa with as little bureaucracy as possible. The small-scale organization aims to promote exchange and learning between Africa and Europe. One of the leading figures is Magdalena, a German woman in her fifties who coaches various people, including returnees. With the foundation's support, Dewe financed his car, which enabled him to serve more clients with his cleaning products throughout the city. Dewe explained how starting a business in Senegal works differently than in Europe. This created tensions between him and Magdalena. Pressured by her donors, Magdalena emphasized that Dewe needed to make money, while his strategy was to give before he can receive. Dewe explained the expectations of people in Senegal during a car ride:

You need to give, otherwise you will not receive [...] When Magdalena tells me that I have to make money, I tell her that it is important in the first three months to create a lot of publicity, make connections, so that people are happy. (Conversation, Dakar, January 2021)

Magdalena and Dewe negotiated various expectations and emotions: those of the people around Dewe in Senegal, towards each other and of German donors. As a Senegalese migrant man returning from Europe, Dewe was expected to provide and share in Senegal (Hannaford, 2016). Money and material goods are part of reciprocal relationships and intertwined with emotional and economic ties in many West-African contexts. Not providing money or keeping silent abroad for too long can create mistrust among family members in the country of origin (see Cole and Groes, 2016: 8). Magdalena instead told him that he had to save his earnings and spend the money on his business. Magdalena was wary of Dewe's strategy and skeptical about whether he was using donor money appropriately. Magdalena referred to earlier experiences with returnees who had asked for money without clear justification:

Those guys in Senegal they are very good at making big business plans and having big numbers [asking for a lot of money]. And then, I think, well, how do I sell this to my people [the donors]? Why should someone get that much money? I don't know whether he can make it work. (Interview, Germany, September 2020)

Magdalena worried about the explanation and emotion work she had to do for the donors as she felt responsible for the money spent. Already before Dewe left for Senegal, Magdalena was not fully convinced by his intentions, and she was not alone. Fundraising among other volunteers, organizations and acquaintances of Magdalena for Dewe did not go as well as fundraising for other returnees. However, Magdalena was not unhappy about this as it lowered the donors' and Dewe's expectations and diminished pressure on her.

We hardly get anything, just €1000. [...]. And I thought: Well, at least I have a bit of money (laughs). And then I thought, hm, this is good. This is good, that we don't overload him now with material and money and he has everything so that he can start. Because Dewe, I'm not 100% in tune with his motivation yet. (Interview, Germany, September 2020)

Magdalena and her small-scale organization aim to support successful businesses in Africa through an approach based on trust, hope and capability. To make herself at ease with the tension and mistrust implied in her situation with Dewe and the donors, Magdalena did emotion work towards herself wherein she 'works to induce or inhibit their feelings' to make them appropriate to the situation (Hochschild, 1979: 562). Magdalena convinced herself that it was good that there was not yet a lot of money for Dewe as this meant he needed to demonstrate his commitment first. She did not want to break their connection, but her own and the donors' doubt towards Dewe's business plan slowed the flow of money and the frequency of their contact. Ambiguity is frequently related to emotion work and stress (Zapf, 2002: 247). This example shows how the acceptance of ambiguity and some mistrust can reduce emotional pressure. Magdalena is not only negotiating her position vis-à-vis Dewe but also towards expectations of the community of donors.

Nevertheless, after Dewe returned to Senegal, he convinced Magdalena and other donors that he needed a car to improve his chances of a successful business. Magdalena, like Bea and other volunteers, was skeptical about bigger international governmental funded return organizations' willingness and ability to help returnees. She considered them to be slow, vague, bureaucratic and unable to cater to the returnees' needs. In the past, she had accompanied another potential returnee in Germany to a counselling session to learn about the regulations governing a voluntary return. It was unclear how much monetary assistance a voluntary returnee would receive; the return consultant explained that this depended on various regulations and factors. According to Magdalena, this did not make returnees feel secure, but rather showed that they were not taken seriously by the organizations.

Returnees, in particular men, had the responsibility to provide for their extended families in Senegal. To her, the organizations were incapable or unwilling to eliminate uncertainty so that returnees can receive the necessary emotional and financial support:

I'm doing that all voluntarily and there are professionals sitting there. Professionals that get a lot of money for those jobs, and they don't even know how to ask very simple questions [such as what returnees need]. It drives me mad. And then all these prejudices: 'Oh, they are only pretending. They are just Wirtschaftsflüchtlinge [economic refugees].' They blame it all on those guys. They [Senegalese men] are completely normal, but our system is sick. (Interview, Germany, autumn 2020)

Her reinforced mistrust in the German system of return migration strengthened her conviction that she should continue her commitment and take responsibility for returnees, including Dewe.

Despite her doubts, Magdalena collected donations to finance Dewe's car. With new donations, Magdalena's expectations and her desire to monitor Dewe's actions increased. Similarly, like the organization with the postcard in the previous example, Dewe wanted to portray a positive image to convince Magdalena and potential donors that he is serious and making progress with his company. To check Dewe's progress, Magdalena hoped to receive additional insights from me as I was in Dakar. She suspected that Dewe would create a façade, showing positive videos where he meets people without actually making money. On the phone, Magdalena shared that someone from her team had asked her: "Do you forever want to be this good auntie who just wants to give money?" She continues explaining how emotions can circulate:

I get all the stress of discussing with the people [returnees] and then I internally get this pressure from the people [donors] [...] I get stress from left, right and center [...] You are running that organization and the team; it is like having a company you know. (Telephone call, Dakar, January 2021)

The personal connection between Magdalena and Dewe was not as strong as Magdalena's previous relationship with another returnees. The pressure from 'her' people to be a credible and critical partner put her under emotional stress. Yet, she was not as emotionally and financially embedded with Dewe's project on a personal basis. Rather, she was suspicious herself, which led to more emotional pressure, but eventually accepting this helped her to be satisfied with some feelings of mistrust towards Dewe.

5.3.3. How mediated mistrust can improve collaborations between an official return organization and returnees

Idrissa was deported to Senegal several years ago. He shares how there are many offices, institutions and structures you have to get to know if you want reintegration support in Senegal: the Migration Centre, GIZ, the Senegalese governmental agency that supports young people in finding work, IOM, the Office Français de l'immigration et de l'Intégration and various others. Idrissa took part in a training with one of these, which was a first step to get financial support for his business. Like many other returnees, he questions the organization's intentions as 'they have beautiful offices but what do they do?' Idrissa handed in his business plan at one of the offices, from which he needed approval to continue. After some months of silence and losing hope in the process, he contacted Monika, a volunteer from Germany. Other returnees told him she might be able to help. Idrissa sent the business plan to her in Stuttgart and Monika used her contacts in Berlin to ensure that it landed on the right desk in Dakar. Idrissa describes Monika as: a 'fighter, who came down from heaven at the right moment. [...] It is because of her that things work here [in Senegal]. I do not know what she does exactly, but she writes to all [administrative] levels in Germany.' (Fieldnotes, Dakar, winter 2021)

Monika, a woman in her late forties volunteered in German refugee camps. She remained in touch with numerous returnees, deportees and got to know various actors in the context of return migration to West Africa. Monika criticized and pressured organizations in the return migration industry to improve the situation for migrants in Germany and for returnees. Like other protestors and solidarity movements (Rosenberger and Winkler, 2014: 168), she appeals to emotion to elicit specific emotional responses, including moral shock and compassion. She pressured organizations via the media to do their work, wrote to officials and found resources for migrants. Despite her skepticism about assisted voluntary return organizations, she was hopeful that positive change could occur. She forged liaisons among returnees, return organizations, volunteers and others. Connecting people and maintaining relationships, she was involved in emotion work in multiple directions: she identified needs and problems and found solutions. She explained how she herself was connected to organizations:

I have a lot of problems with these organizations, they get so much tax money from Germany for their programs but these programs really do not work [...] I started criticizing them [organizations] and then the people [employees of German institutions] came to me [...] they said when you criticize so bad, then you also have to give us ideas. (Interview, Germany, September 2020)

By being vocal and demanding improvements, Monika asked organizations to do their work; by doing so, she was also put in a position to do emotion work herself. As Ahmed wrote (2021: 5), 'Making a complaint is never completed by a single action: it often requires you to do more and more work.' Ms. Müller, an employee of one of the organizations, reached out to Monika and discussed with her how to improve the situation for migrants and returnees. Ms. Müller tried to find a common ground. Despite her skepticism, Monika got closer to official organizations and contacted Ms. Müller, the head of the organization, when a Senegalese returnee did not receive his money. Monika recalled how their relationship developed:

Six months, that's how long a returnee and I had to fight to get his money but [...] since then we call each other sometimes and I ask her what is going on at the moment. [...]. A very nice woman, she has a very good heart. She is more like a mother, really, not a boss [...]. She has a very nice way of talking to the people also. (Interview, Germany, September 2020).

Monika used a form of emotion work, wherein an individual works to induce or inhibit their feelings to make them appropriate for the situation at hand (Hochschild, 1979). Through the emotion work that Ms. Müller did towards Monika and migrants, Monika's initial feelings of mistrust became feelings of hope; she began to feel that if bureaucracy and other issues were solved, they could make a difference for returnees. Monika was convinced by Ms. Müller's way of talking to migrants and her feminine role as 'caring mother' rather than a 'distant boss'. Because of these factors, Ms. Müller's actions felt like spontaneous forms of deep care, instead of just something she did for her job. Monika's trust in Ms. Müller helped her to feel confident in the idea that organizations could create opportunities for returnees.

From these interactions, Ms. Müller changed Monika's feelings towards the organization and she hoped migrants and potential returnees could also reconsider their feelings towards organizations. She consciously mediated trust between an assisted voluntary return organization and potential returnees by showing that cooperation was possible and that financial resources were available despite the many obstacles, problems and contradictions in the return migration industry. She explained why this was necessary:

[Refugees or potential returnees] always think [return organizations] are bad people. Return is a very, very difficult topic. [...] they say [the organization] just wants to send them home. [...] It is important to know faces in this organization. They should know that it is not a place where police are waiting

for them; they can get training, coaching, or just use the computers. [...] They can go anonymously. For the first appointment, you just go and get information. [...]. It is just about building trust. (Interview, Germany, September 2021)

By connecting returnees with organizations, Monika hoped to achieve the most suitable solutions for Senegalese, in Europe or elsewhere, despite her general unease about the return migration industry and immigration laws. To justify her own discomfort, she reasoned that ‘deportation would happen anyways’. She hoped that programs had the potential to improve returnees’ situation. In the example above, Monika intended to maintain the returnees’ wellbeing by mediating tensions: she fostered a relationship between herself and Idrissa as well as between herself and the return organizations. This re-established trust between migrants and herself and, by extension, possibly migrants’ trust towards the organizations.

Monika was not always seen as someone doing good and having ‘fallen from heaven’. Her intentions and way of working were also treated with mistrust and gossip from multiple directions: from returnees, volunteers and employees of organizations. This aligns with Kalir and Wissink’s (2016) finding that the difference between support groups and professional organizations working on deportation can be fluid and unclear in the migration industry (see also Fleischmann, 2019; Serra Mingot and Mazzucato, 2018; Vandevordt, 2016). Mustafa, a returnee I regularly interacted with in Senegal, was friendly towards Monika but also kept his distance. He expressed his mistrust of Monika and her Senegalese companion, with whom she was establishing a new organization.

Is she working for the German government? What does Ahmed [Monika’s Senegalese companion] do all the time in Germany? Does he work for the German government as well?’ I asked if he had the same feelings about Gabriella, another volunteer we met together. Mustafa explained: ‘Gabriella is doing everything from the heart, but Monika, I don’t know. She is different.’ (Fieldnotes, Senegal, August 2019)

During a meeting with Monika in Germany, I asked about the mistrust towards her I had observed. Against the accusations that she might help the German government to deport people she responded casually that ‘there are people who want to go home. They come to me; I do not go to them.’ Aware of the potential to be mistrusted, she emphasized her dedication by collecting money, emotionally supporting returnees over longer periods and managing an NGO to carry out community work in Senegal after working hours. Not only with me, but also with returnees, Monika often discussed the difficulty of doing

all this while caring for her own children. By emphasizing her role as mother, she hoped to gain credibility, as she was unpaid for her work but devoted much time and energy to support migrants. Some returnees questioned her as not being 'genuinely caring', and organizations had described her as 'emotional' and 'pushy', as I learned when visiting a social support organization in Dakar, and Laye, the returnee I had gone to meet with, was late.

Monika messaged me that Laye was in the hospital for unknown reasons. It made me nervous, as I knew he had wanted to commit suicide before. I tell the employee [of the organization that is supposed to help Laye] Laye may arrive about two hours late. He sighs and responds rather nonchalantly: 'that is a pity, we close at 17.00. Tomorrow, we open again and we can welcome him with open arms.' He suggests Laye's situation might not be as urgent as Monika portrayed it. He shares how Monika flooded him with pushy and overemotional emails. This seems to have put him off taking her concerns very seriously. At 16.45, I receive a message Laye is on his way. As Laye has difficulties getting out of the car, we meet outside. He is exhausted and hardly manages to drink from a bottle of water. (Fieldnotes, Senegal, August 2019)

This example shows how Monika came to be regarded as being too emotional (Karakayali, 2017) and unprofessional by employees in organizations. Being too assertive may have shut doors and damaged her ability to support returnees, although, conversely, it is exactly her assertiveness and determination that enabled her to get things done.

Monika's networks and collaborations were more diverse than those of most of the other volunteers I met. These enabled her to gain a broader view and more influence but also created more transnational gossip (see also Drotbohm, 2010). Monika's attempts to secure money or resources from organizations for returnees were not always successful; however, she had been active in returnees' social networks for years, indicating that she was determined and serious. She managed to secure resources that organizations had promised and had not delivered without her involvement, and people like Idrissa and Laye knew this.

5.3.4. Comparing three cases of female German volunteers and Senegalese male returnees

Together, the three examples show how relationships involve a constant process of achievement, negotiation and failure (see Alpes, 2017b; Bachelet, 2019; Schapendonk, 2015). They also show how these processes are gendered. While all cases concern interactions

between male Senegalese returnees and female German volunteers, the gendered misrecognition of emotion work influences relationship dynamics and the circulation of mistrust between actors differently. These three examples show different roles of volunteers that I observed in the larger sample of returnees and volunteers. Namely the 'motherly figure', the 'business connection', and the 'mediator' – each of which come with their own moral expectations around gendered transnational care and responsibility and ultimately affect the volunteer – returnee connection in the context of mistrust.

While the figure of the maternal guardian helped Bea and several other volunteers to gain trust among returnees, Magdalena was careful not to be seen as the 'good auntie' who was just giving away money. She wanted to avoid the 'negative' associations of femininity, which she thought would make her look naive and infantilise Dewe. She was critical of other volunteers who called Senegalese migrant men their 'Schützlinge' (protégées). She saw these volunteers at the risk of being patronizing and reinforcing neo-colonial tendencies towards returnees by employing rescue narratives. She did not want to be a naive 'Gutmensch' (do-gooder) who was uncritical and did unnecessary work. Nevertheless, her organization benefited from beneficiaries displaying happiness, gratitude and hope while highlighting Senegal's and returnees' potential as this improved the organization's ability to raise funds.

Volunteers such as Bea attained trustworthiness among returnees through perceived genuine care, naturalized feminized caring capabilities and her tendency to remain silent. Whereas Monika gained both credibility and suspicion by being vocal, fixing things and knowing people within various organizations. For Monika, this often resulted in putting in significant emotion work in interpersonal relationships with returnees and organizations as her position was ambiguous and needed more explanation as she was collaborating with suspected organizations. Her knowledge of people in organizations, such as Ms. Müller, shows that relationships between people and institutions are often personal and involve constant care and negotiation. Monika stimulated interaction and mediated between organizations and returnees when things went wrong, as in the case of Idrissa's business plan. Monika's actions helped build trust but also created dependency, as returnees needed backing from her or other volunteers to be taken seriously. The latter relates to the highly unequal power field in which these relationships take place: while volunteers could travel back and forth between Germany and Senegal, returnees were very unlikely able to do so.

While ambiguity and mistrust are often associated with increased emotion work (Zapf, 2002), the cases of Magdalena and Bea show that, when mistrust was accepted as part of

the relationship, expectations were lowered, which helped to defuse emotional tension. Overall, multidirectional feelings of mistrust, hopefulness, deep acting of 'genuine care', responsibility and guilt are entangled with the volunteers' wish to safeguard Senegalese returnees' well-being.

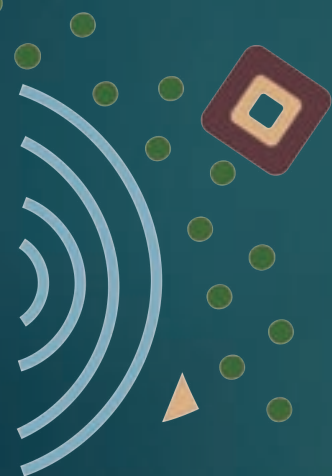
5.4. Conclusions

Deportation and return are highly sensitive and politicized issues where emotions and affect figure prominently. In the return migration industry from Europe to West Africa, an affect that seems ever-present but seldom analyzed is mistrust. In this article, I explore how female German volunteers provide an entry point to understanding the complexity and nuances of multidirectional mistrust. I argue that these volunteers occupy an ambiguous position in relation to perceived power structures in the context of return and deportation. Collaborations, between elderly female German volunteers and mostly young Senegalese male returnees, are under public scrutiny in both Senegal and Germany due to lingering notions about gender, sexuality, neo-colonialism and the perceived need to protect women from being overly emotional and naive (Maskens, 2015; Andrikopoulos, 2019). At the same time, femininity functions to activate discourses related to compassion, 'genuine care' and the maternal figure, which can help gain the trust of institutions, male returnees, volunteers and donors.

This article contributes to literature on deportation and return migration by focusing on female volunteers – who have long-term transnational relations with returnees but have not been investigated in previous research. I analyze how these volunteers engage in emotion work to smooth connections among returnees, return organizations and donors. Through multi-sited fieldwork in Senegal and Germany, I show how volunteers are intermediaries who become part of the landscape of deportation and return and who shape it by connecting returnees to organizations, guide them in their business and provide them with individual support. Mistrust towards existing official state-sponsored organizations can strengthen trust between volunteers and returnees or between volunteers. Yet other times, it weakens this trust.

