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Perceptions and practices of migration and return in the Casamance, Senegal

Study Report

Institute for Migration Research and Intercultural Studies (IMIS)

University of Osnabrück

Deutsches Zentrum für Integrations- und Migrationsforschung (DeZIM) Research Community

Project: Transnational Perspectives on Migration and Integration (TRANSMIT)

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Contents

Abstract

The qualitative research data available here result from research conducted in Senegal, more precisely in the region of the Casamance. The study focused on migration perceptions and practices of potential migrants and returnees and was conducted within the framework of the DeZIM research community joint project *Transnational Perspectives on Migration and Integration* (TRANSMIT). The research interest focused on the interactions between policy efforts to regulate migration as practices of immobilization and transnational migration processes, return and reintegration processes, and on narratives and images of migration and how those influence migration decisions and processes. In form of a multi-sited panel study, longitudinal empirical data was collected through qualitative, semi-structured interviews and one focus group interview with return migrants and potential migrants in all three departments of the Casamance during two periods of fieldwork in 2019 and 2022/23. The empirical data is available in the form of transcripts (n=53) of the audio recordings.

1 Technical Data

Project Title	TRANSMIT - Transnational Perspectives on Migration and Integration (2020-2024) ExiTT. Exit - Transit – Transformation (2018-2019)
Research Institute	Institute for Migration Research and Intercultural Studies (IMIS) University of Osnabrück
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Project Applicants:	Prof. Dr. Ruud Koopmans, Prof. Dr. Naika Foroutan, Prof. Dr. Herbert Brücker, Prof. Dr. Helen Schwenken, Prof. Dr. Andreas Pott, Prof. Dr. Frank Kalter
Funding	Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend), Grant award no.: 3917SFP002 (ExiTT) & 3920405WZB (TRANSMIT)
Project duration:	January 2018 – December 2024
Status:	Completed
Link:	https://www.imis.uni-osnabrueck.de/dezim/transmit_transnational_perspectives_on_migration_and_integration.html https://www.dezim-institut.de/projekte/projekt-detail/transnational-perspectives-on-migration-and-integration-transmit-7-13/
Dataset:	Interview transcripts (n=53; wave 1 n=29; wave 2 n=24) from qualitative interviews with potential migrants and returnees
Country:	Senegal

Context materials	Interview guidelines first and second wave
Software	QualiAnon
Research Area(s)	Sociology; Geography; Anthropology; Migration Studies; Migration policy;

2 Context: Information about the research project and research context

2.1 Transnational perspectives on migration and integration (TRANSMIT)

The questions *why people migrate* and *where they choose to go* are central subjects in the field of migration studies. Since Ravenstein's (1885) laws of migration, a wide range of literature has investigated migration drivers (e.g. Carling & Collins, 2018; Van Hear, Bakewell, & Long, 2018) and the internal dynamics of migration processes (e.g. Bakewell, Engbersen, Fonseca, & Horst, 2016; de Haas, 2010). Moreover, migration is more than ever mediated through technologies, institutions, and actors, which facilitate or, as it increasingly becomes the case, condition and even prevent international movements. Consequently, migration infrastructures and the so-called migration industry have become important research focuses (Cranston, Schapendonk, & Spaan, 2018; Xiang & Lindquist, 2014). A second branch of migration studies focuses on the so-called receiving end of migration flows and on topics such as migrants integration in labour markets, intercultural/interethnic contact or the disposure to discrimination (e.g. Hall, King, & Finlay, 2017; Martiniello & Rath, 2010; Portes & Böröcz, 1989; Vertovec, 2007). Since the transnational turn (e.g.Faist, 2000; Glick Schiller, Basch, & Szanton-Blanc, 1992) and the establishment of network approaches in migration studies (e.g. Haug, 2008; Massey et al., 1998), it has been widely accepted that these two sides of migration processes are often interconnected and influence each other. However, in times of restrictive migration regimes, another factor needs to be considered for the understanding of migration. Due to structural factors, such as immigration laws and economic opportunities, migration has become increasingly complex, often including long and perilous journeys, transiting through a variety of countries and regions and consisting of phases of mobility and immobility, emplacement and displacement. Migration journeys have become increasingly complex, often involving a variety of countries and regions and consisting of phases of mobility and immobility (Jung, 2023; Paul & Yeoh, 2021; Schapendonk, van Liempt, Schwarz, & Steel, 2020; Vammen,

2019). This development affects migration decision-making and aspirations in the country of origin as well as the reintegration of returnees, and the integration processes in the country of destination. Russell King argues that three contextual settings need to be considered for the study of migration: 1) the sending-society context; 2) the receiving-society context, 3) the contextual settings of routes traversed and places and spaces passed through (King, 2018, p. 36). However, until now research has rarely focused on the interdependences between these three different contexts. Thus, little is known about the influence of the complexity of migration processes on migrant integration into the host country.

