Abstract

This dissertation provides a geopolitical and gender analysis of the border that was built between 2005 and 2010 to stop unwanted migration from Senegal to Spain. I combine an investigation of institutional practices and of the experiences of migrants who crossed (or tried to cross) that border. This work constructs a genealogy of the Spanish - Senegalese border, including the obstacles placed to stop unwanted migration and the strategies adopted by migrants to enter EU space. To do so I draw from three bodies of literature: scholarship on migrant transnationalism, critical geopolitics, and feminist political geography. This analysis is built on extensive primary research complemented by secondary data, including life histories, participant observation, and interviews with migrants, members of their transnational social networks, former smugglers, service providers, supra-state organizations, state bureaucrats, and state security forces, as well as official statistics, legislation, and media accounts.

I contend that gender is an articulating factor of international migrations. In the case of contemporary Senegalese migration to Spain, I argue that the re-enforcement and militarization of the border was disproportional to the number of migrants using land and sea routes. These efforts were partly responsible for a decrease in illegal migration by land and sea after 2007, but migration by air and secondary migration from other countries of the EU (which represent the majority of the migrant flow) was unaffected. Despite the obstacles placed to stop it, the migration of Senegalese continued and even increased during this period, mainly thanks to the support that transnational social networks provided to migrants. The main consequence of the preventive and defensive anti-immigration measures adopted was a re-territorialization of the EU border.

The findings suggest the importance of integrating a variety of scales in the study of the processes, actors, and mechanisms involved in the territorial re-definition of state and supranational borders. In the case of the EU, I contend that as a response militarization is ethically questionable, economically wasteful, and inadequate. Finally, this study suggests the need to engage in a mobile cartography of the migrant transnational network to account for its transformations across time and space.
Preface


Parts of a chapter co-authored with Sesé Sité (Vives and Sité 2010) have been used in Chapter 7. The background in-depth interviews for this publication were carried out equally, although I was the lead author and responsible for writing the majority of the paper. The complete references is Vives, Luna and Sité, Sesé (2010) Negra española, negra extranjera: dos historias de una misma discriminación.” *Revista Estudios de Juventud: Discriminaciones diversas en las personas jóvenes*, 89 (Junio), 163-186.

This research project benefitted from collaboration with a Spanish research team, currently working on a project on transnational households that compares the experiences of Senegalese and Ecuadorian migrants in Spain “Negotiations of sex / gender positionings within households and transnationalism “from below:” a comparative study of transnational social relations among Ecuadorian and Senegalese migrant populations with a focus on the Embajadores district, Madrid, and the Campo de Cartagena, Murcia” [Resignificación de las posiciones de sexo / género y de los hogares en el transnacionalismo ‘por abajo:’ estudio de las relaciones sociales transnacionales de los colectivos de migrantes ecuatorianos y senegaleses a partir de sus anclajes en Embajadores (Madrid) y en el Campo de Cartagena (Murcia)]. The team, hosted at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid, is headed by Professor Fernando José García Selgas. The reference number in the database of the Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness is CSO2008-04838.

The UBC Behavioural Research Ethics Board reviewed and approved the fieldwork associated with this research project in February 17, 2009 (H08-02189).
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List of acronyms


AI: Amnesty International (INGO).

CEAR: Comisión Española de Ayuda al Refugiado, Spanish Commission for Refugee Assistance.

CETI: Centro de Estancia Temporal de Inmigrantes, Spanish Government Centre for the Temporary Stay of Migrants.

CFA franc: currency used in West African states (Communauté Financière Africaine or African Financial Community).

CIMADE: French NGO for the protection of undocumented immigrants.

CIE: Centro de Internamiento de Extranjeros, Spanish Government Centre for the Internment of Foreigners.

CIS: Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas, Spanish Institute for Sociological Research.

CTA: Clandestine Transnational Actor.

EC: European Commission.

ECOWAS

EDF: European Development Fund.

EU: European Union.

EUROSUR: European External Border Surveillance System.

FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

FORPEX (programme): Spanish initiative for the professional training, selection, and hiring of Senegalese maritime workers.

FRONTEX: (from its name in French, Frontières Extérieures) is the European agency for the management of operational cooperation at the external borders of the EU. The agency was created in 2004 and became operational in 2005.

HERA (operation): FRONTEX-led operation to curb illegal migration from West Africa to the Canary Islands (2006-2010).

HRW: Human Rights Watch (INGO).

ICT: Information and Communication Technology.

IGO: Intergovernmental Organization.

ILO: International Labour Organization.
INDALO (operation): Frontex-led operation to curb illegal migration flows from North Africa to Spain (2007-2010).

INE: Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Spanish statistics institute.

INEM: Instituto Nacional de Empleo, Spanish government employment office.

INGO: International Non-Governmental Organization.

IOM: International Organization for Migration.

MAEC: Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores y Cooperación, Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.

MEYSS: Ministerio de Empleo y Seguridad Social, Spanish Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs (2011-present).

MSF: Médecins Sans Frontières, Doctors Without Borders (INGO).


NGO: Non-Governmental Organization.

RC: Red Cross (international humanitarian movement).

REVA plan: Retour Vers l’Agriculture, an initiative spearheaded by former President Abdoulaye Wade in 2006 to promote the return of the country’s workforce to the agricultural sector.

SEAHORSE: EU-funded project to control the external borders of the Union through the sharing of information among partners using satellite technology. The partners are Spain, Portugal, Morocco, Mauritania, Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Cape Verde and Senegal.


SIS: Schengen Information System, database used by most EU member states to share information about individuals and objects of interest within the Schengen space.