Theoretically, this article shows how multidirectional mistrust can trigger emotion work, foster opportunities, and create new or strengthen existing transnational relationships – also beyond familial or institutional connections. Relationships do not have to end when multidirectional mistrust arises. Yet, it is relevant to consider the social dynamics that mistrust produces and the gendered dimension it entails. To further advance the study of deportation and return, scholars should investigate effects of multidirectional

mistrust among various actors and over longer time spans. To increase our understanding of transnational connections and the various actors involved in return migration – including citizens of so-called destination countries – research should continue to focus on tensions, ambiguities and the often underestimated and invisible emotion work, such as outside the official institutional infrastructure of return. As the analysis of volunteers in this article showed, engaging in a context characterized by considerable mistrust is not without risks and frustrations, but mistrust can itself create renewed energy and relations.



Chapter 6

Discussion and conclusions

6.1. Introduction

The central aim of this dissertation has been to understand how, after an aborted migration project, men who migrated to Europe position themselves on their return to Senegal. Migration can offer pathways towards economic prosperity and the means to achieve higher social status for migrants, particularly men, and their families. Yet, migration can also lead to stigmatization and suffering when migratory ambitions go unfulfilled. Most studies of deportation and return focus on what happens within the national borders of the departing and returning countries or on institutions implementing return programs. This dissertation adds to this literature by investigating the lived experiences of Senegalese migrant men and their transnational connections.

The dissertation is based on a year of ethnographic research, started and conducted mostly in Senegal, with Senegalese returnee men. Focusing on masculinity and paying specific attention to how men narrate and perform their return has revealed unforeseen transnational connections and affective dimensions in the process of deportation and return. I nuance our understanding of migrant masculinities and demonstrate how returning men at times contest and at other times reaffirm understandings of African migrant masculinities present in Senegalese society and in European discourses. As such, this dissertation contributes to recent literature that ethnographically examines the social and gendered implications of deportation and return and goes beyond the policy-oriented research focus previously present in return and deportation studies.

The thesis is part of a broader shift in return and deportation studies that seeks to include a wider range of places, including the so-called country of origin, which has not often been the focus (but see e.g. Khosravi, 2017). Deportation and return impact people in multiple places. A multi-sited and relational research design that encompassed both Senegal and Germany allowed the incorporation of multiple actors – including the German volunteers who supported migrant men after their return, people in the organizational structures they encountered, as well as friends and family members in different locations. This multi-sited approach provides deeper understanding of the workings of transnational relationships from the point of view of different actors in research on migration and masculinity. In addition, it adds to knowledge concerning migrants' experiences abroad and in Senegal. Below, I summarize the main findings of the empirical chapters. I then discuss the theoretical and conceptual relevance and implications of my results. Finally, I suggest avenues for further research.

6.2. Summary of the main findings in the empirical chapters

6.2.1. Performing return: balancing success, failure and silence

In the first empirical chapter, I examine the multifaceted experiences and performative narrative acts of male returnees to Senegal. I show that not all deportation has to result in a loss of masculine status, as returnees are able to move beyond stereotypical ideas that cast them as victims or criminals and can present their return as a success. By focusing on deportability rather than deportation and eschewing the dubious distinction between forced and voluntary return, I show how migrants who would typically be in opposite categories—an illegalized pirogue migrant and a highly educated legal migrant—behave at times in a similar fashion to oppose stereotypes upon their return. Several returnees perform a successful return despite having faced numerous hurdles, and despite the pain felt when their migration projects are aborted. This helps them to feel that they belong to Senegalese society, to create meaning and to assert agency.

The two men discussed in the first empirical chapter together exemplify four forms of agency I found among my participants. First, they engage in acts of continuity and stability (Mahmood, 2001) concerning normative models of Senegalese masculinity that are being reinforced (Butler, 1988). Secondly, they engage in acts of performative ‘self-distance’ in relation to other migrants and the stereotypical image of the deportee (Häkli et al., 2017). Third, one of the men speaks out in public: he shows his awareness of shared grievances and embodies the possibility of a collective performativity of resistance or ‘rupture’ with the norms of the migration regime (Butler, 1988, 2009, 2015). Finally, they express their agency through ambiguity and practices of silence. There are times and places both in the public and the private sphere when keeping silent is preferable. Participants and their families frequently used performative practices of silence and secrecy to control information about their migration endeavors. Previous researchers have identified agentic practices of discretion, ambiguity and silence in diverse return settings (e.g., Alpes 2012; Schultz, 2021; Schuster and Majidi, 2015). I have expanded on this research by separating the functions of self-silencing, imposed silence, and public secrecy, by looking into the various forms of agency that exists.

6.2.2. Challenging moralizing and racializing discourses in European marriage migration through return

In the second empirical chapter, I focus on migrant men in relation to marriage. State actors in the Global North closely monitor marriages that migrants seek to enter, with the view that migrants marry mainly to obtain the paperwork that will allow them to reside

legally abroad. The effects on migrants of admission policies relating to marriage have been the subject of extensive research, and the challenges and potential vulnerabilities that migrating men encounter in relation to marriage migration are starting to be documented in research on migrant masculinities (Charsley, 2005; Gallo, 2006; Hoogenraad, 2021; Leutloff-Grandits, 2021). I expand on these studies by looking at the impact of European discourses about marriage migration in the country of return.

Black migrant men are frequently portrayed in European discourses and in migration policy as opportunistic and as seeking European citizenship through marriages of convenience. These prejudices are challenged by the two cases in this chapter, which shed light on how men assert dignified masculinity in Senegal. The men in this chapter discursively restore their dignity by explaining that although they had the opportunity to stay in Europe through marriage, they decided not to marry and face the risk of deportation. In the stories they narrate, they do not marry or do not stay married in all circumstances. I argue that it is through their narrations and performances of non-marriage or divorce that men who return when their migration projects are aborted can capitalize on their return and demonstrate their morality. By returning to Senegal, they defy European racist stereotypes about violent promiscuous black Muslim men. They retain their masculinity by reversing the stereotypes about dangerous men and portraying themselves as responsible and moral in relation to other migrant men and white women. At the same time, they reinforce moral hierarchies about genuine love and marriage.

The stories of people who have broken up with their partners and moved back home, or who did not follow a path of marriage migration, are frequently hidden because the majority of research on marriage migration occurs in Europe. We thus know little about how migrants challenge European discourses by returning. By studying these narratives and performances, I highlight the potentially contradictory roles men (and others) play after return and reflect upon power hierarchies within intimate relationships. Theoretically, I link hitherto distinct literatures on marriage migration and migrant masculinities to literature on return and deportation.

6.2.3. Transnational connections and emotion work by German volunteers in a context of mistrust

In the last empirical chapter, I explore the relationship between masculinity and affect by following transnational connections between Senegalese returnees and volunteers in Germany. Volunteers in the Global North may have long-standing transnational relationships with returnees but do not feature in most academic studies on return.

Throughout fieldwork in Senegal, I learned that German female volunteers could be important sources of both emotional and financial support for male returnees. In addition, I observed that mistrust seems to be an emotion that is continuously present, though this, too, is rarely examined in the literature on deportation and return.

The chapter focuses on the 'emotion work' of female German volunteers, their deliberate efforts to influence or manage emotions in others or themselves (Hochschild, 1979: 561). The women engage in a range of activities concerned with enhancing the emotional well-being of men in Senegal and providing emotional support. They work to maintain positive relationships, address problems, offer praise, and share inner thoughts and feelings. The emotion work they do also involves fostering relationships between returnees, return organizations and donors, and sometimes they establish organizations and businesses together with returnees. These German volunteers become part of the deportation and return landscape and can help returnees to fulfill hegemonic norms of masculinity in Senegal.

Based on multi-sited ethnographic fieldwork with a partly matched sample of Senegalese returnee men, German volunteers offer insight into the complexities of mistrust in the context of return and deportation in West Africa. Volunteers can become part of the deportation and return landscape and shape it by establishing organizations and businesses together with returnees and providing individual economic and emotional support to returnees through longstanding transnational relationships. Participating in a context marked by significant mistrust carries risks and frustrations, but I also show how mistrust itself can foster new relationships and energy. Connections do not have to end when mistrust arises from multiple directions. Mistrust gives rise to three seemingly differing dynamics, which together show how relationships involve a constant process of achievement, negotiation and failure (see Alpes, 2017b; Bachelet, 2019; Schapendonk, 2015). First, a lack of recognition by official support organizations of the emotion work of the German women and the lingering mistrust that develops can intensify the relations between volunteers and returnees by creating a feeling that they have to rely on each other. Second, some mistrust and ambiguity between volunteers and returnees can lessen the need for emotion work as expectations are lowered. Finally, mistrust can also improve collaborations between migrants, volunteers and organizations working on return, even helping to increase trust in some contexts, as volunteers act as intermediaries between the various parties. Overall, the chapter shows that researchers need to explore the affective dimension, in the context of deportation and return, including but also beyond the extended family.

6.3. Broader theoretical contributions: relevance and implications

Overall, the performativity and relational lens I take in this dissertation has allowed me to make three main theoretical contributions. First, I improve our understanding of how performative actions, narratives and practices co-create migrant men's experiences and enable the returning men to be agentic. Second, I demonstrate the importance of a transnational approach by identifying how discourses travel and shape the performativity and narrative practices of returnees and by exploring the various support networks that extend beyond the family or state-financed organizations. Third, I show the importance of the affective dimension of return, from the role emotions play in the moral assumptions of European migration management discourses, to the 'emotion work' that helps shape the experiences of deportation and return of Senegalese men and those around them in Senegal as well as transnationally.

6.3.1. Using performativity and narrations to understand masculinities after return and deportation

My theoretical starting point, Butler's theory that subjectivity is performative, allowed me to analyze the construction of migrant men's subjectivity through their narratives and practices. Despite the structural limitations facing them, I reveal the agency of migrant men and their relation to categorizations after return.

Previous studies of masculinities and migration in West Africa have shown how migration opens up avenues to increase masculine status (Kleinman, 2016; Ludl, 2008; Prothmann, 2018) or how men can find themselves under pressure after return if they are unable to fulfill hegemonic masculine ideals (Conrad Suso, 2020; Schultz, 2021). I extend the existing literature by showing how hegemonic ideals about masculinity can both put pressure but also empower men after return. Focusing on masculinities illuminates not only paradoxes of sociality, but also the divergence as well as convergence between hegemonic discourses and everyday practices. I thus show how returned men and their surroundings, adopt various strategies to steer their lives in desirable ways. By speaking up about their experiences of deportation, by performing and narrating their return as desirable or by questioning other migrants' morality and decisions to stay in Europe, they both question and affirm hegemonic masculine norms in line with their interests and/or of their families. But migrant men who do not openly question power inequalities or the masculinity of others also exercise agency in different ways. They do so by keeping silent, continuing their migration trajectories or by seeking out or keeping up transnational connections in Europe. Others decide to comply with the migration regime to receive at least some financial support or to have some

control over the timing of their return or over their own feelings about what it means to be a dignified man.

Practices of silence are a crucial element of the ways Senegalese men express agency. Exploring agentic practices of silence helps to increase understanding of post-deportation and return experiences. Practices of silence have often been neglected, though in various return settings, researchers have recognized its importance (see, for example, Alpes, 2012; Schultz, 2021; Schuster and Majidi 2015). I expand on this research and using the lens of performativity and ethnographic methods enabled me to see how men and their families use *sutura* to perform their return. *Sutura*, a Wolof term, refers to the way people protect information about the household, its residents and the extended family and ensure the reproduction of an honorable life (Pfeil, 2020). It involves practices of active self-silencing, public concealment and of being silenced by others. Analyzing only narrations, i.e. what people say, would have made analyzing *sutura* much more difficult, as people do not talk about it. Yet, by taking a performative approach to return and using ethnographic methods in which observations are crucial, these different narrations and performances could come forward. The emphasis on *sutura* as performative also in relation to experiences of migration and my position as researcher were thus important to develop a nuanced understanding about the position of returning men.

Migration to Europe affects men and their families and networks in various ways. Economic motivations for migration may be important, but there is more to international migration than just seeking citizenship or economic benefits. Masculinity also matters. My work reveals when, how and why men actively adopt or challenge hegemonic ideals about masculinity in Senegal. I also show how ideals of masculinity and migration in Senegal are inherently transnational phenomena and do not stop at the borders of nation states, a point on which I elaborate below.

6.3.2. Seeing the country of migration and return as one social field: a transnational and multi-sited fieldwork approach

Starting my research in the country of return and then extending my research to Europe allowed me to follow connections and relationships and collect data from multiple locations. This gave insights into the role of transnational social networks and the complex dynamics therein. I show how the often-stereotypical discourses about African migrant men present in Europe also travel and can shape how returnees perform their masculinity in Senegal.

Return and deportation are often studied from either the perspective of the country of migration or the country of return. The two are rarely brought together into one social field (but see Drotbohm and Hasselberg, 2015 on the forced connections between various actors in the deportation corridor; Rodkey, 2018 on transnational survival). By going beyond one nation state, I was able to analyze how maintaining transnational connections to a former country of residence can help returnees deal with the adversity they face after returning, as well as serving as a reminder of the person they once were and the opportunities they had (see also Golash-Boza, 2014; Khosravi, 2017). Although transnational migration scholars have shown the importance of looking beyond the nation state as a unit of analysis and how everyday life can transcend national borders (see e.g. Mazzucato et al., 2004; Wimmer and Glick Schiller, 2002), and they have also shown the importance of family networks after return (see Wanki et al., 2022) and the potential and limitations of state-induced support programs (Kuschminder, 2017; Lietaert et al., 2014), few studies on return and deportation consider the role of broader social networks. I show how social networks beyond the family and outside of the country people are returned to can be important to returnees. An example of this are the emotional and financial connections that exist between returnees and German volunteers. These connections complement and shape what family networks and state-financed organizations provide, but they can also lead to new dilemmas and questions (see 6.2.3). Transnational connections can be diverse and they can continue long after return.

A transnational approach was also important in understanding that both European and Senegalese discourses on black migrant masculinity shape the way returnees perform in front of their Senegalese and German connections as well as in front of me as a female European researcher. In a transnational sphere, gender interactions, including masculinities, are altered and transformed (Sinatti, 2014). I show that ideas about black migrant men present in European discourses and in laws regarding marriage continue to play a role after return. These returnees push back against stereotypical European discourses of hypersexualized or criminal African men as well as politicized framings of migration.

Migration scholars have outlined how using state terminology as ‘deportee’, and ‘voluntary returnee’ contain the risk of reproducing nation state logics and hegemonic power structures (Wyss and Dahinden, 2022). By adopting a transnational lens, doing multi-sited fieldwork and using De Genova’s (2002) term of ‘deportability’ as a starting point

for the selection of my participants, I was able to follow how politicized terminology about return, deportation and removal can change in different locations and contexts. Having information and narrations from different localities allowed me to observe subtle changes in meaning after return to Senegal and the ways Senegalese men adapt, respond, question and make use of politicized categories present in European migration management practices, outside Europe. A transnational approach also encourages a longitudinal perspective in which a man's move to the country of return can be seen as one phase of a complicated mobility trajectory (see also Schapendonk and Steel, 2014; van Geel and Mazzucato, 2018; Mazzucato et al., 2022) rather than as the end of the migration cycle. The intricacies of returnees' stories and the agentic components within their performances and narrations come to the fore when you allow for the possibility that someone can migrate and return several times in different politicized categories and analyze how narrations evolve in different contexts.

6.3.3. The affective dimensions in return and deportation

Return and deportation have become an important part of the migration policy of European States, as well as one of the most emotionally charged governmental practices of current times. This dissertation argues for the importance of taking affect and emotion seriously in the context of deportation and return. I make an original contribution to studies of deportation and return by exploring how affective practices matters in relation to the experiences, discourses and transnational interactions of Senegalese male returnees. Migration management relies not just on rules and procedures but also on affect, while affect is also crucial in the way returnees aim to rectify hierarchies and inequalities.

Previous research shows the affective consequences of deportation and return, including feelings of shame, embarrassment, anxiety, pain and hope (Kleist, 2017b; Plambech, 2018). In chapter three, I extended the literature by paying particular attention to how migrant men relate their masculinities to these emotions, by analyzing also less extreme cases of suffering and pain in the context of deportation. I show the pain and disappointment migrant men experience, and the way they express this through their inability to fulfill their masculine role as breadwinner for their families. In addition to sharing their affective states, men also attempt to stop emotions from circulating by keeping silent about their experiences in Senegal and the conditions of their return. Often, they maintain silence in collusion with their families. But affective connections beyond the family are also important. For the informal transnational support provided by volunteers in Germany, feelings of care, connection and trust are crucial. Feelings

of skepticism towards institutions also influence interactions with volunteers and create dynamics of their own. I thus extend previous research by exploring the affective dynamics between various parties *after* return as opposed to the way affect circulates across borders within transnational families (e.g. Anschütz, 2022; Cole and Groes, 2016) or how it can influence a person's migratory trajectory and preparedness for return (see e.g. Hernández-Carretero, 2017).

One of the affects that figures in discourses and practices, including institutional and legal discourses regulating migration and return, is mistrust. It figures in multiple directions. As I discuss in the first empirical chapter, people in Senegal may suspect returnees of criminality or unethical behavior, which encourages practices of *sutura* and silence to develop. In the second empirical chapter, mistrust is present in discourses about romantic relationships non-Europeans residents have with European residents and citizens. The assumption exists that non-European residents do not marry out of love and care but for materialistic gain and a residence visa (Maskens, 2015). This assumption even shapes European migration policies but can also influence the position of returnees. It is important that we take into account narrations about intimacy and love, which few studies investigate, in particular from the perspective of those who did not marry in Europe or ended their relationships, once they left Europe. This is an important gap to address if we aim to understand whether and when migrants leave Europe and at what expense. Furthermore, it adds nuance and complexity to a debate that has been influenced by mainly economic and stereotypical assumptions about motivations for international migration, regarding men coming to Europe by themselves without a family.