TRANSMIT is a migration research project of the DeZIM[1] Research Community and funded by the German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ) that seeks to fill this gap. The project is carried out in cooperation of the Berlin Institute for Empirical Integration and Migration Research (Humboldt University Berlin), the Institute for Employment Research (IAB), the Institute for Migration Research and Intercultural Studies (IMIS) (University Osnabrück), and the Berlin Social Science Center (WZB). TRANSMIT attempts to fill the research gap by building a long-term oriented and integrated data infrastructure that collects and systematically links quantitative and qualitative data in origin-, transit-, and destination countries in order to study the interdependencies between migration and integration processes in origin, transit and destination countries. TRANSMIT was preceded by the 2018-2019 pilot project ExiTT - Exit, Transit, Transformation, which was carried out by the above-mentioned research institutions together with the Mannheim Centre for European Social Research (MZES) (University Mannheim). It aimed to analyse different regions and their migration-induced interdependencies with Europe and Germany as part of a modular research design. During this pilot phase different methodological approaches to data collection in multiple contexts, such as Senegal, Gambia, Lebanon, and Germany, were tested.

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[1] German Centre for Integration and Migration Research

Based on the current state of research and building on the pilot phase, TRANSMIT seeks to shed light on the following - not exhaustive - list of highly relevant research questions: Why - in similar socioeconomic circumstances - do some people migrate while others stay behind? What factors determine the socio-demographic composition of migration flows – and how does this composition affect integration in Germany? How do (traumatic) experiences in the home context and during the journey affect migrants' prospects of integration in Germany? How do transnational networks (e.g., family, relatives, friends, but also information per se) affect migration processes and the social integration of migrants in Germany? Which factors play a role for participation and integration success, particularly for women and families? How are these processes and experiences both shaped by and shaping migration governance regimes? To which extent can transnational networks be used as a resource and function as a protective factor to deal with psychological challenges of the integration process?

TRANSMIT studies the complex interplay of migration dynamics, migrant wellbeing and integration processes by building a long-term and integrated data-infrastructure that collects and links quantitative and qualitative data and knowledge on origin-, transit-, and destination countries and enables comprehensive and comparative analyses. Grasping the complexity of migration also entails looking at the return phenomenon. The research conducted contributes to a better understanding of the social complexities surrounding the return and reintegration process in the country of origin and the different ways through which return influences new migration movements.

Using a mixed-methods research design, the project conducts observations along different migration routes. More precisely, TRANSMIT focuses on two regions of origin and transit that are relevant for Europe: West Africa (especially Senegal, The Gambia, Nigeria and Morocco) and the Middle East (especially Lebanon and Turkey). In Europe, research was conducted in Germany and Italy. TRANSMIT collects quantitative and qualitative data among migrants during and after their migration, and the population in the regions of origin, as well as relevant

actors from the political sphere and civil society. The data available here is limited to 2 qualitative data sets, which were collected in Senegal[2].

2.2 Research context Senegal

Senegal, one of the origin countries focused in the TRANSMIT projects, is a country that is characterised by a mobile population, both in terms of internal and international migration. It has a long and dynamic history of migration within the African continent, especially in West Africa, but also to countries in other regions of the continent like Gabon, Marocco, the Republic of Congo and more recently to South Africa, and to other continents, above all to Europe but also increasingly to North America (Fall, 2016; Tall, 2002).
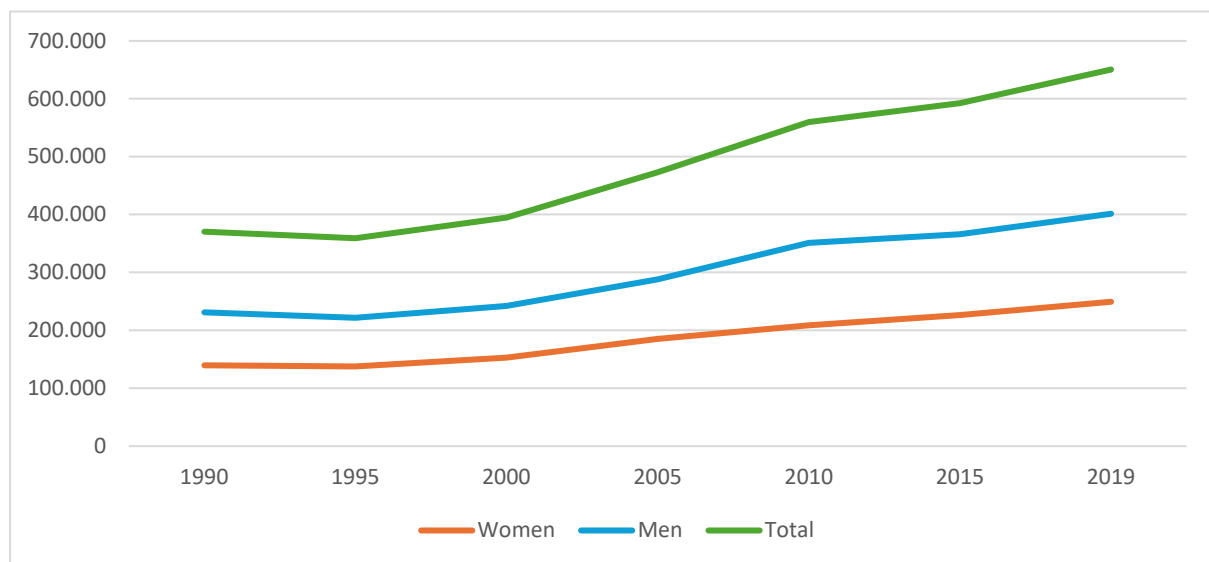