ULYSSES (operation): first multinational EU border control operation in the Mediterranean.


USAID: United States Agency for International Development.

VIS: Visa Information System, a database containing information on visa applications by non-EU citizens.
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To Mohamed and Inara,
our future.
In Africa, I followed the trail of fate, made of chance and infinite hope. In Europe, I walk through the long tunnel of performance that leads to well-defined goals. Here, by coincidence, each step takes me to a given result; hope is measured in terms of the fight involved. (...) And so, beneath grey clouds or an unexpected sun, I move forward under this sky of Europe counting my steps and the few metres of dreams achieved. But how many kilometres, how many days of labour, of sleepless nights remain between me and a hypothetical success that, nonetheless, was immediately taken for granted by my people, from the instant when I announced my departure for France? I move forward, my feet heavy with their dreams, my head full of my own. I move forward, not knowing my destination. I do not know upon which pole one hoists the flag of victory; I do not know either which waters could possibly wash away the insult of failure. (Fatou Diome, Le Vêntre de L’Atlantique, my translation)
1 Introduction

Figure 1.1: Women doing the laundry in a courtyard in Guédiawaye, Senegal. Photograph by Javier Acebal (2009), reproduced with permission from the author.

1.1 Introduction

At its heart, this dissertation is an exploration of the realities that a unique group of migrants faced during an exceptional period in Spain’s history. I analyze the migratory journeys of 50 Senegalese men and women through their own voices and through the narratives of those who, in different ways, helped shape their migration experience. I simultaneously tell their personal stories and the larger story of Spain’s own struggle as it became (for the first time in recent history) a country of immigration. I pay special attention to the migration of Senegalese women migrants between 2000 and 2010. As Senegalese citizens, these women were members of a larger black African migrant population – a group that became a lightening rod for populist anti-immigrant sentiment and the focus of toughening European Union (EU) border control policies. As women, however, they were also a minority within this larger migrant body, and their experiences provide both a variety of exceptional cases and insights into the more common understanding of the contested movement of Africans to the EU.
The current global economic crisis has brought Spain’s short-lived status as one of the top global destinations for immigrants to an end for the foreseeable future. Nonetheless, by looking at the phenomenon of Senegalese migration to Spain in the early 21st century I hope to have accomplished three objectives and learnt a number of lessons that could be extrapolated to other places and time periods. First, I shall provide ample evidence to show that gender is, as others before me have argued, an articulating factor of migration (Mahler and Pessar 2006, Lutz 2010). It is not that women deserve a separate section in migration studies, but that migrants’ lives (and everyone else’s) are fundamentally shaped by their gender. At birth, we are defined as men or women based on our biological sex and, from then on, culturally specific social roles and expectations are imposed upon us. The force of gender binaries (the classification of masculinity and femininity as disconnected, oppositional categories) in the migratory experience of participants will become apparent in this dissertation: gender determined the conditions of possibility for the migration of participants, the way they were seen by the states involved, their access to a thick transnational social network, and the resources that were available to them within that network. This study pays attention to the experience of both men and women, and teases out their journeys to illuminate how gender determined a variety of key moments in their migration.

Second, I shall argue that Fortress Europe (and any other territorial entity that hopes to protect itself against unwanted migration by the sealing of its borders) is an impossibility, particularly when policymakers devise border policies based on electoral calculus and not on empirical evidence (de Haas 2008). For those who were familiar with experiences of border militarization for the purposes of migration control elsewhere in the world, it was clear from the get-go that the new high tech Spanish - North West African border was a misguided effort. It was also obvious for many (including highly-positioned ILO and IOM officers who were part of the negotiations) that secretive preferential migration agreements reached by Spain and Senegal between 2006 and 2008 were poorly designed. This is not to
say that the militarization of the border and other initiatives have not had an impact on human mobility: these measures have contributed to a dramatic decrease of human mobility across the Southern EU border (although some have argued that the economic crisis has been a more important factor, see for example FRONTEX 2009a and IOM 2010). However, border crossings have continued. Under the new circumstances, smuggling and trafficking have become a more profitable business than they used to be prior to the year 2000, and migrants’ vulnerability has increased dramatically both due to the longer and riskier routes they follow and the professionalization and smuggling in the region (Carter and Merrill 2007, Collyer 2007, UNODC 2011, Women’s Link Worldwide 2011). Given that the EU continues to invest vast resources to seal its borders against unwanted migration, it is necessary to consider the achievements and failures of this approach.

Third, in this dissertation I shall propose that in order to study migrant transnationalism we, researchers, need to become transnational ourselves. The next few hundred pages draw primarily from evidence gathered in spaces of origin, transit, and destination of migrants. I started in Spain, went back to the African villages and cities that participants came from and to the zones that many of them had crossed during their migration, and interviewed a number of people who had in different ways shaped respondents’ journeys. Connecting these different people and spaces was challenging, but I believe it gave me a broader and deeper understanding Senegalese migrants’ journeys. Thus, I hope to have proven that multi-sitedness is a necessity in the study of transnationalism. More broadly speaking, it is also a desirable approach throughout the field of migration studies.

In the rest of this introductory chapter I shall provide a more detailed overview of the structure of this dissertation. I also provide brief definitions of key concepts that I have used as the foundation of my analysis, introduce the main theoretical discussions that I engage with, and discuss a public outreach project that grew out of my desire to ensure that the work contained in these pages also penetrated into broader popular perspectives on migration that were current in the media during the period of my study. To begin, however, I
would like to help orient the reader through two vignettes that give some sense of the turbulent and rapidly changing socio-political and economic context within which Spain’s recent approach to immigration needs to be understood.