6.4. Limitations and avenues for further research

In the dissertation I focused on the relationships of returning men mainly from the perspective of the returning men themselves. Future research could pay more attention to care practices within the family and to relationships between returnees, their parents, siblings and other family members and include them in the focus of the research. Exploring the position of the migrant men within the family –whether they are the first son or not, the number of brothers and sisters they have in Senegal or abroad, their interactions with potential marriage partners, their care obligations including towards children and elderly – could shed more light on the complexities and possibilities of performing masculinities after return. I found that female family members could shape men's experiences of return, but my data on their specific perspective could be extended. Women were harder to reach for me, partly due to their position in the family, language, my status as a western

woman, and expectations about keeping silent in line with practices of *sutura*. But family dynamics are undoubtedly important to understanding the nature of return.

Future research might include a more diverse sample than I did in this dissertation, for instance by including more variety in terms of age, gender, sexuality and pays more attention to ethnic differences. I focused on male returnees in urban areas who were young when they first left Senegal. As intersectional researchers have shown, socially constructed dimensions of difference such as race, gender, age, sexuality, nationality and class intersect and co-create unequal realities (see e.g. Cleton, 2022; Crenshaw, 1991; Misra et al., 2021; Yuval-Davis, 2006). While I took into consideration intersectional differences of participants, including even more diversity of participants can help to advance understandings of return experiences and shed light on the dynamic nuances of power. For instance, concerning intimate relationships and the European migration regime, some participants in this study were in a relationship with a partner who held a European residence permit but the couple lived in Senegal. Future research should acknowledge the impact of policies in various localities and could explore, for example, what inspires couples with mixed legal status to reside in Senegal, how couples with mixed legal status deal with restrictive European family reunification laws, and how non-migrant Senegalese family members and others respond to a couple's decision to live in Senegal.

A related limitation of this study was its geographical focus. I argue that it is important to look beyond Europe, yet the transnational connections I followed were connections to Europe. When I found that some participants had moved to other countries after returning from Europe and had transnational connections to locations beyond Europe, I did not analyze this further, given the scope of my research. The reasons were practical: adding a further location was not feasible beyond Germany and Senegal given the limited duration resources of my project. An exploration of transnational networks and mobility beyond Europe would, however, can add nuance to understandings of people's desires and provide insights into their reasons for migrating to other destination countries.

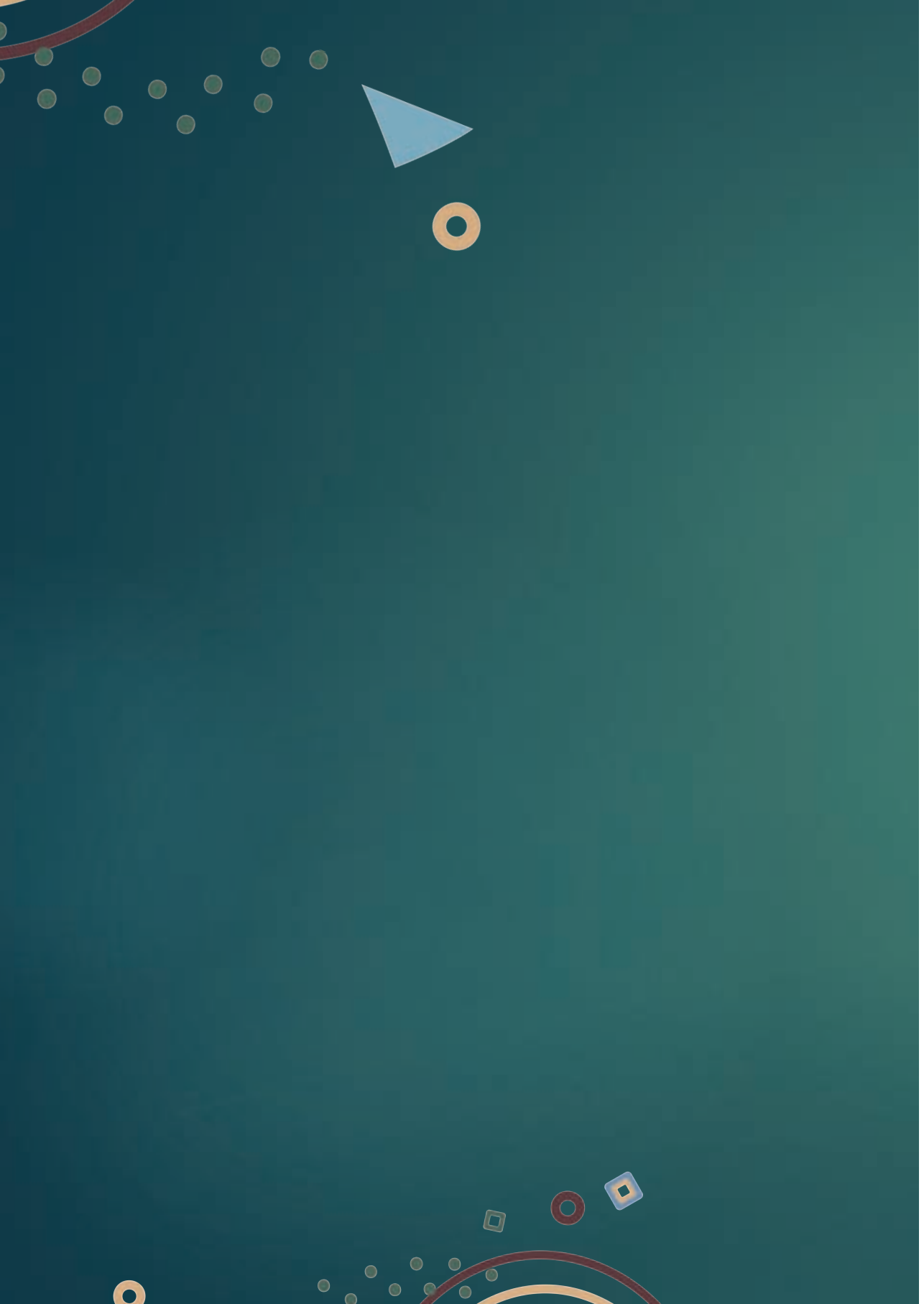
If limited geographically, my research was also limited in time and the timing matters in narrations. The participants in this dissertation returned to Senegal at different times and the timing and duration since their return varied. I followed several for over some years. Yet, the chapters in this dissertation analyze experiences that take place at a particular moment in time. It would be interesting to follow up with these participants again at a later moment in time, to see how participants' experiences and relationships with significant

people develop or change. Even longer-term research on tensions, ambiguities and emotion work would also help to increase understandings of transnational connections and the various actors involved in return migration, including citizens in so-called destination countries.

Researching return is a delicate endeavour that requires emotional sensitivity on the part of researchers and knowledge about where to stop. In this dissertation, I paid particular attention to the affective dimension of return and deportation. I came across various emotions experienced by returnees, their family members, volunteers and at times myself. In the methodological chapter, I discuss my positionality. Yet, this is something one might further develop to understand where and how positionality and feelings play out in research settings. In addition, affects and emotions come into being through interaction with norms and values. In the case of the majority of the participants in this study, the religious and spiritual aspect is here important. Islamic understandings about the world informed their affective experiences, and spiritual feelings of suffering, trust and faith in a good ending play a role in their narrations and practices, as various participants indicated. Further research could pay more attention to this religious and spiritual dimension and explore the role of spiritual leaders in deportation and return. Religion has been examined in studies about migration towards and within Europe (Babou, 2021; Kaag, 2013; Lucht, 2011), but less so in the case of return migration.

Despite its limitations, this study adds theoretically, conceptually and methodologically to the study of return and deportation. Taking a multi-sited and ethnographic approach and examining the highly unequal social field of migration, it delves into the intricate lives of returning males and how they confront, uphold, resist and adapt beliefs about black migrant masculinities after aborting their migration projects. The multi-sited approach allowed for a processual examination of return experiences in Senegal and of transnational links to Germany. This enabled me to portray the performative, narrative and affective components of return and deportation and opened up important questions for further research. Considering the current political climate in which migrants and deportees are portrayed as security threats and are part of geopolitical deals between European and other states, it is urgent that researchers keep on delving into the ways single brown and black men in particular are at the forefront of practices of banishment and exclusion. Yet, as this thesis shows, discourses allow some room to manoeuvre, and it takes work to uphold discursive constructions and legitimize deportability. By adding to knowledge on masculinities in the context of deportation and return, and by combing

different fields of literature on migration, I have supplied some of the ingredients that might hopefully be used to bring transformative change in simplified and homogenizing perspectives concerning migrant men.



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Appendices

Appendices

A. Overview of the times and places where field research was conducted

Month and year	Aim	Location	Stay	Time
January 2017	Preliminary fieldwork & language training in preparation for the NWO research proposal.	Senegal (Dakar and Thies)	Host family	3,5 weeks
May 2018	Exploring the field & language training	Senegal (Dakar and Thies)	Host family	5 weeks
October – mid November 2018	Fieldwork, establishing links and mapping returnees	Senegal (Dakar, Thies, Touba)	Host family & independent stay	6 weeks
February – April 2019	Fieldwork, (re)-establishing links, interviews, participant observation	Senegal (Dakar, Thies, Sine Saloum, Casamace, Touba)	Independent stays, stays with participants	12,5 weeks
June – August 2019	Fieldwork	Senegal (Dakar, Thies)	Independent stays	10 weeks
October 2020	Fieldwork with German volunteers and connections of Senegalese returnees	Germany ¹²	Independent stays & with participants	2 weeks
December 2020 – March 2021	Fieldwork, revisiting established connections & sharing first results	Senegal (Dakar, Thies, Casamace, Sine Saloum)	Independent stay & stays with participants	13 weeks

¹²The exact area is left out in order to protect the anonymity of the participants.

B. Overview of participants in Senegal

	Age ¹³	Age of leaving Senegal	Duration stay(s) abroad	Main place of residence	Back in Senegal ¹⁴	Means of last return from EU	Countries visited ¹⁵	Last return coming from	Marital status ¹⁶	Interactions ¹⁷
1 ¹⁸	M 35-45	25-35	1-5 years	Dakar	5-10 years	Deportation	France, Gambia	Gambia	M, D, M	SI (6), O (>20)
2	M 45-55	25-35	1-5 years	Thies	10-15 years	Deportation	Italy	Italy	M	SI (2)
3	M 35-45	25-35 years	10-15 years	Thies	5-10 years	Unspecified	France, Italy	Italy	M	SI (1)
4	M 35-45 years	25-35 years	5-10 years	Thies	1-5 years	Unspecified	Spain, France, Iran	Spain	M	SI (2), IC (2), O (3)
5	M >55 years	25-35 years	5-10 years	Thies/ Dakar	>20 years	Deportation	Canada, France	France	-	SI (1), IC (2), O (1)
6	M 35-45 years	25-35 years	1-5 years	Dakar	5-10 years	Unspecified	Italy, France	Italy	M	IC (2)
7	M 25-35 years	25-35	1-5 years	Dakar	1-5 years	Own means	Netherlands, Sweden, Norway, Belgium, Switzerland	Switzerland	D, M, W	SI (1), IC (9), O (9)
8	M 45-55 years	25-35 years	10-15 years	Dakar	5-10 years	Unspecified	Italy, France, various other countries in Europe	Italy	M	SI (1), IC (2), O (1)
9	M 25-35 years	20-25 years	10-15 years	Dakar/ Thies	1-5 years	AVRR/ Deportation	Spain, Belgium, Germany	Belgium	S	SI (1), IC (5), O (6)

¹³ At the time of the first meeting with the author

¹⁴ At the time of the first meeting with the author

¹⁵ These are the countries I know of, more countries could have been visited

¹⁶ S = Never married M = married, D = divorced, W = widowed. I do not differentiate between a religious or civil marriage in this table. If there are several of meeting them.

¹⁷ SI = Interview (recorded), IC = informal conversation, O = observation and/or activity together. These interactions exclude digital interactions, for instance over the phone or via social media.

¹⁸ In case a participant is **bold** the participant is a core participant of the research.



B. Continued

	Age ¹³	Age of leaving Senegal	Duration stay(s) abroad	Main place of residence	Back in Senegal ¹⁴	Means of last return from EU	Countries visited ¹⁵	Last return coming from	Marital status ¹⁶	Interactions ¹⁷
10	M	45-55 years	20-25 years	5-10 years	Touba/ Dakar	10-15 years	Unspecified	Italy	M	IC*(1) O (1),
11	M	25-35	<20 years	-	Thies	1-5 years	Own means	Spain, Italy, Saudi Arabia, several African countries	M	IC (2), O(1)
12	M	35-45	25-35	5-10 years	Dakar/ Thies	1-5 years	Own means (travels back and forth)	France, Italy	M	SI (2), IC (3), O (3)
13	M	35-45 years	25-35	<1 year	Dakar / Thies	10-15 years	Deportation	Spain	M	SI* ¹⁹ (1)
14	M	45-55 years	45-55 years	<1 year	Dakar	5-10 years	Deportation	Spain	M	SI* (1)
15	F	45-55 years	25-35	1-5 years	Thies/ Dakar	-	Own means	France, Netherlands, United States	M	SI (1), IC (1)
16	F	25-35 years	<20	1-5 years	Dakar	5-10 years	Own means	France	M	SI (1)
17	M	35-45	25-35	10-15 years	Dakar	1-5 years	AVRR	Greece, Austria, Macedonia, Hungary, Germany, Italy	M	SI (4), CI (5), O (8)
18	M	25-34	20-25 years	10-15 years	Dakar	1-5 years	Unspecified, Travels back and forth	Italy, France, Mali, South Africa, Gabon.	M	SI (1)*
19	M	25-35 years	20-25 years	10-15 years	Dakar/ Sine Saloum	<1 year	Deportation	Morocco, Spain, Germany	S	SI (10), O(17)
20	F	25-35 years	20-25 years	1-5 years	Dakar	1-5 years	Own means	France, Mauritania	S	IC (5), O (3)
21	M	35-45 years	<20 years	20-25 years	Dakar/ Thies	1-5 years	Own means	France, Italy	M, W	IC (2), SI (1), O (2)

¹⁹ In case a * is added it means that the interview or conversation was conducted with a help of a translator

B. Continued

	Age ¹³	Age of leaving Senegal	Duration stay(s) abroad	Main place of residence	Back in Senegal ¹⁴	Means of last return from EU	Countries visited ¹⁵	Last return coming from	Marital status ¹⁶	Interactions ¹⁷
22	M	35-45 years	10-15 years	Dakar/ Touba	< 1 year	Deportation	France, Italy, Germany	Germany	M	IC (2)*
23	M	35-45 years	1-5 years	Dakar/ Louga	< 1 year	AVRR	Turkey, Greece, Austria, Germany	Germany	M	IC (2), O(2)
24	M	25-35 years	5-10 years	Dakar	<1 year	Deportation	Libya, Italy, Germany	Germany	S	SI, (1) IC (8), O (8)
25	M	45-55 years	10-15 years	Dakar/ Djournbell	5-10 years	AVRR	Switzerland, Germany, Belgium, Netherlands, Benin, Gabon	Gabon	M, D, M	IC (5), O(5)
26	M	35-45 years	10-15 years	Touba	1-5 years	AVRR	Spain, Germany, Belgium, Germany, Mauritania	Belgium	M	IC (1), O (1)
27	M	35-45 years	10-15 years	Dakar	<1 year	Deportation	Turkey, Greece, Luxembourg, Germany	Germany	D	SI (2), IC (13) O (13)
28	M	25-35 years	10-15 years	Dakar/ Casamace	< 1 year	Deportation	Turkey, Greece, Germany	Germany	S	SI (6), O (>20)
29	M	35-45 years	10-15 years	Touba	< 1 year	Deportation	Germany, Greece	Germany	M	IC (2), O (1)
30	M	>55 years	20-25 years	Dakar	< 1 year	AVRR	France, Germany	Germany	M, D, M, D	SI, IC (3), O (3)
31	M	45-55 years	10-15 years	Casamace	15-20 years	Unspecified	France, Italy	unspecified	M	SI (1)
32	M	35-45 years	< 20 years	Dakar	-	Unspecified	Spain, Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland	Netherlands	M, D	IC (2)
33	M	25-35 years old	5-10 years	Thies/ Casamace	< 1 year	AVRR	Italy, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Libya	Italy	M	IC (3), O (2)



B. Continued

	Age ¹³	Age of leaving Senegal	Duration stay(s) abroad	Main place of residence	Back in Senegal ¹⁴	Means of last return from EU	Countries visited ¹⁵	Last return coming from	Marital status ¹⁶	Interactions ¹⁷
34	M	>55 years	20-25 years	Casamace	1-5 years	Deportation	Sierra Leone, Belgium, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Italy	Italy	M, D	SI (1), IC (1)
35	M	45-55 years	20-25 years	Casamace	1-5 years	AVRR	France, Germany	Germany	M	IC (1), O (2)
36	M	35-45 years	10-15 years	Casamace	1-5 years	Unspecified	Italy, France, Belgium	Italy	-	SI (1), IC (3), O (2)
37	M	>55 years	1-5 years	Dakar	>20 years	Deportation	Germany	Germany	M	IC (2), O (1)
38	M	35-45 years	5-10 years	Dakar / Sine Saloum	1-5 years	Deportation	Spain, Mauritania Morocco, Germany	Germany	M	SI (1), IC (3) O (3)
39	M	25-35 years	10-15 years	Thies / Casamace	1-5 years	AVRR/ deportation	France	France	M	SI (2), IC, O (3)
40	M	25-35	1-5 years	Dakar	1-5 years	AVRR	France, Germany	Germany	M	IC (1), O (1)
41	M	25-35 years	5-10 years	Dakar	Goes back and forth	Own means	Italy, Netherlands, Belgium	Netherlands	S	IC (5), O (4)
42	M	25-35 years	<1 year	Dakar	5-10 years	Unspecified	France	France	S	IC (6), O (6)
43	F	35-45 years	-	Dakar	<1 year	Unspecified	Spain	Spain	-	IC (2), O (2)
44	F	45-55 years	20-25 years	Dakar/Thies	1-5 years	Unspecified	Italy	Italy	M	SI (1)
45	M	35-45 years	10-15 years	Dakar	Goes back and forth	Own means	Spain, Italy	Italy	M	IC (1), O (1)

C. Overview of participants based in Germany in connection with returnees in Senegal

	Age	Shared contact with returnee(s) in Senegal	Times travelled to Senegal	Met with author in Senegal	Marital status	Interactions
1.	60-70	Yes	>5	Yes	D	SI (2), IC(8), O(8)
2.	60-70	Yes	0	No	M	IC(3), O(2)
3.	60-70	No	0	No	M	SI (1), IC(2)
4.	60-70	Yes	>5	Yes	M	IC (5), O(5)
5.	40-50	Yes	0	No	M	SI(1), IC(2)
6.	40-50	Yes	0	No	R	IC(2), O(1)
7.	60-70	Yes	0	No	D	IC (1)
8.	40-50	Yes	0	No	M	IC (1)
9.	60-70	Yes	>5	Yes	D	SI(2), IC(2), O(1)
10.	40-50	No	1-3	No	M	SI(1), IC(2), O(1)
11.	50-60	No	-	No	D	SI(1)
12.	50-60	Yes	1-3	No	M, D, R	SI(1), IC (1), O(1)
13.	60-70	Yes	0	No	D	SI(1)
14.	60-70	Yes	0	No	M	SI(1), IC (2)

D. English information sheet for participants



Information sheet for participants

Maastricht University in collaboration with the University of Cheick Anta Diop, Dakar

Introduction

You are invited to participate in one of the activities that is part of a PhD project that I am conducting about people such as you who (aimed to) migrated to Europe and returned to Senegal. In specific, I am interested in your experiences before, during and after migration. I would like to know more about how you have experienced coming back and the reactions of people close to you. I am particularly interested in how you think your migration experience has affected your relationships with and ideas about men and women and their marriage prospects.