Figure 1 Development of number of Senegalese immigrants in the World (1990 - 2019)
Source: Own graphic after data from UNDESA (2019)

Figure 1 shows the development of the global number of Senegalese immigrants. It is possible to identify a strong increase since 2000. Moreover, the data shows that, although the majority of Senegalese migrants in the world are men, women represent around 38 per cent of the

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[2] If you are interested in further results of the project, please consult the list of publications at the project web page (https://www.dezim-institut.de/en/projects/project-detail/transnational-perspectives-on-migration-and-integration-transmit-7-13/) and the selection in Chapter 5 of this report. Furthermore, the quantitative data sets will be made publicly available by the Research Data Centre DeZIM.fdz (https://www.dezim-institut.de/en/dezimfdz/about-the-research-data-centre-dezimfdz/) in the near future.

total in 2019. Thus, the data questions the common assumption that Senegalese emigration is a male domain.

According to the UN DESA data, Senegalese emigration is mainly directed to Africa and Europe. In 2019, both continents contained about 90% of the total number of Senegalese immigrants. Africa was the continent with the highest number of Senegalese migrants until 2005, after which Europe surpassed it. Since 1990, the proportion of Senegalese immigrants living in Europe in the overall stock of Senegalese immigrants grew from 34.5% to 47.5%, while the proportion living in Africa fell from 64.7% to 44.1%. The significant increase in numbers in North America, from 2,753 in 1990 to 53,692 in 2019, is also striking. In Europe the three countries with the highest number of Senegalese immigrants are France, Italy and Spain. The three countries alone host about 92% of the total population of Senegalese immigrants in Europe. Germany has a rather small community with about 5500 registered Senegalese migrants, which, however, has increased by about 40% since 2010 (UNDESA, 2019). Since the end of the 1990s, South American countries, especially Argentina and Brazil, have also been included income part of the trajectories of Senegalese migrants (Jung, 2019; Minvielle, 2015; Tedesco & Kleidermacher, 2017).

Emigration processes in Senegal were never limited to a single ethnic group or region of origin. As a general trend of the last decades, it is possible to observe a shift in the 'epicentre' of Senegalese emigration from the Senegal valley to the central region of the country and the urban centres (Sakho, Diagne, & Sambou, 2017). Today, all 14 regions of Senegal are experiencing emigration movements, albeit to varying degrees. Senegalese emigration movements have become both more diverse and more complex[3]. Over the decades, emigration from Senegal has considerably increased, Senegalese migrant networks have expanded and included new countries (de Clerck, 2015; Diouf, 2000; Kaag, 2013; Kleidermacher, 2016). A strong culture of migration has developed in many regions of the

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[3] It should be mentioned that the country was and still is simultaneously a country of immigration, mainly from other West African countries.

countries and emigration has significantly shaped Senegalese society (Mondain, Diagne, & Randall, 2013; Riccio, 2005).

The data provided here addresses three main topics: Migration aspirations, migration experiences and return migration. Migration aspirations are widespread in Senegal (Mbodji, 2008). A survey conducted within the EUMAGINE project indicates that about 73% of the population aspire to migrate (Fall, Sarr, Carling, Hernández-Carretero, & Wu, 2012). However, due to restrictive migration regimes, it has become increasingly difficult to migrate internationally, especially to the most desired destinations in Europe or North America. Kleist (2017) therefore speaks of a mobility paradox that is characterised on the one hand by widespread migration aspirations, resulting from processes of globalization (see also Graw & Schielke, 2012), and on the other by increasing barriers to move legally for most of the population of the Global South. While restrictive migration policies and control (Casas-Cortes, Cobarrubias, & Pickles, 2013; Vives, 2017) did not result in less emigration from Senegal, they have increased the duration and distance and also the risks of migrant journeys (Hernández-Carretero & Carling, 2013; Schapendonk et al., 2020; Vammen, 2019). Europe's border externalization has also led to migrants being stuck in North African countries (Collyer, 2010; Stock, 2019). In this context, unsuccessful migration projects and migrants returning empty-handed have become a common phenomenon in Senegal and other West African countries. For long, return migration has been understood as a relatively straightforward process, in which migrants return to the place where they "belong", without encountering any major obstacles for their "reintegration". However, more recent studies have shown that return is neither a linear process nor is a successful post-return "reintegration" guaranteed (Carling & Erdal, 2014; Kleist, 2020; Lietaert & Kuschminder, 2021; Strijbosch, Mazzucato, & Brunotte, 2023). The latter often depends on how migrants return, but also on how they left in the first place, and what they carry in their "baggage" (e.g. financial means for future project, the support of the family or the repayment of debts related to the migration etc.). The success of reintegration can affect the development of re-emigration aspirations by returnees.

Unsuccessful reintegration or difficulties to readapt to the circumstances may trigger aspirations to migrate again. The same applies to the sudden appearance of opportunities for international movement. In consequence, return decisions should be conceptualised as open and fluid.