1.2 From March 11 to May 15: a roadmap

Two events stand as bookends of the research that I discuss in this dissertation. The first took place in Spain in 2004. That year, in March 11 (11M) – three days before the general elections – 191 people were killed and 1,800 more were wounded in an terrorist attack orchestrated by an Al-Qaeda-inspired group of North African immigrants. Initial controversy over the authorship of the bombings, together with suspicions that the government was hiding important evidence for electoral purposes,¹ had an unmistakable impact on the electoral results: the incumbent conservative party lost despite their lead in previous polls, and the Socialist opposition won 164 of the 208 seats in Parliament. The new government, led by José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, was in power until the Fall of 2011. This government set the legal and policy framework that most of my respondents encountered when they migrated to Spain. They also legislated the 2005 amnesty that helped many of them leave the shadows to join the body of the nation as recognized residents and visible members of the country’s workforce; created the short-lived Ministry of Labour and Immigration (2008-2011); and transformed the state institutions that managed migration at the time, including the National Police, the Guardia Civil, and Spain’s role in FRONTEX.²

The other framing event took place in 2011. It also involved large demonstrations organized by a social movement that drew inspiration from the Arab Spring. The 15M (May 15) or

¹ Initially, it was believed that the Basque terrorist group ETA was responsible for the bombings. The President of the Government, José María Aznar, released a statement shortly after the events where he proposed this possibility. It was only two days later (and one day before the general elections) that this hypothesis was proven false, after both ETA denied its responsibility in the attacks and the involvement of radical Islamist individuals as perpetrators became irrefutable. It was then argued that the ETA-authorship thesis strengthened the Conservative party in the elections, while an Al-Qaeda-orchestrated bombing would, as it happened, benefit the Socialist Party.

² The European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union.
*Indignados* (“Outraged”) was a loosely organized social movement that brought together a variety of groups asking for a radical transformation of Spanish politics. Their frustration was triggered by a dramatic worsening of living conditions in the country, skyrocketing unemployment rates, widespread corruption of the political class, and the government’s inability to protect the population from the impact of the global economic crisis. At first, the movement was framed as the enterprise of a few marginal urban tribes – notably the *perroflautas* or “crusty hippies” without a stable residence, the kind of person likely to busk in public spaces with a dog (*perro*) and a recorder (*flauta*). But soon other citizens joined, among them retirees who saw their income, both net and real, decrease to poverty levels (the *yayoflautas*, “grandparents with a recorder” to point to their affinity to the previous group); middle-class citizens disappointed with the behaviour of the country’s political elite; large segments of Spain’s hyper-qualified youth, disheartened with Spain’s plummeting investment in research and development and diminishing chances to find a job suited to their training; the parents of this new class of unwilling international migrants, young and over-prepared, who were leaving Spain by the thousands; and immigrants, who saw their hard-won dream of achieving economic success vanish before their very eyes.

The *15M* was a catalyst for collective dissatisfaction: demands for change had been brewing for quite some time. Municipal elections were held a week after the demonstrations began, on May 22. New parties at both ends of the political spectrum (notably on the far-right) ran for the first time for these elections, and several popular campaigns encouraged citizens to abstain from voting or cast invalid or blank ballots. Although the *Outraged* movement hoped to trigger radical changes, the results merely sanctioned disillusionment with the governing socialist party. The progressive vote was too fragmented (or non-existent) in most municipalities to swing local governments to the left, and the right won in the majority of the ridings. These results were a taste of the shift that arrived a few months later, in November 20, 2011. That day – which was, not coincidentally, the anniversary of the death of the two main political figures of 20th century Spanish fascism, Primo de Rivera and Francisco Franco – the Conservative Party won 43.4% of the seats in Parliament. Less than
a month later, the newly elected President of the Spanish government eliminated the Ministry of Labour and Immigration.

These two events mark the beginning and the end of my study, but also the beginning and the end of an era of immigration in Spain. For most of its history, the net migration balance in the country was negative. In other words, each year between the 16th century and the 1980s the number of Spanish citizens leaving the country was larger than the number of foreigners who settled within its territorial borders (Vives 2007). The balance began to shift in the late 1980s, shortly after Spain joined the EU. Between 1981 and 2001 the percentage of foreigners grew steadily from 0.5% to 3.3%; by 2004, immigrants were 7% of the population (INE 1981 - 2001). In absolute numbers the total foreign population increased from 198,042 to 3,034,326 in 23 years. The figure for immigrants living in Spain with a residence permit was much lower (1,977,291, MTAS 2005). This gap between the legal and the actual foreign population has been a constant trait of the Spanish experience throughout the last two and a half decades. The largest groups of foreigners by nationality the year the Madrid bombings happened were Moroccans (19.5% of the foreign population), Ecuadorians (11.2%), and Colombians (6.9%).

Fast-forward to 2009, when I conducted the bulk of my fieldwork: that year 12% of the population in Spain were immigrants (5,598,691, INE 2009). Once again, the figure of legal foreign residents was significantly lower: 4,791,232, or 10.2% of the overall population (MTIN 2010). Moroccans were still the largest group (16%), but Romanians followed closely (15.7%) and both the Ecuadorian (9.2%) and the Colombian population (6%) had lost relative weight. The profile of the foreign-born had also changed, becoming more diverse, with more groups of 100,000 members or more. Immigrants not only came from more places, but they also went to more places: in 2009 it became obvious that Spain’s age as a top global destination for international migrants was coming to an end, as both the native-born and the foreign-born left the country in search for greener pastures. In 2011, for the first time since the 1980s, more people left the country than immigrants arrived.
According to official statistics, 90% of the 580,850 people who left that year were foreigners (Pérez de Pablos, 2011; Nogueira, 2011).