Also if you, yourself did not move, but you know someone who did, you can participate. You can tell me how you experienced their absence and their coming back.

In sum, I am interested in your story and what you think is important in current life and in your future.

Voluntary participation

It is important for you to know that your participation in this project is entirely voluntary. It is your choice whether to participate or not. In case you decide not to participate in the project, this does not affect possible services or benefits you receive from NGOs, IOM, or other institutions you might work with.

Duration

A translator and I will be present in Senegal for about a year in various periods of time. In case you want to participate in the project it is possible that we will meet each other several times. This can be for an interview, or, if you agree, I can join in activities that you do, or meet your family and friends. An interview will in principle take place once and the duration will be about one to two hours. In case you and I agree to meet for a follow-up interview or another activity this is possible if we both agree to do so.

Risks

There are no risks in participating in this project. It is however possible that you may share personal or confidential information, or that you may feel uncomfortable talking about some of the topics. You do not have to answer any question if talking about it makes you uncomfortable. You are also free to abandon the project at any time. If this is case, please tell this to me, the translator or one of the scholars involved in the project.

Benefits

There will be no direct benefit to you, but your participation will help me find out more about the experiences of young men returning to Senegal especially related to their friendships and family relationships. With this information I aim to better understand what the consequences are of returning to Senegal for people who have had to return earlier than they expected. I aim to share our experiences and findings with organizations and governments who work with migrants so the needs of returnees are better addressed. This will not change your personal situation, but it could change the situation for migrants in the future. I am interested in your story and what you deem important.

Reimbursements

You will not be given any reimbursement to take part in the project.

Confidentiality

I will not share what you tell me with others. Any personal information that you will share with me will not be shared with people outside of the research team. In case I write about your story I will use a different name (pseudonym) and avoid unnecessary personal details so that no one can recognize you. Should you agree for me to record your interview, I will write it up and then delete the recording so that there is not audio trace of it.

Right to Refuse or Withdraw

You do not have to take part in this research if you do not want to. Choosing not to participate will not affect your access to services or residence permits in any way. You may stop participating in the research at any time.

Whom to Contact

If you have any questions, you can ask them now or later. If you wish to ask questions later, you may contact any of the following:

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E. French information sheet for participants



Information sheet for participants

Université de Maastricht en collaboration avec l'Université Cheikh Anta Diop, Dakar

Introduction

Vous êtes invités à participer à l'une des activités faisant partie d'un projet de doctorat que je conduis au sujet de personnes telles que vous qui (souhaitez) émigrer en Europe et rentrer au Sénégal. En particulier, je suis intéressé par vos expériences avant, pendant et après la migration. J'aimerais en savoir plus sur votre retour et les réactions de vos proches. Je suis particulièrement intéressé par la manière dont votre expérience de la migration a affecté vos relations avec les hommes et les femmes et leurs perspectives de mariage, ainsi que leurs idées.

Aussi, si vous-même n'avez pas bougé, mais que vous connaissez quelqu'un qui l'a fait, vous pouvez participer. Vous pouvez me raconter comment vous avez vécu leur absence et leur retour.

En résumé, votre histoire m'intéresse et ce que vous pensez est important dans la vie actuelle et dans votre avenir.

Participation volontaire

Il est important que vous sachiez que votre participation à ce projet est entièrement volontaire. C'est votre choix de participer ou non. Si vous décidez de ne pas participer au projet, cela n'affectera pas les services ou avantages que vous pouvez recevoir des ONG, de l'OIM ou d'autres institutions avec lesquelles vous pourriez travailler.

Durée

Le traducteur et moi-même serons présents au Sénégal pendant environ un an à différentes périodes. Si vous souhaitez participer au projet, il est possible que nous nous rencontrions plusieurs fois. Cela peut être pour une interview ou, si vous êtes d'accord, je peux participer à des activités que vous faites ou rencontrer votre famille et vos amis. Un entretien aura en principe lieu une fois et durera environ une à deux heures. Si vous et moi acceptons de nous rencontrer pour un entretien de suivi ou une autre activité, cela est possible si nous acceptons tous les deux de le faire.

Des risques

Participer à ce projet ne présente aucun risque. Il est toutefois possible que vous partagiez des informations personnelles ou confidentielles, ou que vous soyez mal à l'aise de parler de certains sujets. Vous n'avez pas à répondre à une question si le fait de parler vous met mal à l'aise. Vous êtes également libre d'abandonner le projet à tout moment. Si c'est le cas, dites-le-moi, au traducteur ou à l'un des spécialistes impliqués dans le projet.

Avantages

Il n'y aura aucun avantage direct pour vous, mais votre participation me permettra de mieux connaître les expériences des jeunes hommes qui rentrent au Sénégal, en particulier en ce qui concerne leurs amitiés et leurs relations familiales. Avec cette information, je cherche à mieux comprendre les conséquences du retour au Sénégal pour les personnes qui ont dû rentrer plus tôt que prévu. Je souhaite partager nos expériences et nos résultats avec les organisations et les gouvernements qui travaillent avec les migrants afin que les besoins des rapatriés soient mieux pris en compte. Cela ne changera pas peut être votre situation personnelle, mais cela pourrait changer la situation des migrants à l'avenir. Je suis intéressé par votre histoire et par ce que vous jugez important.

Remboursements

Vous ne recevrez aucun remboursement pour participer au projet.

Confidentialité

Je ne partagerai pas ce que vous me dites avec d'autres. Toute information personnelle que vous partagerez avec moi ne sera pas partagée avec des personnes extérieures à l'équipe de recherche. Au cas où j'écrirais sur votre histoire, j'utiliserai un nom différent (pseudonyme) et éviterai des détails personnels inutiles afin que personne ne puisse vous reconnaître. Si vous acceptez que j'enregistre votre interview, je l'écrirai, puis je supprimerai l'enregistrement de manière à ce qu'il n'en reste aucune trace audio.

Droit de refuser ou de se retirer

Vous n'êtes pas obligé de prendre part à cette recherche si vous ne le souhaitez pas. Le fait de ne pas participer n'aura aucune incidence sur votre accès aux services ou aux permis de séjour. Vous pouvez cesser de participer à la recherche à tout moment.

Qui contacter

Si vous avez des questions, vous pouvez les poser maintenant ou plus tard. Si vous souhaitez poser des questions ultérieurement, vous pouvez contacter l'une des personnes suivantes:

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English summary

People coming to Europe are often in the news and topic of conversation in political debates. But what happens to those who leave Europe? This dissertation focuses on the experiences and stories of Senegalese men who have left Europe. Their departure may be a consequence of restrictive migration policies as European states deport migrants, encourage them to leave by offering assistance with return, or make their lives so difficult in the hope that they will then leave of their own accord. Yet, it can also be a decision they themselves make because, for example, they want to start their own business in Senegal or be closer to their family and loved ones.

The central goal of this dissertation has been to understand how men who migrated to Europe position themselves upon their return to Senegal after an aborted migration project. Residence in Europe can offer migrants, particularly men, and their families pathways to economic prosperity and the means to achieve a higher social status. However, migration can also lead to stigma and pain when migration aspirations are not fulfilled. Most studies on deportation and return focus on what happens within the national borders of departing and returning countries or on organizations that implement return programs. This dissertation adds knowledge to this literature by examining the experiences and stories of Senegalese migrant men and their transnational connections after the return of these men to Senegal.

Theoretical framework

In this dissertation, I extend existing understandings about the social implications of return and deportation by investigating the experiences and stories of returning men with a ‘masculinity studies’ lens. This means that I focus on how men and their environment shape and adapt their returns within the framework of dominant forms of masculinity. In doing so, I draw on the idea that norms and ideas around masculinity are context-dependent and relational. Masculinity, as an embodied and performative gender identity, involves enacting social norms and reproducing cultural scripts and taboos. In this sense, masculinity consists of doing: how a person moves, dresses, speaks and perform their appearance.

Focusing on different forms of relational masculinities creates space to consider, in addition to the hegemonic forms of masculinity, those who do not, or do not fully, represent the dominant norm. The focus on masculinity stems from research showing that migration in Senegal is male dominated and seen as a way to grow, in particular for young men. Additionally, black or brown heterosexual men in particular are more

likely to be seen as potentially deportable by European states because they are perceived as “dangerous” and less likely to be in need of help or vulnerable than, say, women and children.

In the dissertation, I focus on those Senegalese men who left Europe for Senegal in the context of more restrictive migration policies. This means that I focus on those who did not have a European passport and depended on a temporary residence permit for legal residence in Europe. They are, for example, rejected asylum seekers, people who were (in danger) of overstaying their study, tourist or work visas or those who (would) lose their papers because of the end of a marriage. They could still be with the right papers at the time of departure, but were living with the realization that they had a precarious migration status or would soon be illegalized. Several participants in this study experienced deportations by European states or returned with so-called voluntary return programs, encouraged by European states, but this is not the case for all. This allows seeing not only the act or experience of a deportation, but the broader process of rendering a person illegalized. Although I am aware of the legal and political differences between, for example, deportation and ‘voluntary’ return, I use the terms interchangeably to indicate that the legal separation is not strictly followed by those who are the subject of this research. In this thesis I follow the concept of ‘deportability’ to indicate this blurredness of political definitions of return. In addition to the connections and interactions men have with people in Senegal, I took a transnational perspective in this dissertation, allowing for the role of transnational connections beyond extended family members to be seen in this study.

Sending people back to their so-called countries of origin is increasingly polarized, with emotions ranging from compassion for noncitizens to hatred and anger toward deportable people and those who support them. Immigration controls, rules and practices also include affective elements, and detention and deportation are often emotional experiences. The dissertation builds on and extends existing literature by describing the affective aspects of return and deportation. It pays attention to the ways in which returnees share stories and practices of success, hope, suffering, and courage to maintain and/or prove their masculinity. By doing so, I shed light on the ways in which they depend on, question, resist, and attempt to negotiate hierarchies of inequality in relation to affect and emotions.

Research design

To investigate how men who migrated to Europe position themselves upon their return to Senegal, some features of the research design are essential.

1). *Ethnographic fieldwork* of one year between 2017 and 2021 in which I spoke and followed men and their surroundings several times in order to also see change in their position after their return. I spoke to forty men who returned and of these, I followed twelve over an extended period of time by meeting them in Senegal, as well as by staying in touch digitally.

2). *Multi-sited ethnography: doing research in different places with a matched - sample*. In addition to the connections of returnees in Senegal, I was in contact with fourteen volunteers who maintained transnational connections with returned migrants in Senegal.

3). *Combining research methods*. During the long-term fieldwork, I combined participatory observation, semi-structured interviews and informal conversations physically and online. Most of the conversations took place in people's homes, in public places where people come to relax, at cultural events such as religious celebrations, naming ceremonies and marriages, at work and at organizations working with returning migrants. In addition to migrants and their connections, I interviewed thirteen employees from (international) organizations working with migrant returnees. The results were supplemented by participant observation with Senegalese who have no migration experience and Senegalese who had been to other countries.

4). *Seeing research, like any interaction as dynamic and dialogical processes*. This means that I paid attention to how the researcher's positionality might have influenced interviews and observations.

Results

By focusing on masculinity and paying specific attention to how men narrate and shape the notion of return upon returning, unforeseen transnational connections and affective dimensions in the process of deportation and return have come to light. I nuance existing ideas about migrant men and show how returning men sometimes challenge and sometimes confirm conceptions of African migrant men in Senegalese society and in European discourses. As such, this dissertation contributes to recent literature that ethnographically examines the social and gendered implications of deportation and return. Furthermore, this dissertation goes beyond the policy-oriented research focus previously present in studies of return and deportation.

In the first empirical chapter, I examine the multifaceted experiences and performative narrative acts of male returnees to Senegal. I show that not all deportation has to result in a loss of masculine status, as returnees are able to move beyond stereotypical ideas that cast them as victims or criminals and can present their return as a success. By focusing on deportability rather than deportation and eschewing the dubious distinction between forced and voluntary return, I show how migrants who would typically be in opposite categories—an illegalized pirogue migrant and a highly educated legal migrant—behave at times in a similar fashion to oppose stereotypes upon their return. Several returnees perform a successful return despite having faced numerous hurdles, and despite the pain felt when their migration projects are aborted. This helps them to feel that they belong to Senegalese society, to create meaning and to assert agency.

The second empirical chapter allows me to link literature on marriage migration and migrant masculinities with literature on return and deportation which are often studied separately. The chapter focuses on how brown and black migrant men are often portrayed as opportunists pursuing European citizenship through marriages of convenience. These prejudices are challenged by the two case studies in this chapter, which shed light on how men in Senegal assert their dignified masculinity. The men in this chapter discursively restore their dignity by explaining that although they had the chance to stay in Europe by marrying, they decided not to marry and risk deportation. In the stories they tell, they do not marry or remain married under any circumstances. I argue that it is through their narrations and performances of non-marriage or divorce that men who return when their migration projects are aborted can capitalize on their return and demonstrate their morality. By returning to Senegal, they defy European racist stereotypes about violent promiscuous brown and black Muslim men. They maintain their masculinity by reversing stereotypes about dangerous men and portraying themselves as responsible and moral toward other migrant men and white women. At the same time, they reinforce moral hierarchies about love and marriage. These stories of men who broke up with their partners and returned home, or who did not follow a marriage migration path, often remain hidden. This is because most research on marriage migration takes place in Europe.

In the third and last empirical chapter, I examine the relationship between masculinity and affect by following transnational ties between Senegalese returnees and volunteers in Germany. Volunteers in Europe may have long-term transnational relationships with returnees, but do not appear in most academic studies of return. During my fieldwork

in Senegal, I learned that German female volunteers could be important sources of both emotional and financial support for male returnees. In addition, I found that mistrust is an emotion that seems to be constantly present, although it is rarely explored in the literature on deportation and return. Based on multi-sited ethnographic fieldwork, German volunteers offer insight into the complexity of mistrust in the context of return and deportation to West Africa. Volunteers can be part of and shape the deportation and return landscape by creating organizations and businesses together with returnees and by providing individual economic and emotional support to returnees through long-term transnational relationships. Being part of a context characterized by considerable mistrust entails risks and frustrations, but mistrust itself can also spark new relationships and dynamics. More broadly, this chapter shows the importance of the affective dimension in the context of deportation and return and the possible relevance of transnational connections for migrants returning.

Broader conclusions

All in all, I extend the existing literature by showing how dominant ideals about masculinity can both empower and put pressure on men after their return. By beginning my research in the country of return and later expanding to through transnational connections to Europe, I was able to track connections and relationships and collect data in multiple locations. This provided insight into the role of informal transnational social networks and the complex dynamics within them. I show how the often-stereotypical ways of talking about African migrant men present in Europe are also relevant in Senegal and contribute to how returnees perform their masculinity in Senegal. Returned men and those around them employ various strategies to steer their lives in the desired direction. All these strategies both question dominant masculine norms but can also affirm them.

This transnational multi-sited study contributes to a more nuanced and dynamic understanding of African male returnees as well as their complex performance of masculinity in a highly unequal social field of migration. Given the current political climate in which in particular migrant men are portrayed as security threats and are included in geopolitical agreements between European and African nations, it is critical that researchers continue to investigate how single brown and black men, in particular, are at the forefront of banishment and exclusion practices. As this dissertation demonstrates, discourses allow for some flexibility, and it takes effort to maintain discursive constructs and legitimate deportability. Through my research into masculinities in the context of return and deportation, and by bringing together different fields of literature on migration

and masculinity, I aim to inspire future research to keep on questioning and investigating the implications of (European) migration policies both in countries of origin and in Europe.

Nederlandse samenvatting (Dutch summary)

Migranten die naar Europa komen zijn vaak in het nieuws en onderwerp van gesprek. Maar wat gebeurt er met hen die Europa (moeten) verlaten? In dit proefschrift staan de ervaringen en verhalen van Senegalese mannen die van Europa naar Senegal terugkeren centraal. Deze terugkeer kan een gevolg zijn van een restrictief migratiebeleid, waarin Europese staten migranten uitzetten, stimuleren om weg te gaan door assistentie te bieden met terugkeer, of hen het leven dusdanig moeilijk te maken in de hoop dat ze dan vanzelf vertrekken. Maar het kan ook een beslissing zijn die deze mannen nemen omdat zij bijvoorbeeld in Senegal een eigen bedrijf willen starten of dichter bij familie en geliefden willen zijn.