3 Data collection: Fieldwork preparation and conduction

3.1 Study design: Research interest, questions and sampling strategy

The research in Senegal had the objective to collect empirical data regarding three main research interests, which we summarise here briefly.

First, we examine the interactions between policy efforts to regulate migration as practices of immobilization and transnational migration processes. In recent years, the political efforts of the EU and its member states to manage and limit immigration from Sub-Saharan Africa have noticeably intensified. We seek to understand how European migration management, including programs to "fight the root causes of migration" and to "encourage return migration", affect migration decisions and processes.

Second, we address return migration as an integral part of migration cycles. Depending on the motives and trajectories of return, they can have different meanings for the reproduction of migration patterns and thus also influence future migration dynamics. We focus on the factor of (limited) voluntariness in individual return decisions and experiences as well as its social and political consequences.

Third, we analyse narratives and images of migration. We examine how migrants and those living in the context of origin perceive migration, destination countries and return. Through an examination of knowledge production processes, we trace how, by what means and when these narratives and images are constituted or change. Ultimately, we examine their significance in the context of migration decisions and processes.

The empirical data was collected through qualitative methods, including semi-structured interviews, expert interviews, and observations in Senegal's most southern region, the Casamance. With the objective to observe developments over time and at different places, the research was designed as a multi-sited panel study that allowed us to collect longitudinal data and investigate the impact of different geographical locations in the Casamance. The data made available here results from semi-structured interviews with potential migrants and returnees that were conducted during two periods of fieldwork in the three administrative regions of the Casamance. The category 'potential migrant' is used as an umbrella term for everyone that did not have any previous emigration experience. This also includes family members of emigrants that may not express any intentions or aspirations to migrate themselves. On the other hand, return migrants may also aspire to migrate again and could be designated as potential migrants. Our dichotomy of return and potential migrants, thus, only highlights the presence and absence of international migration and return experiences and does not indicate any preference for staying or emigrating. The first round of data collection was conducted in October 2019, followed by the second between December 2022 and January 2023. A more detailed description of the two field work periods follows in the next chapter.

Figure 2 Political Map of Senegal,
Source: Worldometers.info (2023)

The choice of Casamance as the fieldwork site was based on several factors. While migration processes in Senegal have attracted a lot of attention from national and international scholars, studies have mainly focused on the region of Dakar, the Senegal valley and the Groundnut basin. With regard to migration, the Casamance is relatively understudied. This lack of knowledge was an important argument for conducting research in the Casamance. Furthermore, the region is characterised by several features that set it apart from other regions of the country. Most obvious is its geographic isolation. Only in the east it is not separated through The Gambia from the rest of the country. Since the 1980s the region has been affected by low-level warfare between the Senegalese government and the MFDC (*Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques de Casamance)*, which seek the independence of the Casamance. Despite its great potential for agriculture, it is one of the poorest regions of

Senegal. With regard to its ethnic composition, it is the most diverse region of Senegal. Finally, the qualitative data complements quantitative data from a panel survey conducted in the Casamance in 2019 and 2021 (see Auer & Schaub, 2023; Schaub & Auer, 2023).

With the objective to get a diverse sample, the empirical data was collected in the three administrative regions of the Casamance. While Ziguinchor, Sédhiou and Kolda share some characteristics, for example the high percentage of rural population, each of them has also its particularities. The Casamance conflict, for example, is mainly concentrated on some parts of the Ziguinchor region. The ethnic composition of its population also differs between the three regions. The fieldwork was conducted in different localities regarding population size and density. In the region Ziguinchor empirical data was collected in the regional capital Ziguinchor, a mid-sized city of over 200.000 inhabitants, in Bignona a city of over 27.000 inhabitants, and in several smaller towns located east of Ziguinchor. In Sédhiou, in contrary, all interviews were conducted in villages. In Kolda, the fieldwork took place in several neighbourhoods in the outskirt of Kolda, the regional capital after which the region is named and that has over 80.000 inhabitants, and some small villages between 10 and 30 km distant from Kolda. Doing fieldwork in the three regions, in different settings and with persons from different ethnic and social backgrounds allowed us to avoid a homogeneous sample and to diversify our data.

The sample strategy followed several criteria. First, we wanted an equal sample of returnees and potential migrants. Secondly, the three regions of the Casamance (Ziguinchor, Kolda and Sédhiou) as well as rural and urban areas should be equally represented in the sample. Third, the objective was a balanced gender distribution of the sample. Finally, the sample should include different levels of education.

3.2 Fieldwork: conditions and data collection

Fieldwork October 2019

The first fieldwork took place in October 2019 and was carried out by Hamza Safouane (IMIS), Julia Stier (WZB) and Amadou Mballo (Université Assane Seck in Ziguinchor). A snowball sampling was applied to recruit the interviewees. The starting point were three gatekeepers: 1) Amadou Mballo, our research assistant from Université Assane Seck in Ziguinchor, who had already conducted interviews with returnees and used these contacts to recruit interviewees for our study; 2) a migrant on a return visit, who Julia Stier knew personally, that recruited returnees in his village; and 3) a potential migrant, who Julia Stier knew due to personal connections, that enabled us to conduct interviews with several potential migrants and a returnee. The general rule of data saturation was applied. The interviews took place in an environment familiar to the participants, for example at their home or workplace, at the university or in the shades of a tree in their courtyard or village. Before the interview started, the research participants were informed about the research project, the use of the data and that all personal data would be anonymised afterwards. All of them participated voluntarily in the study and their verbal consent to participate in the study was obtained before the interviews started.