1.3 The migrant-on-the-beach approach to migration and border policy (2004-2009)

Under Zapatero’s leadership, Spain became a top-ten world destination for international migrants and joined a global movement towards a new style of migration management, characterized by tough, militarized borders and the attempt to encourage circular migration. Senegal was a crucial actor in both processes. Citizens from this Western African country started arriving in large numbers after the turn of the century and soon became the largest nationality of black immigrants in Spain. At the same time, West Africa became a site for experimentation with a new kind of territorial border aimed at controlling unwanted human mobility. Policy makers expected to achieve this mainly through the deployment of new technologies of migration control, militarization of spaces of transit, development aid, and bilateral trade and migration agreements. Many of these strategies had already been used at a much smaller scale at the border with Morocco. They were applied in West Africa primarily between 2004 and 2008, when Spain’s efforts to deter illegal border crossings were enlisted (and supported) as part of the EU’s broader attempt to seal its external border. Moreover, during this period the President of the Senegalese republic, Aboulaye Wade, proved to be the perfect ally to realize Spain’s migration and border management plans in Senegal.

One picture summarizes national perceptions on immigration from Africa to Spain and public discourses used to justify these new developments. It was taken in 2000, years before most of my participants and their relatives arrived in Spain. With this image, Spanish photographer and Pulitzer Prize winner Javier Bauluz3 pioneered a new genre that coloured every discussion on black African migration in the country during the first decade of the

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3 Bauluz received the Pulitzer Prize in 1995 for feature photography for his coverage of the Rwandan genocide.
21st century, from the coffee shop to the national Parliament: dead migrant voyeurism. Bauluz took the photograph on the Spanish beach of Tarifa (see Figure 1.2, below). Only 15 kilometres separate this beach from North Africa, a reason why many migrants have chosen this route to access Spain by boat since the 1980s.

An unknown number of migrants have disappeared while attempting the sea journey from North Africa to Spain (some estimate the number at around 1,300 between 2000 and 2008) (CARIM 2009). On the one hand, strong winds and marine currents in the Strait of Gibraltar make this crossing dangerous – particularly if the vessel used is not fit for these conditions, which is usually the case for undocumented boat migrants. On the other, surveillance of the narrow passage that separates Africa and Europe in and around this area has increased dramatically since the year 2000, forcing migrants to travel at night and under adverse conditions and increasing the risk of shipwreck.

Maybe because of heavy seas or an unreliable vessel (we will never know), one early morning a corpse appeared on the tourist beach of Tarifa. Police were called. A small group of photographers arrived first, though, to document the bizarre moment when the first beach-goers claimed their spots on the golden sand before the corpse was removed. Bauluz, one of these photographers, captured the situation with shocking bluntness. In the image we see a young white couple under a flowered umbrella. They have brought a cooler to the beach and have three beer cans nearby them. The couple’s eyes are turned to a lump that lies a few metres away from them, close to the end of the beaches in the intertidal zone where the waves have pushed it. The lump is the body of a black man in a pair of light blue jeans and a yellow t-shirt; his feet are bare and his face is flush against the sand. He died (like thousands of others) while trying to reach Europe crossing the Strait of Gibraltar. Statistically speaking, this dead migrant was probably born in Senegal.

Bauluz’s picture did not need words to transmit the chasms and tensions between the two universes its actors embodied: that of the tourist and the undocumented migrant; the wealth
of Europe and the poverty of Africa; the white citizen of the Western world and the black foreigner from a South riddled by corruption and poverty; a country (and a Europe) that wanted to seal its borders against unwanted (racialized) migration and a people whose main hope was to reach Europe to get their share of her prosperity. Because of its shock value and apparent simplicity, this picture and the similar ones that followed had a deep impact on the heated immigration debate in Spain. This debate would last a decade, until the economic crisis brought the mirage of Europe as the land of endless wealth to an end.

Figure 1.2: The corpse of a drawn black migrant lies on Tarifa beach under the gaze of white tourists. Photograph by Javier Bauluz (2000), reproduced with permission from the author.

When it came to illegal migration of black Africans to Spain, several lines of argument regularly met in public fora. I call these lines of argument “discourses” because they were systems of thought that described and constituted the reality they talked about; in this case, they provided a meaningful context to interpret the meaning of black African migration to Spain and their impact on the socio-economic life of the country. To be sure, these discourses were ideologically charged – they had a transformative goal – based upon religious, civilizational, and racially informed world views. To a great extent, these geographical imaginations were based on the opposition between the EU and black Africa

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4 This definition of the term discourse is based on the work of Foucault, particularly on his book *The archaeology of knowledge* (1972).
as inside and outside, rich and poor, progress and regress, Christianity and Islam, white and black, legitimate citizen and definite outsider.

There is a subtle yet important difference between the way undocumented migrants (in particular, boat migrants) have been constructed in Spanish and Canadian media and policy accounts. In Canada, boat migrants arriving in the 1990s and 2000s were seen as “bogus refugees” – greedy queue jumpers whose motives to migrate were not political but economic, and who attempted to take advantage of the protection Canada offers to legitimate refugees by posing as such (Mountz 2010). In Spain boat migrants were never equated with political refugees, perhaps because that is a figure with virtually no currency (and very little legal recognition) in the country. As a group, black African migrants in the media and in political discourse were constructed as poor and needy; with legitimate reasons to leave their homeland, but without a genuine claim to be in the country. From this point of departure three main lines of argument came into conflict as to how Spaniards as a people – and Spain as a sovereign state – should manage the presence of a population perceived to be racially distinct, unprepared to meet the demands of the local labour market, and impossible to assimilate culturally and religiously into the existing social fabric of the country. These discourses created the conditions of possibility for the migration and settlement of black African migrants as well as for the legislation regulating it.