Het centrale doel van dit proefschrift is om te begrijpen hoe, na een afgebroken migratietraject, mannen die naar Europa migreerden zichzelf positioneren bij terugkeer in Senegal. Verblijf in Europa kan migranten, in het bijzonder mannen, en hun families wegen bieden naar economische welvaart en de middelen om een hogere sociale status te bereiken. Migratie kan echter ook leiden tot stigmatisering en pijn wanneer deze migratieambities niet worden vervuld. De meeste studies over uitzettingen en terugkeer richten zich op wat er gebeurt binnen de nationale grenzen van de landen van waar iemand wordt uitgezet of op organisaties die terugkeerprogramma's uitvoeren. Dit proefschrift voegt kennis toe aan deze literatuur door de ervaringen en verhalen te onderzoeken van mannelijke Senegalese migranten en hun transnationale connecties, en door met de dataverzameling te starten in Senegal in plaats van in Europa.

Theoretisch kader

De ervaringen en verhalen van deze mannen zijn bestudeerd vanuit een kader van masculiniteit. Dit betekent dat de aandacht gericht is op de manier waarop de mannen en hun omgeving hun terugkeer vormgeven en aanpassen in de het kader van dominante vormen van mannelijkheid. Masculiniteit gaat dan ook over de eigenschappen, gedragingen en rolpatronen die in de samenleving worden geassocieerd met mannen. Dit betekent dat normen en ideeën rondom mannelijkheid afhankelijk zijn van de context en relationeel zijn. Door te focussen op verschillende vormen van masculiniteit, ontstaat ruimte om naast de dominante vormen van masculiniteit, ook oog te hebben voor hen die de dominante norm niet, of niet volledig, representeren. De keuze voor de focus op mannen komt voort uit onderzoek waaruit blijkt dat migranten overwegend jong en man zijn bij vertrek uit Senegal. Daarnaast worden met name donkere mannen en mannen van kleur eerder gezien als potentieel uitzetbaar door Europese staten. Dit omdat ze

eerder kans hebben als ‘gevaarlijk’ gezien te worden en minder snel als hulpbehoevend of kwetsbaar dan bijvoorbeeld vrouwen en kinderen.

In mijn proefschrift focus ik me op diegenen die in de context van een restrictiever migratiebeleid van Europa naar Senegal vertrokken. Dit betekent dat ik me richt op hen die geen Europees paspoort hadden bij vertrek en afhankelijk waren van een tijdelijke verblijfsvergunning voor een legaal verblijf in Europa. Zij die weg gingen waren bijvoorbeeld afgewezen asielzoekers, mannen die te lang op een studie-of werkvisum (dreigen te) verblijven of bijvoorbeeld zij die vanwege het eindigen van een huwelijk hun papieren (zouden) verliezen. Zij konden op het moment van vertrek nog de juiste papieren bezitten, maar leefden met de realisatie dat ze een precare migratiestatus hadden of binnenkort geïlegaliseerd zouden zijn. Sommige mannen zijn uitgezet door Europese staten of met zogenaamde vrijwillige terugkeerprogramma’s gestimuleerd terug te gaan door Europese staten.

Hoewel ik me bewust ben van de wettelijke en politieke verschillen tussen bijvoorbeeld uitzetting, deportaties en ‘vrijwillige’ terugkeer, gebruik ik de termen door elkaar om aan te geven dat de wettelijke scheiding niet strikt wordt gevolgd door degenen waar dit onderzoek over gaat. Daarnaast trekt het de veronderstelling in twijfel dat ‘terugkeer’ naar je thuisland betekent dat zij die teruggaan welkom zijn. ‘Naar huis gaan’ impliceert immers onbetwiste gevoelens van geluk, verbondenheid en connectie. Naast de connecties en interacties die mannen hebben met mensen in Senegal, heb ik in dit proefschrift een transnationaal perspectief gehanteerd. Hiermee bedoel ik dat de rol van grensoverschrijdende praktijken en connecties mee zijn genomen in de studie.

De emoties en standpunten rondom terugkeer en uitzettingen zijn uiteenlopend. Emoties variëren van medeleven met niet-burgers tot haat en woede richting uitzetbare mensen en degenen die hen steunen. Ook immigratiecontroles, regels en praktijken zijn niet vrij van emoties en detentie en uitzetting zijn vaak emotionele ervaringen. Het proefschrift bouwt voort op deze literatuur waarin de affectieve aspecten van terugkeer en uitzetting wordt beschreven. Ik besteed aandacht aan hoe teruggekeerde mannen verhalen en uitingen van succes, hoop, lijden en moed delen om hun masculiniteit te handhaven en/of te bewijzen.

Onderzoeksopzet

Om te onderzoeken hoe mannen die naar Europa migreerden zichzelf positioneren bij hun terugkeer naar Senegal waren enkele kenmerken van de onderzoeksopzet essentieel:

1). *Etnografisch veldwerk*, van in totaal een jaar, waarbij ik mannen en mensen in hun omgeving meerdere keren sprak en volgde om op die manier mogelijke verandering in hun positie te zien na hun terugkeer. In de periode van 2017 tot en met 2021 heb ik veertig mannen gesproken, vervolgens heb ik twaalf mannen over een langere tijd gevolgd. Dit deed ik door elkaar te ontmoeten in Senegal maar ook door digitaal in contact te blijven. Het meeste veldwerk speelde zich af in urbaan Senegal zoals in Dakar en Thies maar als mannen naar andere plekken in Senegal vertrokken heb ik ze daar ook (opnieuw) bezocht.

2). *Het doen van onderzoek op verschillende plaatsen met een matched-sample*. Naast de connecties van teruggekeerden in Senegal, stond ik in contact met veertien Duitse vrouwelijke vrijwilligers die transnationale connecties onderhielden met teruggekeerde migranten in Senegal. Elf van de veertien vrijwilligers kenden dezelfde Senegalese teruggekeerde mannen als ik. Om met hen te spreken ben ik twee weken naar Duitsland geweest. Drie van hen heb ik ook in Senegal ontmoet toen zij daar op bezoek waren.

3). *Tijdens het veldwerk combineerde ik diverse onderzoeksmethoden*: participatieve observatie, semigestructureerde interviews en informele conversaties fysiek en online. De meeste gesprekken vonden bij mensen thuis plaats, op openbare plekken waar mensen zich ontspannen zoals bij culturele evenementen zoals religieuze vieringen, naamgevingsceremonies en huwelijken, op het werk en ook bij organisaties die met migranten werken die terugkomen. Naast migranten en hun connecties heb ik gesproken met dertien medewerkers van (internationale) organisaties die werken met migranten die terugkeren. De resultaten zijn aangevuld met participerende observatie van Senegalezen die geen migratie-ervaring hebben en Senegalezen die in andere landen zijn geweest.

4). *Onderzoek zien als onderdeel van dynamische en dialogische processen*; net zoals elke interactie. Dit betekent dat ik aandacht besteedde aan hoe de positie van de onderzoeker van invloed kon zijn op de interviews en de observaties.

Resultaten

Door mij te focussen op masculiniteit en specifiek aandacht te besteden aan hoe mannen over terugkeer vertellen en dit vormgeven, zijn onvoorziene transnationale verbanden en affectieve dimensies in het proces van deportatie en terugkeer aan het licht gekomen. Ik nuanceer bestaande ideeën over mannelijke migranten en laat zien hoe terugkerende mannen soms de opvattingen over migranten van Afrikaanse origine in de Senegalese

samenleving en in Europese discoursen betwisten en soms juist bevestigen. Als zodanig draagt dit proefschrift bij aan recente literatuur die etnografisch de sociale en genderspecifieke implicaties van deportatie en terugkeer onderzoekt. Mijn onderzoek reikt op deze manier verder dan de beleidsgerichte onderzoek focus die overwegend aanwezig was in studies naar terugkeer en uitzettingen.

In het eerste empirische hoofdstuk onderzoek ik de veelzijdige ervaringen en performatieve en narratieve uitingen van mannen die terug zijn in Senegal. Het hoofdstuk laat zien dat niet elke uitzetting hoeft te resulteren in een verlies van mannelijke status, aangezien teruggekeerden in staat zijn om stereotiepe ideeën die hen als slachtoffers of criminelen bestempelen te overstijgen. Zij kunnen hun terugkeer als een succes presenteren. Dit wordt bijvoorbeeld gedaan door het gebruiken van bewuste stiltes, waarmee mensen informatie over hun gezin en naasten voor zich houden en daarmee de eer van de uitgebreide familie en henzelf beschermen. Ik laat in dit hoofdstuk ook zien hoe migranten die normaal gezien in tegenovergestelde categorieën zouden vallen - een illegale migrant en een hoogopgeleide legale migrant - zich soms op een vergelijkbare manier gedragen om stereotypen tegen te gaan bij hun terugkeer. Ondanks de vele hindernissen en pijn die teruggekeerde mannen voelen wanneer hun migratieproject voortijdig wordt afgebroken, zijn er ook momenten waar ze succes uitdragen. Dit helpt hen om het gevoel te krijgen dat ze deel uitmaken van de Senegalese samenleving, betekenis te creëren en de waardigheid van henzelf en hun familie te behouden.

In het tweede empirische hoofdstuk staat centraal hoe mannelijke migranten vaak worden afgeschilderd als opportunisten die het Europees burgerschap nastreven via schijnhuwelijken. Deze vooroordelen worden in twijfel getrokken door de twee casussen in dit hoofdstuk. De twee mannen laten manieren zien hoe ze hun waardigheid als man terug in Senegal laten gelden. Dit doen ze discursief door uit te leggen dat, hoewel ze de kans hadden om in Europa te blijven door te trouwen, besloten om dit niet te doen en dus het risico liepen om uitgezet te worden. In de verhalen die ze vertellen, trouwen ze niet of wilden ze niet getrouwd blijven onder alle omstandigheden. Door terug te keren naar Senegal bevragen ze Europese racistische stereotypen over gewelddadige promiscue donkere moslimmannen. Ze behouden hun masculiniteit door de stereotypen om te keren en zichzelf af te schilderen als verantwoordelijk en moreel ten opzichte van andere migrantenmannen en blanke vrouwen. Tegelijkertijd versterken ze morele hiërarchieën over liefde en het huwelijk. Deze verhalen van mannen die het hebben uitgemaakt met hun partner en zijn teruggekeerd naar hun land van herkomst, of die geen huwelijksmigratietraject hebben gevolgd, blijven vaak verborgen omdat het meeste

onderzoek naar huwelijksmigratie plaatsvindt in Europa. Met dit hoofdstuk verbind ik bestaande literatuur over huwelijksmigratie en masculiniteit bij mannen met een migratieachtergrond met literatuur over terugkeer en uitzettingen, iets wat nog weinig is gedaan.

In het derde empirische hoofdstuk onderzoek ik de relatie tussen masculiniteit en affect door de transnationale banden tussen Senegalese teruggekeerden en vrijwilligers in Duitsland te volgen. Vrijwilligers in Europa kunnen langdurige transnationale connecties hebben met teruggekeerden, maar deze relaties komen niet voor in de meeste academische studies over terugkeer. Tijdens mijn veldwerk in Senegal leerde ik dat Duitse vrouwelijke vrijwilligers belangrijke bronnen van zowel emotionele als financiële steun konden zijn voor mannelijke teruggekeerden. Daarnaast heb ik gemerkt dat wantrouwen een emotie is die voortdurend aanwezig lijkt te zijn, hoewel zelden onderzocht in de literatuur over deportatie en terugkeer. Door middel van multi-sited etnografisch veldwerk, kreeg ik via Duitse vrijwilligers inzicht in de complexiteit van gevoelens en het belang van wantrouwen in de context van terugkeer en uitzetting naar West-Afrika. Vrijwilligers kunnen deel uitmaken van het uitzettings- en terugkeerlandschap én er vorm aan geven. Bijvoorbeeld door samen met teruggekeerden organisaties en bedrijven op te richten en door individuele economische en emotionele steun te verlenen aan teruggekeerden via langdurige transnationale connecties. Onderdeel zijn van een context die gekenmerkt wordt door een aanzienlijk wantrouwen brengt risico's en frustraties met zich mee, maar ik laat ook zien hoe wantrouwen zelf nieuwe relaties en energie kan aanwakkeren. In bredere zin laat dit hoofdstuk het belang zien van de affectieve dimensie in de context van uitzetting en terugkeer en de mogelijke relevantie van transnationale connecties voor migranten die terugkeren.

Bredere conclusies

Met dit onderzoek voeg ik kennis toe aan de bestaande literatuur door te laten zien hoe dominante idealen over mannelijkheid Senegalese mannen zowel sterker kunnen maken als onder druk kunnen zetten na hun terugkeer. Teruggekeerde mannen en hun omgeving passen verschillende strategieën toe om hun leven in de gewenste richting te sturen. Bijvoorbeeld door openlijk te praten over hun deportatie-ervaringen, door ervaringen van uitzetting juist stil te houden en/of de moraliteit en beslissingen van andere migranten om in Europa te blijven in twijfel te trekken. Ze kunnen ook opnieuw vertrekken en hun migratietraject voortzetten. Hiermee bevragen teruggekeerde mannen zowel dominante mannelijke normen maar bevestigen ze deze tegelijkertijd ook.

Door het onderzoek te beginnen in het land van terugkeer en dit later uit te breiden naar transnationale verbindingen naar Europa, was ik in staat om connecties en relaties te traceren en gegevens te verzamelen op meerdere locaties. Dit gaf inzicht in de rol van informele transnationale sociale netwerken en de complexe dynamiek daarbinnen. Dit transnationale onderzoek in zowel Senegal en Duitsland draagt bij aan een genuanceerder begrip over teruggekeerde mannen van Afrikaanse origine in een ongelijke context waar sommige mensen mogen reizen en anderen beperkt worden in hun bewegingsvrijheid.

In het huidige politieke klimaat worden met name alleenstaande donkere mannen of mannen van kleur die naar Europa komen afgeschilderd als bedreigingen voor de veiligheid. Daarnaast worden ze opgenomen in geopolitieke overeenkomsten tussen Europese en (Afrikaanse) landen. Aangezien zij in de voorhoede staan van uitsluitingspraktijken, is het van cruciaal belang te blijven onderzoeken hoe zij dit ervaren en ermee omgaan. Mijn onderzoek laat zien dat het energie vraagt om discursieve constructies in stand te houden en het uitsluiten en uitzetten van mensen te legitimeren. Daarnaast heb ik gepoogd om genuanceerdere perspectieven over mannelijke migranten te stimuleren. Tevens hoop ik inspiratie te bieden om de implicaties van het (Europese) migratiebeleid in zowel de landen van herkomst als in Europa te blijven bevragen en onderzoeken.

Résumé en Français (French summary)

Les personnes qui viennent en Europe font souvent l'objet de l'actualité et de débats politiques. Il y a également un phénomène de personnes qui retournent dans leur pays d'origine, mais qu'arrive-t-il à ceux qui quittent l'Europe ? Cette thèse se concentre sur les expériences et les histoires d'hommes sénégalais qui ont quitté l'Europe. Leur départ peut être provoqué par les politiques migratoires restrictives des États européens, qui expulsent les migrants, les encouragent à partir en leur offrant une aide au retour, ou rendent leur vie difficile dans l'espoir qu'ils partent d'eux-mêmes. Mais il peut aussi s'agir d'une décision qu'ils prennent parce qu'ils veulent, par exemple, créer leur propre entreprise au Sénégal et se rapprocher ainsi de leur famille et de leurs proches.

L'objectif central de cette thèse a été de comprendre comment, suite à un projet migratoire avorté ou écourté, les hommes qui ont migré en Europe se positionnent dans la société sénégalaise à leur retour. La résidence en Europe peut offrir aux migrants, en particulier aux hommes, et à leurs familles, des voies vers la prospérité économique et les moyens d'atteindre un statut social plus élevé. Cependant, la migration peut également conduire à la stigmatisation et à la souffrance lorsque les aspirations migratoires ne sont pas satisfaites. La plupart des études sur la migration du retour et l'expulsion se concentrent sur ce qui se passe à l'intérieur des frontières nationales des pays qui les mettent en exécution ou sur les organisations qui mettent en œuvre les programmes de retour. Cette thèse contribue à la littérature en examinant les expériences et les récits des hommes migrants sénégalais et leurs liens transnationaux, à commencer par la collecte de données au Sénégal.

Cadre théorique

Dans cette thèse, je contribue à une meilleure compréhension des implications sociales du retour et de l'expulsion en examinant les expériences et les récits des hommes qui rentrent au pays à travers l'optique des études sur la masculinité. Cela signifie que je me concentre sur la manière dont les hommes et leur environnement façonnent et adaptent leurs récits du retour dans le cadre des formes dominantes de la masculinité. Ce faisant, je m'appuie sur l'idée que les normes et les idées de masculinité dépendent du contexte et sont relationnelles. La masculinité, en tant qu'identité de genre incarnée et performative, implique la mise en œuvre de normes sociales et la reproduction de scripts et de tabous culturels. En ce sens, la masculinité s'exprime concrètement à travers la manière dont un personne se déplace, s'habille, parle et se met en scène.

Le fait de se concentrer sur différentes formes de masculinités dans une approche relationnelle permet de prendre en compte, en plus des formes hégémoniques de la

masculinité, ceux qui ne représentent pas, ou pas entièrement, la norme dominante. L'accent mis sur la masculinité découle d'une recherche montrant que la migration au Sénégal est dominée par les hommes, particulièrement les jeunes, et considérée comme un moyen d'accomplissement de soi. En outre, les hommes hétérosexuels noirs ou bruns en particulier, sont plus susceptibles d'être considérés comme potentiellement expulsables par les États européens parce qu'ils sont perçus comme « dangereux » et moins susceptibles d'avoir besoin d'aide ou d'être vulnérables que, par exemple, les femmes et les enfants.