During four weeks of fieldwork, 29 semi-structured interviews were conducted – 20 of them with returnees and nine with potential migrants. A focus group interview (Pot_7_Focus) with seven potential migrants complements the empirical data resulting from the semi-structured interviews. In total 42 persons were interviewed during the fieldwork. All interviews were conducted in either French, Wolof or Pular. In the case of the last two languages, questions and answers were translated during the interview either by Amadou Mballo or Julia Stier so that follow-up questions were possible. These translations are also included in transcripts of the interviews.

Transcript (Data ID)	Interviewee (Case ID)	Gender	Category	Region
TRANSMIT_2019_1	Pot_1_F	Female	Potential migrant	Ziguinchor
TRANSMIT_2019_2	Ret_1_M	Male	Returnee	Ziguinchor
TRANSMIT_2019_3	Ret_2_M	Male	Returnee	Ziguinchor
TRANSMIT_2019_3	Ret_3_M	Male	Returnee	Ziguinchor
TRANSMIT_2019_4	Ret_4_M	Male	Returnee	Ziguinchor
TRANSMIT_2019_5	Pot_2_F	Female	Potential migrant	Ziguinchor
TRANSMIT_2019_6	Ret_5_M	Male	Returnee	Ziguinchor
TRANSMIT_2019_7	Pot_3_F	Female	Potential migrant	Ziguinchor
TRANSMIT_2019_7	Pot_4_M	Male	Potential migrant	Ziguinchor
TRANSMIT_2019_8	Pot_5_M	Male	Potential migrant	Ziguinchor
TRANSMIT_2019_9	Pot_6_M	Male	Potential migrant	Ziguinchor
TRANSMIT_2019_10	Pot_7_Focus	Male	Potential migrants	Ziguinchor
TRANSMIT_2019_11	Ret_6_M	Male	Returnee	Ziguinchor
TRANSMIT_2019_11	Ret_7_M	Male	Returnee	Ziguinchor
TRANSMIT_2019_12	Ret_8_M	Male	Returnee	Ziguinchor
TRANSMIT_2019_12	Ret_9_M	Male	Returnee	Ziguinchor
TRANSMIT_2019_12	Ret_10_M	Male	Returnee	Ziguinchor
TRANSMIT_2019_13	Pot_8_M	Male	Potential migrant	Ziguinchor
TRANSMIT_2019_14	Pot_9_F	Female	Potential migrants	Ziguinchor
TRANSMIT_2019_14	Pot_10_F	Female	Potential migrant	Ziguinchor
TRANSMIT_2019_15	Pot_11_M	Male	Potential migrant	Sédhiou
TRANSMIT_2019_16	Ret_11_M	Male	Returnee	Kolda
TRANSMIT_2019_17	Ret_12_M	Male	Returnee	Kolda
TRANSMIT_2019_17	Ret_13_M	Male	Returnee	Kolda
TRANSMIT_2019_18	Ret_14_M	Male	Returnee	Kolda
TRANSMIT_2019_19	Pot_12_F	Female	Potential migrant	Kolda
TRANSMIT_2019_20	Ret_15_M	Male	Returnee	Kolda
TRANSMIT_2019_21	Ret_16_M	Male	Returnee	Kolda
TRANSMIT_2019_22	Ret_17_M	Male	Returnee	Kolda
TRANSMIT_2019_23	Ret_18_M	Male	Returnee	Kolda
TRANSMIT_2019_24	Ret_19_M	Male	Returnee	Kolda
TRANSMIT_2019_25	Ret_20_M	Male	Returnee	Sédhiou
TRANSMIT_2019_26	Ret_21_M	Male	Returnee	Sédhiou

TRANSMIT_2019_27	Ret_22_M	Male	Returnee	Sédhiou
TRANSMIT_2019_28	Ret_23_M	Male	Returnee	Kolda
TRANSMIT_2019_29	Ret_24_M	Male	Returnee	Kolda

Table 1 List of interviewees (wave 1)

Out of the 20 interviews with return migrants, four were joint interviews with two persons (TRANSMIT_2019_3, TRANSMIT_2019_11 & TRANSMIT_2019_17) or three persons (TRANSMIT_2019_12). As a result, a total of 24 returnees were interviewed, all of them men. Regarding the geographical location of the interviews, there is a predominance of Ziguinchor and Kolda, where six and nine interviews respectively took place. In Sédhiou only three interviews with returnees were conducted.

The interviews followed a loose structure, and three groups of subjects were addressed through different questions. First, the research participants were asked to introduce themselves. Secondly, they were asked to recount their migration experience and trajectory. In this context, the returnees were also asked to speak about their aspirations concerning the migration and how these developed, the process of migration decision-making and the preparation for the migration. Thirdly, questions regarding the return and the process of reintegrating were asked. This also includes questions about their attitude towards migrating again and if they talk to potential migrants about migration.