First, the “humanitarian discourse” drew from two main sources (human rights and Catholic compassion) to demand that both political institutions and individual citizens lend a hand to the migrant who, in his desperation, was willing to sacrifice his life in search of a better life. The migrant in this discourse became a helpless victim from an underdeveloped continent where political and economic systems were dysfunctional. The viewer (who was also the main agent) had the power to welcome the stranger in the symbolic home (the nation) and lead him in the way towards becoming a new and more fitting person in the contemporary world. In this sense, there was a civilizational component to this argument.
Some proponents of the welcoming approach put less emphasis on religion, pointing instead towards an international legal human rights framework and Spain’s international commitments for the protection of migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees. There were nevertheless more encounters than disagreements within the different groups that defended this solidarity-based approach, including the Catholic Church (and its various pro-immigrant and front-line service provider organizations in the country) and civil society groups. We will see how this discourse trickled down to individual citizens’ rapport with some of the respondents upon their settlement in the country (for example, in my discussion on cross-cultural motherhood in Chapter 7). Proponents of the humanitarian approach became a powerful voice that publicly challenged discriminatory public policies and government-based anti-immigration initiatives at the border, in spaces of transit (mainly Morocco) and Spain.

A second line of argument was the dominant exclusionary discourse. Between 2005 and 2011 the anti-immigrant sentiment had been articulated into the electoral platforms of several centre-right and far-right political parties. According to this discourse, there were too many foreigners (especially undocumented migrants) taking advantage of privileges and public services that should be reserved for the native-born. Moreover, defendants of this approach argued that migrants were responsible for the perceived increase of criminality; and that racial, religious, linguistic, and cultural diversity were a threat to the survival of Spanish society and culture. Black migrants, Muslim foreigners, and Eastern European Roma were favourite targets for those who defended this point of view. The solution that they proposed included sealing the border and giving chase to illegal migrants in the national territory. As for those already settled and with residence permits, the postures varied depending on the radicalization of the discourse.

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5 For a detailed discussion of some of these premises in citizens’ perception of international migration, see for example Cea D’Ancona and Valles Martínez 2008.
Anti-immigration was not a marginal feeling in Spain at the time of my study. In May of 1995 (with less than half a million foreigners living in Spain) 32% of Spaniards believed that the number of immigrants in the country was “excessive.” Ten years later, soon after a major border crisis when hundreds of black African migrants jumped over the land fences that separate the Spanish territories of Ceuta and Melilla from Morocco, the number had increased to 60% (Cea D’Ancona and Valles Martínez 2008). By 2007, over two thirds of the population (68.7%) expressed this opinion. When asked if they trusted any specific group, Spaniards tended to point to Latin Americans (31.5%) and black Africans (12%). Two groups were identified as particularly non-trustworthy: immigrants from Maghreb (18.9%) and Romanians (29.3%) (CIS 2007). These numbers are only a breakdown of a marked tendency observed in all surveys conducted by the Spanish Centre for Sociological Research (Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas or CIS): starting in 2004, immigration became a main concern for Spaniards. To give one more example, the percentage of citizens who identified this phenomenon as one of the three main problems that the country faced

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6 These were the two groups with over 10% of positive responses. The categories were non-exclusive (there was one for Latin Americans plus four others for specific nationality groups from the region) and some of the labels used non-standard terms such as “Moors” and “Blacks.”
grew from under 10% to almost 60% between 2004 and 2007 (see Graph 1.1). This was precisely the period when the largest growth of the Senegalese immigrant population occurred.

This context was, of course, fertile ground for parties in the far right of the political spectrum. A proponent of an extreme version of the exclusionary discourse was the nationalist group Plataforma per Catalunya. The party’s political platform is, to this day, articulated around a frontal rejection of Muslim immigration, which they consider a threat to democratic values; zero tolerance of terrorism and crime, which they trace directly to migrants from certain parts of the world; and a return to traditional family values. The number of representatives from Plataforma per Catalunya in the region’s municipal governments increased by almost 400% between 2007 and 2011, from 17 to 67.

A more normalized but also exclusionary discourse came from Spanish mainstream political parties in the centre-left and centre-right – the governing party and the official opposition during this time period. Proponents of the “crisis approach” argued that exceptional measures were needed to respond to the exceptional circumstances the country was immersed in. Defendants pushed for the creation of new and tougher legislation to protect the country against illegal migration; the militarization of the border; increased cooperation with a variety of governments, agencies, and institutions to improve the management of migration; and the creation of novel migration programs based on the experiences of countries like Canada (e.g. the point system for skilled workers). The official discourse nominally situated itself between the humanitarian and the exclusionary arguments insofar as its defendants (including those in charge of the immigration departments and Ministry) wanted to seal Spain against unwanted migration while conforming to international agreements in the area of human rights and refugee protection. Despite its nominal moderation, the leanings of this discourse towards exclusion became evident in many of the government’s initiatives in and beyond West Africa. Some examples include the militarization of the sea border through cooperation with FRONTEX and with governments
in countries of origin and transit of migrants in Africa; the extension of the SIVE, a system for the detection and detention of migrants attempting to cross the borders illegally; the reconfiguration of the two main national security forces; the cancellation of a number of visa waiver programs with Latin American countries; and the international development programs in West Africa between 2005 and 2010. All these initiatives worked on the assumption that there were too many migrants in Spain and the number of new arrivals had to be curbed or, in some cases, stopped.