Dans cette thèse, je me concentre sur ceux qui ont quitté l'Europe pour le Sénégal dans des contextes de politiques migratoires plus restrictives. Je me suis concentrée sur ceux qui n'avaient pas de passeport européen et qui dépendaient d'un permis de séjour temporaire pour rester légalement en Europe. Les personnes qui sont parties étaient, par exemple, des demandeurs d'asile refusés, des personnes qui risquaient de dépasser la durée de validité de leur visa d'étude, de tourisme ou de travail ou, par exemple, des personnes qui allaient perdre leurs papiers suite à un divorce. Ils pouvaient avoir été en règle au moment du départ, mais vivaient en sachant qu'ils avaient un statut migratoire précaire et/ou qu'ils seraient bientôt en situation irrégulière. Plusieurs participants à cette étude ont été expulsés par des États européens ou sont revenus au Sénégal dans le cadre de programmes dits de retour volontaire, encouragés par les États européens, mais ce n'est pas le cas de tous. Cela nous permet de voir non seulement l'acte ou l'expérience d'une déportation, mais aussi le processus plus large qui consiste à rendre une personne illégale. Bien que je sois consciente des différences juridiques et politiques entre, par exemple, l'expulsion et le retour 'volontaire', j'utilise les termes de manière interchangeable, car ceux concernés par cette recherche ne perçoivent pas aussi strictement ces distinctions. J'ai emprunté le concept de '*déportabilité*' pour indiquer que les définitions politiques du retour sont floues. En outre, ce concept remet en question l'hypothèse selon laquelle 'retourner' dans son pays d'origine signifie que ceux qui reviennent sont les bienvenus, car 'rentrer chez soi' implique des sentiments de bonheur, d'appartenance et de connexion. En plus des liens et des interactions que les hommes ont avec des personnes au Sénégal, j'ai adopté une perspective transnationale dans cette thèse, ce qui permet d'aller au-delà du cadre de la famille étendue et de mettre à jour le rôle des liens transnationaux.

Le renvoi des personnes dans leur soi-disant pays d'origine est de plus en plus polarisé, avec des émotions allant de la compassion pour les non-citoyens à la haine et la colère envers les personnes expulsables et ceux qui les soutiennent. Les contrôles, les règles et les pratiques en matière d'immigration contiennent également des éléments affectifs, et la détention et l'expulsion sont souvent des expériences émotionnelles. Cette thèse s'appuie

sur cette littérature et l'élargit en décrivant les aspects affectifs du retour et de l'expulsion. En prêtant attention à la manière dont les rapatriés partagent des histoires et des pratiques de réussite, d'espoir, de souffrance et de courage pour maintenir et/ou prouver leur masculinité, je mets en lumière la manière dont ils dépendent, questionnent, résistent et tentent de négocier les hiérarchies sociales en relation avec l'affect et les émotions.

Principaux éléments du plan de recherche

Afin d'étudier comment les hommes qui ont émigré en Europe se positionnent à leur retour au Sénégal, certaines caractéristiques de la conception de la recherche ont été essentielles.

1). *Un travail de terrain ethnographique* d'un an entre 2017 et 2021 au cours duquel j'ai parlé à des hommes et à leur entourage et j'ai fait un suivi à plusieurs reprises afin de noter leur position après leur retour. J'ai parlé à quarante hommes qui sont revenus et, j'ai suivi douze d'entre eux sur une période plus longue en les rencontrant au Sénégal, mais aussi en restant en contact sur les réseaux sociaux. La majeure partie du travail de terrain s'est déroulée à Dakar et à Thiès, avec quelques cas à l'extérieur.

2). *Une ethnographie multi-sites*: j'ai mené des recherches dans différents lieux avec un échantillon connecté. Outre les relations des migrants de retour au Sénégal, j'étais en contact avec quatorze volontaires qui entretenaient des relations transnationales avec des migrants de retour au Sénégal. Onze de ces quatorze volontaires étaient en relation avec les Sénégalais retournés participant à ma recherche. Je me suis rendue en Allemagne pendant deux semaines pour leur parler. J'ai également rencontré trois d'entre eux au Sénégal lors de leurs visites.

3). *La combinaison des méthodes de recherche*. Pendant le travail de terrain à long terme, j'ai combiné l'observation des participants, les entretiens semi-structurés et les conversations informelles à la fois physiques et en ligne. La plupart des conversations ont eu lieu au domicile des personnes, dans des lieux publics où les gens viennent se détendre, lors d'événements culturels tels que des célébrations religieuses, des cérémonies d'attribution de noms, des mariages, sur le lieu de travail, ainsi que dans des organisations qui travaillent avec les migrants de retour. Outre les migrants et leurs relations, treize personnes issues d'organisations (internationales) travaillant avec les migrants de retour ont été interrogées. Les résultats ont été complétés par des observations participantes avec des Sénégalais qui n'ont aucune expérience de la migration et avec des Sénégalais qui sont allés dans d'autres pays.

4). *Considérer la recherche, comme toute interaction, comme un processus dynamique et dialogique.* Cela signifie que j'ai prêté attention à la manière dont la position du chercheur pouvant influencer les entretiens et les observations.

En me concentrant sur la masculinité et en accordant une attention particulière à la manière dont les hommes racontent et façonnent la notion de retour une fois rentrés/à leur retour, des connexions transnationales imprévues et des dimensions affectives dans le processus d'expulsion et de retour ont été mises en lumière.

Résultats

En me concentrant sur la masculinité et en accordant une attention particulière à la manière dont les hommes racontent et façonnent la notion de retour une fois rentrés, des connexions transnationales imprévues et des dimensions affectives dans le processus d'expulsion et de retour ont été mises en lumière. J'ai nuancé les notions existantes sur les hommes migrants, en montrant comment les hommes de retour remettent parfois en question et parfois confirment les notions d'hommes migrants africains dans la société sénégalaise et dans les discours européens. Cette thèse contribue à la littérature actuelle qui examine de manière ethnographique les implications sociales et de genre du retour et de l'expulsion, et va au-delà de la recherche axée sur les politiques qui a été présente dans les études sur le retour et l'expulsion.

Dans le premier chapitre empirique, j'examine les diverses expériences et les actes narratifs performatifs des hommes expulsés d'Europe au Sénégal, y compris les pratiques du silence. Je montre que toute déportation n'entraîne pas nécessairement une perte de statut masculin, car les migrants de retour peuvent transcender les notions stéréotypées de victimes ou de criminels et peuvent présenter leur retour comme une réussite. En me concentrant sur '*déportabilité*' plutôt que sur l'expulsion, et en évitant la distinction douteuse entre retour forcé et volontaire, je montre comment des migrants de catégories dites opposées - un migrant clandestin en pirogue et un migrant légal très instruit - se comportent parfois de manière similaire pour défier les stéréotypes à leur retour. Certains rapatriés réussissent leur retour malgré les nombreux obstacles qu'ils ont rencontrés et la douleur qu'ils ont ressentie lorsque leurs projets de migration ont avorté. Cela les aide à sentir qu'ils appartiennent à la société sénégalaise, à créer du sens et à affirmer leur pouvoir.

Le deuxième chapitre empirique se concentre sur la manière dont les hommes migrants bruns et noirs sont souvent dépeints comme des opportunistes cherchant à obtenir la citoyenneté européenne par le biais de mariages de complaisance. Ces préjugés sont remis en question

par les deux études de cas de ce chapitre, qui mettent en lumière la manière dont les hommes sénégalais affirment leur masculinité et leur dignité. Les hommes de ce chapitre restaurent de façon discursive leur dignité en expliquant que, bien qu'ils aient eu la possibilité de rester en Europe en se mariant, ils ont décidé de ne pas le faire et de risquer l'expulsion. Dans les histoires qu'ils racontent, ils ne se marient pas et ne restent pas mariés, quelles que soient les circonstances. Je soutiens que c'est à travers leurs récits et leurs performances de non-mariage ou de divorce que les hommes qui reviennent peuvent capitaliser sur une démonstration de leur moralité. En retournant au Sénégal, ils défient les stéréotypes racistes européens d'hommes noirs musulmans violents et aux mœurs légères. Ils préservent leur masculinité en renversant les stéréotypes sur les hommes dangereux et en se présentant comme responsables et moraux vis-à-vis des autres migrants et des femmes blanches. En même temps, ils renforcent les hiérarchies morales dans l'amour et le mariage. Ces histoires de personnes qui ont rompu avec leur partenaire et sont rentrées chez elles, ou qui n'ont pas suivi la voie de la migration conjugale, restent souvent invisibilisées parce que la plupart des recherches sur la migration conjugale ont lieu en Europe. D'un point de vue théorique, cela me permet de relier la littérature sur la migration conjugale et les masculinités migrantes à la littérature sur le retour et l'expulsion, qui sont souvent étudiés séparément.

Dans le troisième et dernier chapitre empirique, j'examine la relation entre la masculinité et l'affect en retraçant les liens transnationaux entre les rapatriés sénégalais et les bénévoles en Allemagne. Les bénévoles en Europe peuvent avoir des relations transnationales à long terme avec les rapatriés, mais ils n'apparaissent pas dans la plupart des études universitaires sur le retour. Au cours de mon travail sur le terrain au Sénégal, j'ai appris que les femmes bénévoles allemandes peuvent être d'importantes sources de soutien émotionnel et financier pour les hommes rapatriés. J'ai également découvert que la méfiance est une émotion qui semble être omniprésente, bien qu'elle soit rarement explorée dans la littérature sur la déportation et le retour. Sur la base d'un travail de terrain ethnographique multi-sites, les bénévoles allemands donnent un aperçu de la complexité de la méfiance dans le contexte du retour et de l'expulsion au Sénégal. Les bénévoles peuvent faire partie du paysage du retour et de la déportation et le façonner en créant des organisations et des entreprises avec les rapatriés et en apportant un soutien économique et émotionnel individuel aux rapatriés par le biais de relations transnationales à long terme. Faire partie d'un contexte caractérisé par une méfiance considérable comporte des risques et des frustrations, mais je montre aussi comment la méfiance elle-même peut susciter de nouvelles relations et dynamiques. Plus généralement, ce chapitre montre l'importance de la dimension affective dans le contexte de l'expulsion et du retour, et la pertinence possible des relations transnationales pour les migrants de retour.

Conclusions plus générales

Dans l'ensemble, j'élargis la littérature existante en montrant comment les idéaux dominants en matière de masculinité peuvent à la fois donner du pouvoir et exercer une pression sur les hommes lors de leur retour. En commençant mes recherches dans le pays de retour et en les étendant ensuite aux connexions transnationales vers l'Europe, j'ai pu suivre les connexions et collecter des données dans de multiples endroits. Cela m'a permis de mieux comprendre le rôle des réseaux sociaux transnationaux informels et la dynamique complexe qui les caractérise. Je montre comment les manières souvent stéréotypées de parler des hommes migrants africains présentes en Europe sont également pertinentes au Sénégal et contribuent à la façon dont les rapatriés interprètent leur masculinité là-bas. Les hommes qui rentrent au pays et ceux qui les entourent emploient différentes stratégies pour orienter leur vie dans la direction souhaitée. Toutes ces stratégies peuvent à la fois remettre en question et confirmer les normes masculines dominantes.

Cette étude transnationale et multi-sites a contribué à une compréhension plus nuancée et dynamique des hommes africains rapatriés et de leur performance complexe de la masculinité dans un champ social de migration très inégal. Compte tenu du climat politique actuel, dans lequel les hommes migrants sont présentés comme des menaces pour la sécurité et sont inclus dans les accords géopolitiques entre les États européens et africains, il est essentiel que les chercheurs continuent d'étudier comment les hommes célibataires bruns et noirs, en particulier, sont en première ligne des pratiques de bannissement et d'exclusion. Comme le montre cette thèse, les discours permettent une certaine flexibilité, et il faut des efforts pour maintenir les constructions discursives et légitimer *déportabilité*. Grâce à ma recherche sur les masculinités dans le contexte du retour et de l'expulsion, et en rassemblant différents domaines de la littérature sur la migration et les études sur la masculinité, j'espère avoir apporté des éléments qui inspireront de futures recherches pour continuer à questionner et à enquêter sur les implications des politiques migratoires (européennes) à la fois dans les pays d'origine et en Europe.

Deutsche Zusammenfassung (German summary)

Menschen, die nach Europa kommen, sind oft in den Nachrichten und Gegenstand politischer Debatten. Aber was passiert mit den Menschen, die Europa verlassen? Diese Dissertation konzentriert sich auf die Erfahrungen und Geschichten von senegalesischen Männern, die Europa verlassen haben. Rückkehr kann eine Folge der restriktiven Migrationspolitik sein, da die europäischen Staaten Migranten und Migrantinnen abschieben, sie mithilfe von Rückkehrhilfe zur Ausreise ermutigen, oder ihnen das Leben so schwer machen, dass sie von sich aus entscheiden, zu gehen. Es kann aber auch eine Entscheidung sein, die sie treffen, weil sie z. B. im Senegal ein eigenes Unternehmen gründen oder näher bei ihrer Familie und anderen geliebten Menschen sein wollen.

Das zentrale Ziel dieser Dissertation war es zu verstehen, wie sich Männer, die nach Europa migriert sind, nach einem gescheiterten Migrationsprojekt bei ihrer Rückkehr in den Senegal positionieren. Der Aufenthalt in Europa kann Migranten und Migrantinnen, aber insbesondere Männern und ihren Familien den Weg zu wirtschaftlichem Wohlstand und einem höheren sozialen Status eröffnen. Migration kann jedoch auch zu Stigmatisierung und Schmerz führen, wenn sich die Migrationswünsche nicht erfüllen. Die meisten Studien über Rückkehr und Abschiebung konzentrieren sich auf die Vorgänge innerhalb der nationalen Grenzen der abschiebenden Länder oder auf Organisationen, die Rückkehrprogramme durchführen. Die vorliegende Dissertation trägt zu dieser Literatur bei, indem sie die Erfahrungen und Geschichten senegalesischer Migranten und ihrer transnationalen Verbindungen untersucht und mit der Datenerhebung im Senegal beginnt.

Theoretischer Rahmen

In dieser Dissertation erweitere ich das bestehende Verständnis der sozialen Auswirkungen von Rückkehr und Abschiebung, indem ich die Erfahrungen, Geschichten und performativen Inszenierungen von zurückkehrenden Männern „aus dem Blickwinkel“ der Geschlechter- und Männlichkeitsforschung untersuche. Das bedeutet, dass ich mich darauf konzentriere, wie Männer und ihr Umfeld ihre Rückkehr im Rahmen dominanter Formen von Männlichkeit gestalten und anpassen. Dabei stütze ich mich auf die theoretische Annahme, dass Normen und Vorstellungen von Männlichkeit kontextabhängig und relational sind. Männlichkeit als verkörperte und performative Geschlechtsidentität beinhaltet die Umsetzung sozialer Normen und die Reproduktion kultureller Skripte und Tabus, schließt allerdings auch, wie ich in meiner Dissertation zeige, „agency“ und Normendistanz mit ein.

Die Fokussierung auf verschiedene Formen relationaler Männlichkeit schafft Raum, um neben den hegemonialen Formen auch solche zu berücksichtigen, die die dominante

Norm nicht oder nicht vollständig repräsentieren. Der Fokus auf soziale Männlichkeit ergibt sich aus Forschungsergebnissen, die zeigen, dass die Migration im Senegal männlich dominiert ist und insbesondere für junge Männer als eine Möglichkeit gesehen wird, sich zu entwickeln. Darüber hinaus werden insbesondere schwarze oder braune heterosexuelle Männer von den europäischen Staaten eher als potenziell abschiebbar angesehen, da sie als „gefährlich“ und weniger hilfsbedürftig oder verletzlich gelten als Frauen und Kinder.

In der Dissertation geht über diejenigen, die Europa im Kontext einer restriktiveren Migrationspolitik in Richtung Senegal verlassen haben. Das bedeutet, dass ich mich auf diejenigen konzentriert habe, die keinen europäischen Pass besaßen und auf eine befristete Aufenthaltsgenehmigung angewiesen waren, um sich legal in Europa aufzuhalten. Bei denjenigen, die Europa verließen, handelte es sich beispielsweise um abgelehnte Asylbewerber, um Personen, die ihr Studien-, Touristen- oder Arbeitsvisum zu überziehen drohten, oder um Personen, die ihre Papiere aufgrund der Beendigung einer Ehe verloren hatten oder verlieren würden (inklusive Duldung). Es kann sein, dass sie zum Zeitpunkt der Ausreise die richtigen Papiere hatten, aber mit dem Wissen lebten, dass ihr Migrationsstatus prekär war oder sie bald illegalisiert werden würden. Mehrere Teilnehmer dieser Studie wurden von europäischen Staaten abgeschoben oder kehrten im Rahmen sogenannter „Programme zur freiwilligen Rückkehr“ zurück, die von europäischen Staaten gefördert wurden. Das trifft jedoch nicht auf alle zu. Ich betrachte nicht nur den Akt oder die Erfahrung einer Abschiebung zu, sondern den umfassenderen Prozess der Illegalisierung einer Person. Obwohl ich mir der rechtlichen und politischen Unterschiede zwischen z. B. Abschiebung und „freiwilliger“ Rückkehr bewusst bin, verwende ich die Begriffe austauschbar, weil diese rechtliche Trennung von den Teilnehmern dieser Studie nicht strikt eingehalten wurde. Ich benutze das Konzept der „Abschiebbarkeit“, um auf die Verwischung der politischen Definitionen der Rückkehr hinzuweisen. Darüber hinaus wird die Annahme in Frage gestellt, dass die „Rückkehr“ in das Heimatland bedeutet, dass die Rückkehrenden willkommen sind, da der Ausdruck „nach Hause gehen“ unhinterfragte Gefühle von Glück, Zugehörigkeit und Verbundenheit impliziert. Zusätzlich zu den Verbindungen und Interaktionen, die Männer mit Menschen im Senegal haben, habe ich in meiner Dissertation eine transnationale Perspektive eingenommen, die es ermöglicht, die Rolle transnationaler Verbindungen über die erweiterten Familienmitglieder hinaus in dieser Studie zu betrachten.