Out of the 9 interviews with potential migrants, two were joint interviews (TRANSMIT_2019_7; TRANSMIT_2019_14) – one with a married couple and one with two female students. In total, 11 potential migrants were interviewed, six of them were women. Most of the interviews were conducted in the region of Ziguinchor, with only two in Sédhiou and one in Kolda. Furthermore, one focus group interview with seven young men, all member of a youth association, was carried out in the region of Ziguinchor. The interviews with potential migrants also followed a loose structure. They were asked to briefly introduce themselves first. Then they were asked to speak about their perceptions of migration and

whether they personally know emigrants. Those who expressed aspirations to migrate where then asked to elaborate further on these plans and their preparation to migrate.

As the above-mentioned information about the interviews already indicate, the target of a balanced gender distribution in the sample was not achieved. Out of the 42 persons interviewed, only six were women, all of them potential migrants. While women make up around a third of the respondents among the potential migrants, they account for 0% of the returnees interviewed. Consequently, there was a complete gender imbalance among the returnees. Female returnees that return involuntarily are often exposed to specific stigmatisations (see Kleist, 2020), which could be one reason for the encountered difficulties to get access to them and gain their confidence. Another explanation could be the lack of a female gatekeeper.

The objective to achieve a balanced representation of the three regions in the sample was only partly realised with only five interviews conducted in Sédhiou. Nonetheless, all three regions are represented in the sample. Furthermore, the sample includes research participants living in urban and rural areas, in mid-sized and small-sized cities and in different neighbourhoods of the cities and, thus, allows to study the impact of geographical locations with different characteristics. The sample is also divers regarding socioeconomic characteristics of the research participants. 20 of the research participants are married, eight are singles and three did not indicate their marital status. The sample covers a wide spectrum of age groups. Nine of the interviewees were in their twenties, five in their thirties, 14 in their forties, three in their fifties and one was in his sixties. With regard to the other participants, the age is unknown. Information about the level of education is incomplete. It is higher within the sample of potential migrants with seven participants holding a university degree, while within the sample of return migrants none has a university degree and only two finished secondary school.

Fieldwork December 2022 – January 2023

The second period of fieldwork took place between December 2022 and January 2023 and was carried out by Amadou Mballo (Université Assane Seck Ziguinchor) and Philipp Jung (IMIS). Before the data collection started, Amadou Mballo contacted the research participants from 2019 to find out their availability for a second interview.

Transcript (Data ID)	Interviewee (Case ID)	Gender	Category	Region
TRANSMIT_2022-23_1	Ret_7_M	Male	Returnee	Ziguinchor
TRANSMIT_2022-23_2	Ret_1_M	Male	Returnee	Ziguinchor
TRANSMIT_2022-23_3	Ret_6_M	Male	Returnee	Ziguinchor
TRANSMIT_2022-23_4	Ret_5_M	Male	Returnee	Ziguinchor
TRANSMIT_2022-23_5	Ret_9_M	Male	Returnee	Ziguinchor
TRANSMIT_2022-23_6	Ret_10_M	Male	Returnee	Ziguinchor
TRANSMIT_2022-23_7	Ret_8_M	Male	Returnee	Ziguinchor
TRANSMIT_2022-23_8	Ret_12_M	Male	Returnee	Kolda
TRANSMIT_2022-23_9	Ret_16_M	Male	Returnee	Kolda
TRANSMIT_2022-23_10	Ret_13_M	Male	Returnee	Kolda
TRANSMIT_2022-23_11	Ret_17_M	Male	Returnee	Kolda
TRANSMIT_2022-23_12	Ret_23_M	Male	Returnee	Kolda
TRANSMIT_2022-23_13	Ret_24_M	Male	Returnee	Kolda
TRANSMIT_2022-23_14	Pot_12_F	Female	Potential migrant	Kolda
TRANSMIT_2022-23_15	Ret_14_M	Male	Returnee	Kolda
TRANSMIT_2022-23_16	Ret_22_M	Male	Returnee	Sédhiou
TRANSMIT_2022-23_17	Ret_25_M	Male	Returnee	Sédhiou
TRANSMIT_2022-23_18	Ret_20_M	Male	Returnee	Sédhiou
TRANSMIT_2022-23_19	Ret_26_M	Male	Returnee	Sédhiou
TRANSMIT_2022-23_20	Ret_27_M	Male	Returnee	Sédhiou
TRANSMIT_2022-23_21	Ret_21_M	Male	Returnee	Sédhiou
TRANSMIT_2022-23_22	Ret_4_M	Male	Returnee	Kolda
TRANSMIT_2022-23_23	Pot_2_F	Female	Potential migrant	Ziguinchor
TRANSMIT_2022-23_24	Pot_8_M	Male	Potential migrant	Dakar

Table 2 List of interviewees (wave 2)

The goal of a panel structure for the interviews could not be fulfilled in all cases. In some cases, it was not possible to locate or even contact the interviewee. Five of the returnees have emigrated again. In two of those cases, we manged to talk to family members instead. For the cases where it was not possible to locate the interviewee or at least some of his or her family members in 2022/23, the data is limited to the fieldwork from 2019.