1.4 Research questions and goals

The arrival of Senegalese migrants, both men and (to a much lesser extent) women happened in a context shaped by solidarity-based, exclusionary, and official discourses: one welcomed them, another demonized them, and the last one tried to keep them out. These migrants arrived by plane as tourists, temporary workers, and relatives of migrants already settled in the country; or by land and sea as undocumented migrants. Most of them lacked status at one point or another during their stay in Spain.

Graph 1.2 summarizes the gap between legal Senegalese residents (“Senegalese Men (YB)” and Senegalese Women (YB)”) and registered inhabitants of Spanish municipalities regardless of their status in the country (“Senegalese Men (P)” and “Senegalese Women (P)”) between 2001 and 2011. Although I will discuss these data in Chapter 7, here I want to highlight the growing disparity between the number of legal and *de facto* residents in this group, as well as the larger incidence of undocumented status among Senegalese men.

The unavoidable conclusion is that Senegalese migrants kept arriving despite the legislation, policies, and programs that tried to prevent them from reaching Spanish territory. In this context, the main question that I address in this dissertation is: how did Senegalese men and women migrate to Spain in a context of increasing barriers to their movement? More specifically, the research questions that I address in the next pages explore three main topics: border(s), strategies used by migrants to overcome them, and the role that social networks played in these strategies. I approach these general areas of interest with a specific focus on gender relations, and ask:

- What is the genealogy of the Spanish - Senegalese border for the purposes of migration control? How has this border evolved to repel unwanted migrants from the region, and how is it gendered (or not)?
- What are the obstacles and barriers encountered by Senegalese migrant men and women in their migration to Spain? Which of these have to do with the state border, and which do not (e.g., obstacles resulting from gendered collective constructions of the migrant)? How are these obstacles gendered?
- What kinds of social networks have been deployed by Senegalese migrants in Spain to migrate and settle in the country? How is gender, along with other axes of social differentiation such as ethnicity, religion, and place of settlement in Spain, relevant to understanding the ways these networks function and the kinds of services they provide?
To answer these questions, I conducted one year of multi-sited ethnographic work in Spain, Senegal, and to a lesser extent Morocco. The details of my epistemological and methodological approach are discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

1.5 Introduction to key concepts and theoretical framework

In this dissertation I rely on a series of key concepts and engage in a conversation with existing theoretical traditions and discussions. Chapter 3 is devoted to a detailed account of my theoretical framework, but as a way of introduction here I will briefly elaborate on the concepts of migrant transnationalism and state border as I have used them in my analysis.

1.5.1 Migrant transnationalism

Throughout the following chapters I use the concept “migrant” to mean a person who lives in a country other than that in which she or he was born. My respondents were individuals who were born in different parts of Senegal and lived, legally or otherwise, in Spanish territory. Many of them were secondary migrants: migrants who had initially arrived from Senegal to another EU country and had then moved onward to Spain in search of better job opportunities, a legal status, or following other members of their family. Most were economic migrants who had accessed the Schengen space as tourists or visitors with a travel document that allowed them to enter and stay in the country for a limited number of days, but did not give them the right to either work or settle. They had subsequently overstayed their visas, becoming undocumented migrants. Others were wives, daughters, and husbands of Senegalese citizens already settled in Spain who had benefitted from family reunification legislation. Those in this group arrived with a relatively comfortable safety net (strict laws ensured this was the case) but also encountered some difficulties upon arrival, mainly when entering the Spanish labour market. A third group were workers recruited in Senegal to participate in the agricultural harvest as a temporary workforce, and

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7 The Schengen space or area includes the territory of the 26 European countries that have ratified the Schengen Agreement. Controls for the movement of people within this space no longer exist, except in exceptional circumstances.
who had decided to abandon their positions and join the undocumented population in large numbers. Finally, there were the boat and land migrants who had arrived in Spain crossing the border illegally.

I focus on economic migration and not on asylum seekers and refugees because these two groups did not exist in my sample. The only participant who at one point had sought refugee status (in Switzerland, before migrating to Spain) acknowledged that her application was a strategy to buy up some time while she explored the options she had to remain in Europe. The reasons why I did not encounter Senegalese asylum seekers or refugees may be a result of the difficulties the Spanish government puts in the way of migrants who pursue a protected status in the country. The Spanish Commission for Refugees (CEAR, Comisión Española de Ayuda al Refugiado) talks about a crisis of asylum in Spain: in 2008, only 5.34% of the accepted applications for refugees were given status (151 people). An additional 126 individuals received protection on humanitarian grounds (CEAR 2009). But there may be another reason that I have not sought to tease out in this dissertation: there are readmission agreements in place between Spain and Senegal. I saw the implications of this while looking for Senegalese respondents in the Centre for the Temporary Stay of Immigrants (CETI) in Ceuta. Everyone (including the director) knew there were Senegalese citizens in the centre and I could hear Wolof and other Senegalese languages being spoken in the common areas, but there was only one person registered with this nationality (a minor). The staff believed that Senegalese migrants tried to increase their chances of being accepted into Spain as refugees by pretending to be nationals from countries with ongoing conflict and no readmission agreements, like Nigeria. The strategies adopted by boat and land migrants interviewed for this study point in this direction.