Die Abschiebung von Menschen in ihre so genannten Herkunftsländer polarisiert zunehmend, wobei die Emotionen von Mitleid mit Nicht-Staatsbürgern bis hin zu Hass und Wut auf abzuschiebende Menschen und diejenigen, die sie unterstützen, reichen. Einwanderungskontrollen, -vorschriften und -praktiken enthalten auch affektive Elemente, und Inhaftierung und Abschiebung sind oft emotionale Erfahrungen. Die

Dissertation baut auf dieser Literatur auf und erweitert sie, indem sie die performativen Selbstdarstellungen und die affektiven Aspekte von Rückkehr und Abschiebung beschreibt. Indem ich darauf achte, wie Rückkehrer Geschichten und Praktiken des Erfolgs, der Hoffnung, des Leidens und des Mutes teilen, um ihre Männlichkeit zu bewahren und/oder zu beweisen, beleuchte ich die Art und Weise, wie sie von Hierarchien der Ungleichheit in Bezug auf Affekte und Emotionen abhängen, diese in Frage stellen, sich ihnen widersetzen und versuchen, sie zu verhandeln.

Forschungsdesign

Um zu untersuchen, wie Männer, die nach Europa migriert sind, sich nach ihrer Rückkehr in den Senegal positionieren, waren einige Merkmale des Forschungsdesigns wesentlich:

- 1). *Ethnografische Feldforschung* von einem Jahr im Zeitraum von 2017 bis 2021, in der ich die Männer und ihr Umfeld mehrmals gesprochen und begleitet habe, um auch die Veränderung ihrer Position nach ihrer Rückkehr zu sehen. Ich habe mit vierzig Männern gesprochen, die zurückgekehrt sind, von welchen ich zwölf über einen längeren Zeitraum begleitet habe, indem ich sie im Senegal getroffen habe, aber auch digital in Kontakt geblieben bin. Die meiste Feldarbeit fand in Dakar und Thies statt, aber wenn die Männer an andere Orte im Senegal gingen, besuchte ich sie auch dort (wieder).
- 2). *Multi-Sited-Ethnography*: Forschung an verschiedenen Orten mit einem Matched Sample. Zusätzlich zu den Verbindungen der Rückkehrer im Senegal stand ich in Kontakt mit vierzehn Deutsche Freiwilligen Frauen, die transnationale Verbindungen zu zurückgekehrten Migranten im Senegal unterhielten. Elf der vierzehn Freiwilligen Frauen kannten die gleichen senegalesischen Rückkehrer wie ich. Ich reiste für zwei Wochen nach Deutschland, um mit ihnen zu sprechen. Drei von ihnen habe ich auch im Senegal während ihrer Besuche dort getroffen.
- 3). *Kombination von verschiedenen Forschungsmethoden*. Während der Langzeit-Feldforschung habe ich teilnehmende Beobachtung, halbstrukturierte Interviews und informelle Gespräche sowohl physisch als auch online kombiniert. Die meisten Gespräche fanden bei Teilnehmenden zuhause statt; an öffentlichen Orten, die zur Entspannung aufgesucht wurden; bei kulturellen Veranstaltungen wie religiösen Feiern, Namensgebungszeremonien, Hochzeiten; am Arbeitsplatz und auch bei Organisationen, die mit zurückkehrenden Migranten und Migrantinnen arbeiten. Neben den Migranten und ihren

Angehörigen wurden dreizehn Personen aus (internationalen) Organisationen, die mit Rückkehrern arbeiten, befragt. Ergänzt wurden die Ergebnisse durch teilnehmende Beobachtung mit Senegalesen, die keine Migrationserfahrung haben, und mit Senegalesen, die in andere Länder gegangen sind.

4). *Das Begreifen der Forschung als einen dynamischen und dialogischen Prozess.* Das bedeutet, dass ich darauf geachtet habe, wie die Positionalität der Wissenschaftlerin die Interviews und Beobachtungen beeinflusst haben könnte.

Ergebnisse

Indem ich mich auf soziale Männlichkeit konzentrierte und besonders darauf achtete, wie Männer den Vorgang und Begriff der Rückkehr nach der Rückkehr erzählen und gestalten, kamen unvorhergesehene transnationale Verbindungen und affektive Dimensionen im Prozess der Abschiebung und Rückkehr ans Licht. Ich habe die bestehenden Vorstellungen über Männer mit Migrationshintergrund nuanciert und gezeigt, wie zurückkehrende Männer die Vorstellungen über afrikanische Migranten in der senegalesischen Gesellschaft und in europäischen Diskursen sowohl in Frage stellen als auch bestätigen. Damit leistet diese Dissertation einen Beitrag zur Literatur, die die sozialen und geschlechtsspezifischen Implikationen von Rückkehr und Abschiebung ethnografisch untersucht, und geht über den politikorientierten Forschungsschwerpunkt hinaus, der in Studien zu Rückkehr und Abschiebung vorherrscht.

Im ersten empirischen Kapitel untersuche ich die unterschiedlichen Erfahrungen und performativen Erzählungen von männlichen Rückkehrern in den Senegal. Ich zeige, dass nicht jede Abschiebung zu einem Verlust des männlichen Status führen muss, da die Rückkehrer stereotype Vorstellungen von ihnen als Opfer oder Kriminelle überwinden und ihre Rückkehr als Erfolg darstellen können. Indem ich mich auf die Abschiebbarkeit statt auf die Abschiebung konzentriere und die zweifelhafte Unterscheidung zwischen erzwungener und freiwilliger Rückkehr vermeide, zeige ich, wie Migranten, die normalerweise in entgegengesetzte Kategorien fallen würden - ein illegalisierter Piroggenmigrant und ein hoch gebildeter legaler Migrant - sich manchmal ähnlich verhalten, um Stereotypen nach ihrer Rückkehr zu trotzen. Einige Rückkehrer kehren trotz der vielen Hürden, die sie zu überwinden hatten, und des Schmerzes, den sie empfanden, als ihr Migrationsprojekt abgebrochen wurde, erfolgreich zurück. Dies hilft ihnen, sich der senegalesischen Gesellschaft zugehörig zu fühlen, einen Sinn zu schaffen und ihre Handlungsfähigkeit zu behaupten.

Das zweite empirische Kapitel befasst sich mit der Tatsache, dass people of color und Migranten oft als Opportunisten dargestellt werden, die durch Scheinehen die europäische

Staatsbürgerschaft anstreben. Diese Vorurteile werden durch die beiden Fallstudien in diesem Kapitel in Frage gestellt, die aufzeigen, wie Männer im Senegal ihre Männlichkeit in Würde behaupten. Meine Interviewpartner in diesem Kapitel stellen ihre Würde diskursiv wieder her, indem sie erklären, dass sie, obwohl sie die Möglichkeit hatten, durch eine Heirat in Europa zu bleiben, beschlossen haben, nicht zu heiraten und ihre Abschiebung zu riskieren. In den Geschichten, die sie erzählen, heiraten sie nicht und vermeiden es um jeden Preis verheiratet zu bleiben. Ich behaupte, dass Männer, die zurückkehren, wenn ihre Migrationsprojekte gescheitert sind, durch ihre Erzählungen und performativen Selbstdarstellungen von Nicht-Heirat oder Scheidung aus ihrer Rückkehr Kapital schlagen und ihre Moral demonstrieren können. Indem sie in den Senegal zurückkehren, widersetzen sie sich den europäischen „rassistischen“ Stereotypen von gewalttätigen, promiskuitiven schwarzen muslimischen Männern. Sie verteidigen ihre Männlichkeit, indem sie die Stereotypen über gefährliche Männer umkehren und sich gegenüber anderen Migranten und Migrantinnen sowie weißen Frauen als verantwortungsbewusst und moralisch integer darstellen. Gleichzeitig verstärken sie moralische Hierarchien über Liebe und Ehe. Diese Geschichten von Menschen, die sich von ihren Partnerinnen getrennt haben und in ihre Heimat zurückgekehrt sind oder die nicht den Weg der Heiratsmigration eingeschlagen haben, bleiben oft im Verborgenen, da die meisten Untersuchungen zur Heiratsmigration in Europa stattfinden. Theoretisch ermöglicht mein transnationaler Ansatz, die Literatur über Heiratsmigration und männliche Migranten mit der Literatur über Rückkehr und Abschiebung zu verbinden, die oft separat untersucht werden.

Im dritten und letzten empirischen Kapitel untersuche ich die Beziehung zwischen Männlichkeit und Affekt, indem ich transnationale Beziehungen zwischen senegalesischen Rückkehrern und Freiwilligen Frauen in Deutschland nachzeichne. Freiwillige in Europa können langfristige transnationale Beziehungen zu Rückkehrern unterhalten, werden aber in den meisten wissenschaftlichen Studien zur Rückkehr nicht erwähnt. Während meiner Feldforschung im Senegal erfuhr ich, dass deutsche Freiwillige eine wichtige Quelle emotionaler und finanzieller Unterstützung für männliche Rückkehrer sein können. Ich fand auch heraus, dass Misstrauen ein Gefühl ist, das allgegenwärtig zu sein scheint, obwohl es in der Literatur über Abschiebung und Rückkehr nur selten untersucht wird. Auf der Grundlage ethnografischer Feldforschung an mehreren Standorten geben deutsche Freiwillige einen Einblick in die Komplexität von Misstrauen im Kontext von Rückkehr und Abschiebung im Senegal. Freiwillige können Teil der Rückkehr- und Abschiebelandschaft sein und diese mitgestalten, indem sie gemeinsam mit Rückkehrern Organisationen und Unternehmen gründen und durch langfristige transnationale Beziehungen individuelle wirtschaftliche und emotionale Unterstützung für Rückkehrer

bereitstellen. Es birgt Risiken und Frustrationen, Teil eines von erheblichem Misstrauen geprägten Kontextes zu sein, aber ich zeige auch, wie Misstrauen selbst neue Beziehungen und Dynamiken auslösen kann. Im weiteren Sinne zeigt dieses Kapitel die Bedeutung der affektiven Dimension im Kontext von Abschiebung und Rückkehr sowie die mögliche Bedeutung transnationaler Beziehungen für zurückkehrende Migranten.

Allgemeinere Schlussfolgerungen

Alles in allem erweitere ich die bestehende Literatur, indem ich zeige, wie dominante Männlichkeitsideale – seien sie nun senegalesische oder europäische – männliche Migranten bei der Rückkehr sowohl stärken als auch unter Druck setzen können. Indem ich meine Forschung im Land der Rückkehr begann und sie später auf transnationale Verbindungen nach Europa ausdehnte, konnte ich Verbindungen und Beziehungen nachverfolgen und Daten an mehreren Orten sammeln.

Dies ermöglichte einen Einblick in die Rolle informeller transnationaler sozialer Netzwerke und die komplexe Dynamik innerhalb dieser Netzwerke. Ich zeige, wie die oft stereotypen Redeweisen über afrikanische männliche Migranten in Europa auch im Senegal relevant sind und dazu beitragen, wie Rückkehrer ihre Männlichkeit im Senegal darstellen. Zurückkehrende Männer und ihr Umfeld wenden unterschiedliche Strategien an, um ihr Leben in die gewünschte Richtung zu lenken. Alle diese Strategien können die vorherrschenden männlichen Normen sowohl herausfordern als auch bekräftigen.

Diese transnationale Studie, die an mehreren Orten durchgeführt wurde, trug zu einem differenzierteren und dynamischeren Verständnis afrikanischer männlicher Rückkehrer und ihrer komplexen Darstellung von Männlichkeit in einem höchst ungleichen sozialen Feld der Migration bei. Angesichts des gegenwärtigen politischen Klimas, in dem insbesondere Migranten bzw. Migrantinnen als Sicherheitsbedrohung dargestellt und in geopolitische Abkommen zwischen europäischen und afrikanischen Staaten einbezogen werden, ist es von entscheidender Bedeutung, dass Wissenschaftler*innen weiterhin untersuchen, wie insbesondere alleinstehende braune und schwarze Männer an der Spitze von Vertreibungs- und Ausgrenzungspraktiken stehen. Wie diese Dissertation zeigt, lassen Diskurse eine gewisse Flexibilität zu, und es bedarf einiger Anstrengungen, um diskursive Konstrukte aufrechtzuerhalten und Abschiebung zu legitimieren. Durch meine Forschung zu Männlichkeiten im Kontext von Rückkehr und Abschiebung und durch die Zusammenführung verschiedener Literaturbereiche zu Migration, Geschlechter- und Männlichkeitsforschung hoffe ich, Elemente beigesteuert zu haben, die künftige Forschungen dazu anregen werden, die Auswirkungen der (europäischen) Migrationspolitik sowohl in den Herkunftsländern als auch in Europa weiter zu hinterfragen und zu untersuchen.

Impact statement

At the time of finishing this dissertation in May 2024, return and deportation remains high on the political agenda in both Europe and Africa. The ink of the migration deal of Tunisia barely dried before it was adjusted. In March 2024, the European Commission signed a new migration deal with Mauritania, which includes agreements on return and readmission. In spring 2024, the Pact on Migration and Asylum was approved by the European Parliament and the Council. The legislative proposal regarding the Return Directive is still pending adoption. Meanwhile there have been several deportation warnings from Germany to West Africa, an end to which I do not foresee as right-wing parties are gaining ground in Europe. European states have made increasing efforts to return those considered ‘undesirable’.

Since writing the research proposal for the dissertation, there has been a growing interest in return migration. This research came into being and was conducted in a time just after the so-called ‘refugee crisis’ in Europe in 2015. While at first there was a response of support and many volunteering initiatives throughout Europe by citizens and others, there were also xenophobic reactions and the perceived need to differentiate ‘real, deserving refugees’ and ‘bogus refugees’ to keep incoming migration manageable. At the same time, we saw another way of dealing with refugees from Ukraine after the start of the Russian occupation. Meanwhile, there are growing shortages of workers across Europe, and many European countries are dealing with aging populations. This raises questions about how and when migrants can play a role in this and under what conditions exclusion is defensible. I hope this dissertation provides insights into and raises new questions concerning the consequences of inclusion and exclusion practices. It is important to consider the effects of state policies also outside Europe, as we live in a world that is interconnected.

In this section, I outline the societal contributions of this dissertation. I will focus first on the scientific contributions which took place in the form of conferences, seminars, workshops, lectures and open access publications. Afterwards I will outline the overall implications of the study for broader societal actors. I will end by sharing the ways in which this dissertation aims to contribute to knowledge production in science and broader society.

Scientific contributions

Three scientific articles in international peer reviewed journals came out of this research and are currently published. Together they extend the existing knowledge about return migration, deportation and masculinities. A fourth publication, which is not part of dissertation but is based on this work, explores how gendered and racialized positionalities and interactions are negotiated and shifting due to both the researcher’s and the participant’s

experiences in each other's home contexts. Sharing the experiences of having to adjust to each other's intersecting erotic cultural and gendered norms can, despite substantial differences in terms of racialization, gendered experiences and access to spaces, shows how researchers and researchees' positionalities shift and are negotiated as people move in transnational multi-sited migration research. It is under review for a special issue about researching migrant masculinities as female identifying researcher.

Until now, I have presented research findings in national and international academic gatherings, including seven conferences, seminars, and workshops²⁰, and I gave guest lectures. Throughout my research, I shared emerging insights and organized sessions with several groups and collectives at the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at Maastricht University, including the Transnational Migration Research group (TMG) and the Ethnography Group. I was also an active member of the Ethnography Safety Group to share dilemmas and questions with other researchers before, during and after fieldwork. Supported by the *Centre for Gender and Diversity*, I also established, together with three fellow Ph.D. students, 'Progress is better than Perfection' writing and exchange sessions. These sessions are aimed at Ph.D. and postdoc scholars related to the *Centre for Gender and Diversity* to share work in progress and exchange feedback on written texts.

In addition, I organized two workshops aimed at the broader Maastricht University community. One workshop was about 'Researching Gender, Sexuality and Health beyond European contexts' with Prof. Dr. Mkhwanazi from South Africa in collaboration with the Centre for Gender and Diversity and the Globalization, Transnationalism and Development Research Group. The second workshop I organized in collaboration with the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) and Ph.D. researcher Nadine Blankvoort as part of the annual Maastricht Centre for Citizenship, Migration and Development (MACIMIDE) conference in September 2021. The workshop was named 'Research communication: Migration Researchers in Dialogue with the General Public'. One guest lecture was part of the Globalization Seminar and Symposium where I introduced the students of the minor Globalization and Development at FASoS to deportation and return studies. At University College Maastricht I provided a guest lecture about interviewing and ethnography. I provided many examples based on my dissertation research.

²⁰ The Neuchâtel Graduate Conference of Migration and Mobility Studies (2023)

International Migration Research Network (IMISCOE, 2022 online, 2023)

African Studies Association of Africa (ASAA, 2022)

Maastricht Centre for Citizenship, Migration and Development (MACIMIDE, 2019, 2021, 2022)

Feminist Geography Conference (online, 2022)

Mobilités en Afrique de l'Ouest, Ziguinchor, Sénégal 2020

European Association of Social Anthropologists (EASA, 2020 online)

Beyond the Maastricht University community, I was part of the Geography Department at the University of Cheikh Anta Diop in Dakar (UCAD). There I shared and discussed my progress with PhD students and master students. During the first years of the Ph.D. project, I was also an active member of the reading and writing group about gender and sexualities at the University of Amsterdam under supervision of Prof. Dr. Rachel Spronk, where we shared work in progress.

Beyond the scientific community: societal and professional contributions

Because return and deportation is a topic that is often in the headlines and fosters societal debates in both Europe as well as Senegal, I aimed to share my progress and results beyond the scientific community.

Professional audience

I shared my research with a professional audience who could be working on issues related to migration by publishing my progress in the journal '*Justitiële Verkenningen*', a joint publication by The Scientific Research and Documentation Centre (WODC) and Boom publishers. WODC is the knowledge institute for the Ministry of Justice and Security in the Netherlands. *Justitiële Verkenningen* aims to highlight trends and developments in the field of justice and security for practitioners working in those fields. The article I shared, based on my first empirical chapter, was part of the issue on return and deportation.

Throughout my fieldwork in Senegal and in Germany, I had contact with various organizations and practitioners working on topics related to my dissertation. In addition to interviewing practitioners, I also aimed to share developing insights and findings while keeping the anonymity of my participants in mind. Meetings were occasions for both of us to exchange and learn from each other. In both the Netherlands and in Germany I shared preliminary findings with NGOs who have programs of assisted voluntary return in Senegal. During the policy day at Maastricht University on 26 April 2023, I also gave a presentation about my results and had the opportunity to exchange with policy makers working at the Ministry of Justice and Security to monitor and design migration policies. After finalizing the thesis, I aim to go back to Senegal to share my findings with various NGOs working on return and migration in Senegal who have been part of my research and other organizations working with illegalized migrants in Europe.