The empirical data from 2022/23 also consists of semi-structured interviews. In total 24 interviews were conducted, including 19 interviews with return migrants. All of them were already interviewed in 2019. However, in the case of four interviews no transcripts exist for the interviews conducted during the first wave of data collection. Due to a low quality of information content of the interviews, a transcription was not carried out in these cases. As already mentioned, some of the interviewees from 2019 were no longer met as they had emigrated again. In two of these cases (Ret_21_M & Ret_4_M), we managed to interview one or two of their brothers respectively. Only three interviews with potential migrants, who were interviewed in 2019, were conducted, of these two were with women.

All interviews were conducted individually, although in some cases in the presence of other interviewees. The language of the interviews was either French, Wolof or Pular. Except for one interview with a female potential migrant, all interviews in Ziguinchor were conducted by Amadou Mballo. Therefore, no translation happened during the interviews. All Interviews in Sédhiou and Kolda were conducted by Amadou Mballo and Philipp Jung. By far the largest number of these interviews were conducted in Pular and Amadou Mballo translated questions and answers during the interview from Pular to French and vice versa. Before the interviews started, the research participants were informed once again about the study and its objectives, the possible use of the empirical data and the anonymisation of personal data. A written consent to participate in the study was obtained by all participants.

While the focus of the 2019 study was on perceptions and migration practices, the 2022 follow-up study had the objective to understand whether the plans and intentions have

changed since 2019. Both returnees and potential migrants were first asked to recount how they have experienced their lives the last years and if their situation has changed since the first interview in 2019. Furthermore, they were asked how specific developments like the COVID 19 pandemic, the high inflation rate, or the evolution of the Casamance conflict have impacted their situation. Then they were asked if their plans or aspirations have changed due to these developments or their current situation and if they have emigrated or tried to do so since 2019. Returnees were also asked to talk about their economic reintegration and the relations with their family and community and whether there have been any changes in this respect.

3.3 Reflections on the social and situational aspects of data collection

Qualitative research is always influenced by the relation between researcher and research participant. Especially scholars from feminist and postcolonial studies call for consideration of the impacts of positionality and the power relationship between researcher and research participants in the research process and argue that knowledge production is always situated and influenced through historical and social dimensions (England, 1994; Reich, 2021; Sultana, 2015). Except for Amadou Mballo, none of the researchers who participated in the data collection originates from Senegal. Julia Stier and Philipp Jung are both white Germans and Hamza Safouane is from Marocco, but lives in Germany. Especially in rural areas in Senegal, conducting research as a (white) European may lead to certain expectations of the research participants and local populations. For example, one participant asked us to get the German government to work directly with the Senegalese returnees and not to involve the Senegalese government, as this prevents the support from reaching them. Although we tried to avoid unrealistic expectations by explaining the research project, our position as researchers at a German university and our scope for actions before the interview started, it cannot be excluded that some interviewees participated in the hope that it will benefit them in some way. A compensation for participation was never paid.

Our positionality, of course, may not only lead to certain expectations, but also can influence the answers given by the research participants and the relation of confidence between them and us. Amadou Mballo's participation in the research was certainly an important factor in gaining access to the field. Moreover, nationality is not the only marker that can influence the positionality (Carling, Erdal, & Ezzati, 2014). Julia Stier and Philipp Jung have both lived in Senegal for a couple of years and have very good and basic knowledge of Wolof respectively. This may have had a positive influence in gaining the trust of the interviewees.

4 Data preparation, analysis and reuse potential

4.1 Transcription & translation

During both periods of fieldwork, the interviews were audio-recorded on a mobile device with the consent of the participants. The audio files were stored on a secure server at Osnabrück University. Since the interviews were conducted in different languages, different procedures for their transcription were applied. In the case of interviews conducted in French, the transcript is a written, verbatim reproduction of the interview. In cases where French was not the interview language, the interviews were first transcribed in the original language (Pular or Wolof). In a second step, the transcript was translated into French. If a translation already took place during the interview, the transcript contains both this translation and the translation subsequently carried out during transcription. The first is shown in the transcripts in brackets and is labelled as *Français* (French). All interviews were transcribed, time-coded and, if necessary, translated by Amadou Mballo.

4.2 Data protection and anonymisation

The next step of the data preparation was the anonymisation of sensitive, personal data in the transcripts. These are data that could be used to identify the research participants or other persons mentioned in the interview, including names and ages of persons and names of places, companies, or universities. With regard to the name of places, we decided only to

anonymise the name of villages, small towns, or neighbourhoods. The name of bigger cities and of the region have been maintained, as in our opinion they do not allow identification due to their population size but include important contextual information. The anonymisation was carried out using the software QualiAnon (Nicolai, Mozygemba, Kretzer, & Hollstein, 2021). Five categories of anonymisation have been created. These are: Personal data, location information, time, and information regarding employment, education or associations. These categories have been assigned different labels, which in turn offer different selection options. The table 3 offers an overview of the different categories, labels and selections options that were applied during the process of anonymisation.

In addition to the names of regions and larger cities already mentioned, we decided not to anonymise different characteristics of the interviewee, which in our opinion contain relevant information for a better understanding of the circumstances and living conditions of the research participants. These include information about the civil status, number of children or the type of labour and income source and do not facilitate the identification of the person. For example, work in agriculture or carpentry are very common and even in the cases, where we did not anonymise the name of the place of residence (e.g. Ziguinchor or Kolda), this does not enable identification of the interviewee.