The migrants I worked with participated in social, religious, cultural, economic, and political communities and spaces rooted in different national contexts; this made them transnational migrants. Participants were members of thick and pre-existing transnational social networks: “sets of interpersonal ties that connect migrants, former migrants, and non
migrants in origin and destination areas through ties of kinship, friendship, and shared community origin” (Massey et al. 1993, 448). The evidence I collected suggests that most Senegalese who migrated to Spain between 2000 and 2010 deployed networks that were well-established in Senegal, Spain, France, Italy, and (in some cases) Portugal. The deeply transnational nature of worldwide Senegalese migrations is a phenomenon observed by researchers in Spain and elsewhere (in the case of Italy see Riccio 2001a, 2001b, 2008; Sinatti 2006, 2008, 2010a; in the case of Spain see Rosander 2001, Moreno Maestro 2005, 2006 and 2008, Suarez-Navaz 2004, Vázquez Silva 2010; in the case of France see Bava 2002 and 2003 and Coulibaly-Tandian 2008, among many others).

As a result, this dissertation fits squarely within the growing field of transnational studies. At the heart of it is an effort to further the study of a phenomenon that has captured the imagination of a multi-disciplinary crowd. Of the vast existing literature, I have drawn primarily from the theoretical contributions of anthropologist Steve Vertovec (2003, 2009), and sociologists Peggy Levitt (2009, 2010 and 2011; see also Levitt and Jaworsky 2007) and Thomas Faist (2000, 2009). This dissertation is also in conversation with the work of geographers that brings together theory and empirical evidence on migrant transnationalism. Particularly influential have been the works of David Ley (2004, 2005 and 2008; see also Hiebert and Ley 2006), Gerry Pratt and Brenda Yeoh (2003), and Margaret Walton-Roberts (2004).

The vast majority of the West African citizens who migrated to the EU since the turn of the 21st century did so with a proper travel document. However, illegal border crossings have triggered public anxiety and resulted in stringent immigration measure. Because of the existing tensions between illegal Senegalese migrants’ objectives and those of the Spanish state and the EU, and due to the transnational nature of this particular group, the term Clandestine Transnational Actors (CTA) is particularly useful for this study. According to the author who coined the term, Peter Andreas, CTAs are:
nonstate actors who operate across national borders in violation of state laws and who attempt to evade law enforcement efforts. CTAs are as dramatically varied as their motives. (...) They may be highly organized or disorganized and operate regionally or globally. Nevertheless, these otherwise radically different types of CTAs have some core common characteristics: they are the targets of border controls, and their border-crossing strategies are designed to avoid detection and minimize the risk of apprehension. CTAs have existed in one form or another as long as states have imposed border controls (Andreas 2003: 78-79).

Strictly speaking, Andreas’ definition of CTAs only applies to those who attempt to cross the border illegally. However, the concern with illegal migration flows from West Africa to the EU was such between 2005 and 2010, and these migrants’ legal status in Spain so precarious, that we could argue the overall Senegalese-born population in the country was treated as CTAs during the period of my study. This makes Andreas’ concept unfortunately useful for this dissertation.

Some authors have highlighted that studies on migrant transnationalism emphasize agency over structure and tend to paint a too-rosy picture of current international migrations. Most studies chose to focus on one side of the old debate between structure and agency, and it is true that scholars working in the area of transnationalism tend to privilege agency (Bailey 2001, Castles and Miller 2003, Portes 2001). Furthermore, until recently most studies on transnationalism focused on the wealthy and male (see Mahler and Pessar 2006, Pratt and Yeoh 2003). My goal here is to both contribute to an expansion of the object of transnationalism studies and to reach a happy medium between agency and structural constraints, where the latter are acknowledged as contextual factors shaping participants strategies. In this sense, I align with author Laura Agustin (2003) and argue that conceptualizing South-North international migrants as either victims or criminals is a lost opportunity to understand agency and strategy within this group of transnational actors. Giving structural constraints the place that they deserve, I aim to focus on the constant negotiations migrants engage in to challenge, modify, or adapt to state interventions at and beyond the border.
1.5.2 Borders and boundaries

This study is also built upon a second concept, that of the state border. I am critical of the traditional conception of the border as a “zero-width” line separating the discrete and self-contained units (the nation-states). In this sense, I often use the term border to refer to the liminal spaces of states’ territories (border zones) where migration management and surveillance are put in the hands of state security forces. For the purposes of control of unwanted migration from West Africa to Southern Europe, the border that migrant had to cross spread through entire national territories in countries of origin and destination; it was a vast “buffer zone” resulting from negotiations between the EU, individual member states, and a number of African countries.

This way of understanding the border as a space and not a line draws from a critical and feminist political approaches, a large and growing area of the literature. Of particular relevance has been the work focused on the emergence of a new, “safer,” and technologically advanced kind of border worldwide. The works of Mathew Coleman (2005, 2007, 2009 and 2012), and Alison Mountz (2004, 2010 and 2011a and 2011b), Mark Salter (2008, and Piché 2011) although focused on the Canadian and US borders, have served to put my study in a larger context. In Europe I have drawn primarily from the work of Bigo (2009, and Jeandesboz 2010, among others), Henk van Houtum (with Pijpers 2007, and Boedeltje 2009, 2010), and William Walters (2002, 2004, 2006).