Media and other contributions

In 2020, I was selected through a competitive procedure to become a 'Face of Science' of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW), and I wrote blog posts about my research. The aim of these blogpost was to provide insight about what it means to be a scientist to young people who are deciding what to study, but also for anyone else

who is interested. I shared these on social media such as LinkedIn. Due to the blogposts, I made several new connections, including master students who work on migration and return in West Africa. Besides new connections, it re-established connections with former colleagues and other professionals in the field of migration.

In November 2021, I contributed to a series set up by Euronews about masculinities in Africa. In the series, 'Cry like a Boy', they explored various places in Africa to share stories of men and the way they deal with pressures to conform to male gender roles. I wrote an article about the duality of not sharing deportation experiences, how it can be both painful and empowering for deportees in Senegal. Maastricht University interviewed me and my supervisor, Valentina Mazzucato, about my Ph.D. research and our collaboration in February 2023. The interview was published in the UM magazine aimed at alumni of Maastricht University. It was also featured on the Maastricht University website in July 2023. In the summer of 2023, I contributed to a creative writing piece to the FASoS Creative Writing Anthology edited by dr. Fourie and dr. Höne called: 'Bed sharing practices in a holy city in Senegal'. In October 2023, I was cited as an expert by a journalist of the Dutch newspaper *Financieel Dagblad* to provide background information concerning the increased number of Senegalese migrants arriving on the Canary Islands.

Besides already published and shared findings, I also plan to disseminate the research to a broader audience in the future. In the summer of 2023, I received funding from the valorization funds at the Faculty of Arts at Maastricht University to figure out the possibility of an artistic production inspired by my research. I collaborate with Ilay den Boer, who is a renowned theatre maker in the Netherlands. In the winter of 2023, I went back to Senegal and visited the Gambia to share my current findings and elaborate the results by conducting explorative fieldwork for this artistic project.

The insights, perception and nuance found in this dissertation are relevant for policy makers, practitioners working in the field of migration, but also social workers and people who know those who can be subject to deportation and return. In the end, state decisions are enacted on behalf of its citizens and citizens are also involved in shaping future directions. All in all, return and deportation is a delicate topic with heavy consequences for various actors involved. By sharing knowledge on masculinities in the context of deportation and return and continuing to pose questions to various stakeholders involved, I hope to outline and contribute to knowledge gaps that enables making just political decisions, including for those who are not always seen, heard or acknowledged.

Acknowledgements

It is impossible to finish a Ph.D dissertation by yourself. I am tremendously grateful for all who contributed in their own ways. I probably can't do justice to all of you, but I will try.

First and foremost, I am extremely thankful to participants and all those who in Senegal and Germany who welcomed me in their lives and shared their food, stories, struggles and joys with me. I cannot name you here but without you I could not have started, let alone finish this Ph.D. Thank you for your time, openness, trust in sharing your stories and willingness to keep up with me. Jërejëf!!

My sincere gratitude goes to my supervisors, Valentina Mazzucato and Ulrike Brunotte. Valentina, I vividly remember how, after I introduced myself at a department meeting as a junior lecturer, you approached me to have a drink, or in our case, a tea together. I am grateful you did! You encouraged me to explore my own interests and to write the application for the NWO Ph.D. in the Humanities grant. During the writing of the proposal and throughout the Ph.D. journey you provided tricks and tips and helped me to polish my arguments. I could always count on constructive feedback. Besides thinking conceptually, you are also down to earth, well organized and pragmatic, which helped me to deal with turbulent times during the Ph.D. trajectory. It has been a privilege to learn and grow with you as supervisor and I am grateful for the shared learning opportunities with your other (MO-TRAYL) Ph.D. students. Ulrike, it has been an honor to work with you. I appreciate your openness to explore working together. You have pushed me to be theoretically sharper and to dig deeper. I thank you for your enthusiasm to (re)discuss findings and linking them to developments in Germany and beyond. Although we mostly met online since the COVID-19 pandemic, I knew you would be there from your office in Berlin. I value your academic curiosity and dedication even after retirement. Vielen Dank!

I would like to thank the Dutch Scientific Organization (NWO) and the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASoS) of Maastricht University for the trust in me to become a Ph.D. holder. I would also like to use this opportunity to thank the assessment committee. I appreciate the time that you agreed to spend on my dissertation, and I am looking forward to hearing your questions during the public defense.

The Geography Department at the University of Cheick Anta Diop in Dakar provided an academic home during my stays in Senegal. I am grateful to all my fellow (Ph.D.) students and colleagues who exchanged ideas, experiences with me and welcomed me in their worlds. Je tiens à remercier Papa Sakho pour son ouverture d'esprit, sa gentillesse,

sa patience et ses conversations inspirantes. Ce fut un plaisir de vous connaître et de vous rencontrer à Dakar, Ziguinchor et Cologne et j'espère que nos chemins se croiseront à nouveau. Je remercie également Mamadou Bouna Timera, Aboulaye Diagne, El Hadji Rawane Ba, Abou Ka, Coumba Ndoeffene Faye et Mareme Niang-Ndiaye pour leurs questions, leurs soins, leurs humour et leur soutien. Je tiens à remercier également Fatou et Halima pour avoir partagé leur travail, leurs expériences et pour m'avoir présenté à leurs familles. Je suis reconnaissant à Serigne Modou Habib Sene pour son aide durant le processus de recherche. It was a pleasure to also meet other academics in Senegal, including the hospitable and joyful Divine Fuh. Thank you for pointing out possible blind spots and introducing me to the beautiful work of CODESRIA.

To all those at the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASoS) who cheered me up and chatted in the hallways, who joined for lunch, drinks or a walk, who engaged with my work, who helped with bureaucratic issues and who joined online writing sessions during the pandemic. Thank you for all the interactions and encouragements. I am grateful for the support I received in planning and starting this research even before the funding was realized. I think of Merle Achten for her care in the project proposal phase. I also think of all other colleagues who provided feedback and made the (preliminary) fieldwork possible, such as Floris Peters, Harro van Lente, Anique Hommels and Sophie van Hoonacker. I also thank Christine Neuhold and Cerien Streefland who, after careful consideration, enabled me to travel despite the limitations of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This dissertation would not have existed without the Centre for Gender and Diversity (CGD) at Maastricht University. I appreciate the support and critical questions of members who at some point in this trajectory contributed to the further advancement of the study. This includes but is not limited to Eliza Steinbock, Lies Wesseling, Louis den Hengel, Aagje Swinnen and Pomme van der Weerd.

I want to thank the members of the Transnational Migration Research group (TMG) and the members of the Globalization, Transnationalism and Development Research group (GTD) for the support and intellectual stimulation, for sharing stories and for the fun, and for the at times awkward, moments at the famous retreats. You provided a support group to explore and exchange work in progress and the ups and downs of academic life. Thank you Lauren Wagner, Bilisuma Dito, Brigitte Lenormand, Maha Naami, Mahardhika Sadjad, Yabo Wu, Joan van Geel, Maarten Vink, Wiebe Nauta, Elsje Fourie, Konjit Hailu Gudeta, Simone Schleper, Timo Makori, Faisal Hamadah, Swantje Falcke, Joma Rondén, Ester Serra Mignot, Christoph Leclerk, Sharon Anyango, Pablo del Hierro, Adam Dixon and Niklas Mayer.

The so-called 'MO-TRAYL' ers': Sarah Anschütz, Laura Ogden, Onallia Osei, Gladys Akom Akombrey. I thoroughly enjoyed our numerous working sessions where we shared and read drafts together, also outside work. It was a pleasure to follow your trajectories, laugh and learn together along the way. I cherish the co-working sessions, lunches and dinners with Imogen Liu. I hope they will continue now we both finished our dissertation. I also want to thank Maha, Sarah and Marie for their friendship, ongoing interest and language support, which enabled me to write the French and German summaries of this dissertation. My safe haven in the faculty was office 0.13. I thank all office mates who made it a space where work and *gezelligheid* could be combined. Thank you in particular to Marie Labussière, Marloes de Hoon, Cecilia Schenetti, Sophie Withaecx, Ana Garcia Lopez and Manling Yang for making our office alive and for the walks, cycling tours and (food) outings.

The ethnography group meetings opened up opportunities to share and grow. I appreciate the work of the initiators Anna Harris and Lotte Thissen and all the members who keep it alive. It is a privilege to have an excellent group of scholars to discuss the joy and challenges of ethnographic fieldwork spread out in diverse fields. Thank you Mareike Smolka, Jessica Mesman and Marie Rickert for co-organizing sessions and reading groups.

I am grateful for the existence of the Graduate School, most visibly represented to me by Alexander Supper, Joeri Bruyninckx and Sabine Kuipers. The Graduate School helped me to be part of a thriving community with many inspiring young scholars beyond my direct research group. This community includes but is not limited to Andrea Wojcik, Marith Dieker, Daan Hovens, Veerle Spronk, Maud Oostindie, Flora Lysen and Sara Atwater. I should not forget my fellow teaching fellows and other colleagues with whom I restarted my journey at Maastricht University. Thank you for making me feel at home again after my return to Maastricht. I think of Philip, Dani, Vincent, Sven, Anke, Tetiana, Annelies, Mirko, Madelon, Ruud and Afke. Besides academic colleagues I would also like to thank everyone else who makes FASoS a nice(r) place to work. Thank you to all the support staff and Vincent, Cindy and Iris.

Several reading and writing groups inspired me throughout the years. A special mention goes to the reading and writing group discussing Sexuality and Gender in Africa under supervision of Rachel Spronk. Thank you very much for your openness, adopting me into the group and the adventures in South Africa! The meetings and discussions were a pleasure and provided me with a lot of enthusiasm to continue my project. I cherish the exchanges and I am glad to have met the bright and engaged researchers Loes Oudenhuisen, Peter Miller, Carole Ammann, Amisah Bakuri, Lise Woensdrecht, Lieve de Coninck, Janine Häbel, Dilys Amoabeng, Annerienke Fioole, Apostolos Andrikopoulos, and Norah Kiereri.

Progress, not perfection: that is what you need while writing! I thoroughly enjoyed and benefited from the exchanges with Noah Little, Vasiliki Belia, Liang Kai and Pieter du Plessis. Thank you CGD for facilitating us to meet and share our work in progress.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Maastricht Centre for Citizenship, Migration and Development (MACIMIDE) and all their members for the engaging sessions during the yearly conference and beyond. I am also grateful for the 'return' meet ups together with Talitha Dubow and Laura Cleton. I genuinely enjoyed our discussions and I am looking forward to returning to one of our favorite restaurants in Maastricht or elsewhere!

Over the years I have met many encouraging researchers during conferences, trainings, workshops and as student. Besides critical but constructive comments and questions I am glad to have learned from your personal experiences as researchers. Thank you to all who engaged with my (previous) work, helped me grow and encouraged me. I think for instance of Dick Powis, Omar Cham, Sebastian Prothman, Lou Snijders, Ulrike Mueller, Annelien Bouland, Elsemieke van Osch, Martin Sökefeld, Sabine Strasser, Usman Mahar, Reena Kukreja, Esther Gallo, Árdís Ingvars, Leonie Jegen, Aino Korvensyrjä, Judith Altrogge, Julia Stier, Saskia Bonjour and Yassin Dia.

Thank you Gwyn Williams for reading and editing various texts over the years. John Harbord, I thank you for reading and providing feedback to my work in its earlier versions. Camille Banham, you are often far away but close at crucial moments. Thank you for your friendship and proofreading parts of this work over the years. Lisa Rathman, Indy Joosten, Wyne Veen, I thank you for helping me to figure out the last practical details of this dissertation. I have a lot more individuals to thank. To everyone not yet listed who read, commented, contributed their priceless thoughts, and helped me develop professionally or personally, I sincerely thank you.

Tijdens het schrijven van het laatste stuk van mijn Ph.D. werkte ik bij de Academie voor Sociaal Werk aan Hogeschool Zuyd. Ik wil mijn Zuyd collega's bedanken voor de aanmoediging tijdens het afronden van het laatste stukje van het proefschrift. Ik denk met name aan de leden van het lectoraat Sociale Integratie en specifiek aan Sabrina Keinemans, Maja Roçak en Lineke van Hal.

Throughout my stays in Senegal I spent time at various houses and places. I thank everyone who made me feel at home away from home. Specifically, I would like to thank Silvia and her community, family Diallo, Babacar, Stefania, the people of 'la maison rouge' and 'kërgumag'.

Many of my friends and family members know how important it is for me to get out of my mind and go outside, do sports, explore cultural events, or just catch up from time to time! I am looking forward to continue to hike, play beach volleyball, dance, cycle, climb or boulder together. I sincerely thank you all for your ongoing support and care. In particular I think of Dorien, Maayke, Myreen, Woutjan, Sanne, Iris, Masha, Laura, Charlotte, Soraya and Mo, Astrid and Niels, Annemiek, Sterre, Sara, Thomas, the Wagner family, Jolijn, David and Lian. Veel dank ook aan Christianne, Mary en Hans, Annemie en Thijs, Peet en Jef, Ineke en Dirk en Ria voor hun (praktische) support en lieve berichtjes tijdens en hopelijk ook na de Ph.D.

Karlijn, bijna naamgenoot, je gaf me een thuis toen ik terug naar Maastricht ging en hielp me te integreren in de academische wereld. Wat bijzonder om hier samen met jou als mijn paranimf te staan. Dank hiervoor en ik hoop op meer mooie wandelingen, dansen en samenwerkingen.

Yara, mijn tweelingzus van andere ouders, ik ben erg blij met jou als paranimf aan mijn zijde! Je luisterend oor, enthousiasme en positiviteit werken aanstekelijk en hebben me op cruciale momenten een push gegeven. Je bent er als dat nodig is en samen zetten we stappen –in Senegal, op het Pieterpad of elders- en gaan we vooruit. Ik kijk ernaar uit wat er verder nog gaat komen.

Ik wil mijn (schoon)familie bedanken voor het vertrouwen en hun steun. Het was misschien niet altijd te snappen waar ik mee bezig was of waar ik heen ging. Toch waren jullie er. Jullie en ook mijn neefjes en nichtje laten me zien dat het leven uit meer bestaat dan de Ph.D. en werk. Ik weet dat ik op jullie kan bouwen en jullie houden me scherp. Piet, José, Anthea en Lianne, bedankt voor alle momenten dat jullie klaarstonden, inclusief de (last-minute) reiskoffers en technische support. Ik wil mijn ouders en broer bedanken voor de sterke basis die ze me hebben gegeven waardoor ik uit durfde te vliegen. Pa, Thomas en Angelique, dankzij jullie kon ik periodes van zorg afwisselen met onderzoek in het buitenland, omdat ik wist dat jullie er waren. We hebben samen ervaren hoe dicht leven en dood bij elkaar liggen. Ik koester de basis en band die we, ook in onze nieuwe samenstelling, hebben.

Maarten, bij jou voel ik me vrij en toch geborgen. Waar sommigen me voor gek verklaarden naar de andere kant van het land te verhuizen en onderzoek te gaan doen in het buitenland, stelde jij me gerust en gaf me moed om door te gaan. Je geduld, praktische support, flexibiliteit, nieuwsgierigheid en kritische blik helpen me vooruit. Op naar een mooi vervolg!

December 2024

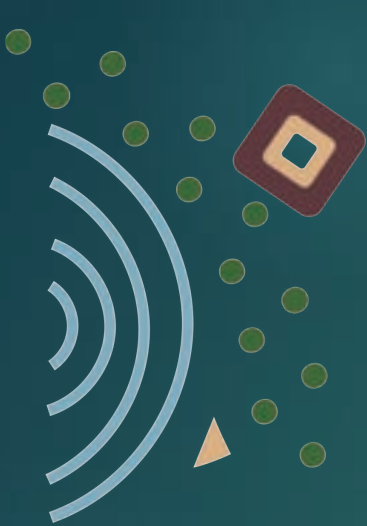
About the author

Karlien Srijbosch (Helmond, 1989), graduated with honours at University College Maastricht (UCM) in 2010. At this interdisciplinary Liberal Arts and Sciences Honours college, she discovered her interest in ethnographic methods. During a semester abroad at Waikato University in New Zealand, she explored anthropological courses and was part of the top 15% students.

In 2013, Karlien completed the research Master Cultural Anthropology: Sociocultural Transformations at Utrecht University. Her MSc thesis ethnographically explored the relationship between government interference and the intimate lives of young, well-educated, single women in Singapore. During her fieldwork in Singapore, she was a visiting scholar at the Asia Research Institute (ARI) at the National University of Singapore. The research was nominated for the Nieboer Prize for the best thesis in Cultural Anthropology at Utrecht University in 2013 and is published in the international peer-reviewed *Journal of Marriage and Family*.

While studying and after finishing the research master, she worked at a foundation for highly educated refugees in Utrecht (UAF) and as research assistant at Trimbos Institute. Before returning to academia, she was employed as an immigration officer at the Dutch Immigration Office (IND). In 2015, she started working as junior lecturer at the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASoS) at Maastricht University. Next to her teaching, she prepared the proposal for her Ph.D. project supported by prof. Dr. Mazzucato and Dr. Brunotte. In 2017 she successfully applied for the competitive funding grant 'Ph.D. in the Humanities' of the Dutch Scientific Organization (NWO). As part of her Ph.D. she conducted a year of ethnographic research, mostly in Senegal but also in Germany, to investigate how men who return from Europe to Senegal after an aborted migration project narrate and perform their return in Senegal. During her time in Senegal she was hosted by the Geography Department at the University of Cheikh Anta Diop in Dakar. Her research is published in international peer-reviewed journals such as *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *Ethnic and Racial Studies* and *Gender Place and Culture*. Karlien has presented her work at numerous national and international conferences and (co)-organized workshops.

Since 2023, she is a researcher and teacher at the Academy of Social Work at Zuyd University of Applied Sciences in Sittard.



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