Category	Label	Selection options
Données personnelles	**Nom**	Nom d. interviewé(e)
		Nom d. ami(e)
		Nom de la famille
		Nom de la person
	L'année de naissance	Selection options for year number sections (1941-1945; 1946-1950; 1951-1955 etc.)
	Âge	Selection options for age groups (0-5; 6-10; 11-15; 16-20 etc.)

Lieu	Village	Village région Ziguinchor
		Village région Sédhiou
		Village région Kolda
		Nom de village
	Ville sénégalais	Ville région Ziguinchor
		Ville région Sédhiou
		Ville région Kolda
		Ville région Saint Louis
	Nom	Nom de quartier
		Nom de ville français
		Nom de rue
	Département sénégalais	Département région Ziguinchor
		Département région Sédhiou
		Département région Kolda
Nom	Nom	Nom d'entreprise
		Nom d'association
		Nom d'établissement
		Nom d'école
		Nom d'organisation
		Nom d'université sénégalaise
		Nom d'université français
Indication du temps (Indication of time)	Trimestre d'année (Annual quarter)	1°
		2°
		3°
		4°

Table 3 Categories, labels & selection options for the anonymisation

4.3 Reuse potential

All interviews (n=53) from both waves are archived at Qualiservice and provided for secondary use in research and academic teaching. The greatest reutilisation potential of the available data is obviously in the field of migration studies. The datasets for 2019 and 2022/23 can be used individually or together. Among other things, the 2019 data can be used to analyse and compare individual migration trajectories and to identify different factors that influence them. They illustrate the precarious conditions which Senegalese migrants encounter during their

journeys and how they try to cope with them. The data also provide insights into the decision-making process for migration, also with regard to renewed migration attempts. Furthermore, different aspects of return and reintegration processes can be studied, including the stigmatisation of empty-handed returnees and how they deal with it. Another option for data analysis relates to narratives and images of migration. The analysis of the datasets from 2019 and 2022/23 allows to observe developments of aspirations to migrate or to stay over time and what factors contribute to changes of aspirations. Furthermore, it is possible to analyse how the reintegration process of returnees unfolds over the years.

5 Context materials and project publications

The interview guidelines of the first and second wave of data collection are available in French for scientific re-use as part of the dataset. This includes four guidelines:

a) 2019 Potential migrants topic guide
b) 2019 Returnees topic guide
c) 2022-23 Family members follow up topic guide
d) 2022-23 Returnees & potential migrants follow up topic guide

Selection of **scientific and policy-related publications**

Altrogge, Judith & Auer, Daniel (2020). Zurück ins Herkunftsland? Warum eine „geringe Bleibeperspektive" für Asylsuchende aus Gambia kein Grund zur Rückkehr ist, DeZIMinutes #02

Altrogge, Judith (2023). Income prospect trajectories after state-induced return from Germany to the Gambia: Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration as 'slow deportation'. *sozialpolitik. ch*, (2/2023), 2-4.

Altrogge, Judith (2023). Managing power-knowledge imbalances in researcher-informant relationships: Methodological and ethical implications for longitudinal post-return research. in: Hg. A. Radziwinowiczówna, Edward Elgar.Research Methods in Deportation: The Power-Knowledge Approach.

Altrogge, Judith; Stier, Julia (2023). Migration und Migrationspolitik in Westafrika. Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung, Regionalprofil im Dossier: Migration weltweit - Daten - Geschichte - Politik. https://www.bpb.de/themen/migration-integration/laenderprofile/541954/migration-und-migrationspolitik-in-westafrika/.

Glyniadki, Katerina; Ratzmann, Nora; Stier, Julia (2025): Migrant returnees as (anti-)migration messengers? A case of street-level representative bureaucracy in Senegal. International Migration, 63(1), e13382, https://doi.org/10.1111/imig.13382

Helbling, Marc; Auer, Daniel; Meierrieks, Daniel; Mistry, Malcolm & Schaub, Max (2021). Climate change literacy and migration potential: micro-level evidence from Africa. Climatic Change, 169(1), 1-13. [SSCI; Impact Factor: 4.743]

Safouane, Hamza & Schaub, Max (2021). Zu arm, um zu migrieren? Wie Armut und Migration zusammenhängen. Befunde aus Gambia und Senegal, DeZIMinutes #04

Schaub, Max & Auer, Daniel (2022). Rebel recruitment and migration: Theory and evidence from Southern Senegal. Journal of Conflict Resolution, 00220027221118258.

Stier, Julia (2020). "Senegalesische Corona-Songs als Sensibilisierungs- und Informationsquelle für wolofsprachige Geflüchtete und Migrant*innen". In: Z'Flucht - Zeitschrift für Flucht- und Flüchtlingsforschung, 4(1), 131-148.

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Zanker, Franzisca & Altrogge, Judith (2022). Protective exclusion as a postcolonial strategy: Rethinking deportations and sovereignty in the Gambia. Security Dialogue, 53(5), 475–493. [SSCI; Impact Factor: 3.459]

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