I have borrowed conceptual and theoretical perspectives from these authors, as well as an interest in the deployment of high-tech and military equipment in the creation of a new kind of border. I depart from the work of some of these authors in my decision not to ground my analysis in the the theoretical works of Foucault and Agamben. Foucault’s work on biopolitics and governmentality and Agamben’s reflections on “spaces of exception” and the homo sacer have been extensively used to study contemporary border processes. For example, Alison Mountz’s study of the actions of the Canadian government to manage the arrival of almost 600 Chinese boat migrants to the coast of British Columbia relies heavily
on both the notions of biopolitics and spaces of exception (Mountz 2010). In my own study, the only space that could be comparable to the naval base where the boat migrants she studied were held was the CETI (“Centro de Estancia Temporal de Inmigrantes” or centre for the temporary stay of migrants) in Ceuta. But there migrants were free to come and go as they pleased and they were offered a variety of services; it was more a site of “paradoxical sovereignty” (Agamben cited in Mountz 2010) than of suspension of the law.

Other scholars have applied Agamben’s work to their study of EU maritime borders (see for example Carter and Merrill 2007) or to recent developments in the processing of visa applications in the region (see van Houtum 2010). Although it is not my intention to question the validity of their findings, the evidence that I collected for this research suggested that the actions of official institutions towards migrants could not be interpreted using the terms of “bare life” and “homo sacer” offered by Agamben. Instead, I witnessed the delegation of border control duties to actors beyond the border, the collision of different legal spaces, and more individual agency than those conceptual approaches might suggest. Finally, there is a fascinating area of the literature that studies biopolitics and the biometric dimensions of contemporary borders (see Amoore 2006 and 2009, van Houtum 2010, Walters 2002). I did not have the opportunity to contribute to due this literature to a lack of empirical information. My goal here has been to build theory from the evidence that I found during my fieldwork. Recent applications of Foucault and, in particular, Agamben’s work did not seem to offer tools to interpret this evidence.

Despite this departure, in my discussion I take on the challenge put forward by critical and feminist geographers, and examine how the state border is a place where difference is made and power asserted and executed. Encouraged by the work of John Agnew (2002, 2005, 2007), James Sidaway (2002, and Power 2005) and Anssi Paasi (2001 and 2011), I approach borders as ideological constructions and complex semiotic systems; places ripe with contradictions and power struggles; instruments that need to be constantly re-created. Despite the limitations of my methodological approach, I also aim to take on Alison Mountz
(2004, 2010) and Merje Kuus’ (2011a, 2011b, 2011c) demand that we delve into the spaces and discourses where borders are made by individual people. Finally, I have been deeply inspired by Michael Collyer (2007, 2008, 2010, et al. 2011) who has provided sophisticated reflections on transit migration across state borders in different parts of the world.

As a continuation of the state border, whenever I study barriers that happen at different scales (e.g. the local, the home, or the body) I often use the term “boundary.” Agnew (2007) has argued that the distinction between state borders and social boundaries only makes sense in a world where Western European models of statehood are predominant. That is the context for this study. I take on calls from feminist geographers that we need to understand how geopolitical thinking (and the state borders that create international migration) is constructed at different and interconnected scales (Gilmartin and Kofman 2004, Hyndman 2004a and 2004b, Mountz 2004 and 2010, Silvey 2006, Staeheli and Kofman 2004, Wastlwalter and Staeheli 2004). Although this dissertation remains mainly about state borders, I engage with this area of the literature by extending my study below the nation-state at different points during the discussion.

A key aspect of this multi-scalar analysis is the concept of race as it is constructed in contemporary Europe, and more specifically in Spain. Here I will not engage in a historical and geographical study of the concept, something that I have done elsewhere (Vives 2011), but rather explain how the term is used in the pages that follow. First, I take race as an ideological construction and not only a social construction, “because the idea of ‘race’ has never existed outside of a framework of group interest” (Essed 2002: 185). Second, race is conceived here as historically contingent, and as such fluid and evolving (Hall 2002; Kobayashi 2003). Third, race is relational, built upon the direct and mediated interactions among bodies, groups and institutions at many scales at once (Pulido 2000; Kobayashi 2003). And finally, race and racialization are considered fundamentally spatial concepts (Saldanha 2006). Combined with the discourse of “domopolitics” (Walters 2004b, explained in Chapter 3) and in relation to other axes of differentiation such as citizenship status,
religion, and gender, I take race to be one of the fundamental pillars of the anti-immigration strategy in Spain between 2000 and 2010.

1.6 A few words about gender

Feminist migration scholars have highlighted that, prior to the 1980s, women were largely absent from studies in this area of the literature (Gabaccia 1996, Lutz 2010, Mahler and Pessar 2006, Morokvasic 1984, Moch 1992). In the last thirty years we have witnessed an uneven and fragmented attempt to bring first women and then gender to the centre of migration studies. This project has not yet been wholeheartedly embraced by mainstream scholars (Lutz 2010, Mahler and Pessar 2006, Silvey 2004 and 2006), although recent years have seen an increasing number of publications that examine gender in the context of transnationalism and migration.

Scholar Helma Lutz discusses four stages in the integration of gender into the field of migration studies. First, there was the compensatory approach, which aimed to prove that women had been and were part of international migration movements. Second, scholars embarked in a project to make women’s contributions to migration explicit (what Lutz labels the contributory approach). In the last half of the 1980s and 1990s emerged the intersectional approach. The focus on differences among women instead of on commonalities was part of a much larger debate, were the goal was to tease out how axes of social differentiation such as race, socioeconomic status, or immigrant / citizenship status impacted women’s experiences. Finally, Lutz argues that since the mid-1990s there has been a paradigm change in the social sciences (including migration studies) that has taken feminism from a focus on women to a focus on gender. Here, “[t]he key subject is the social construction of masculinity and femininity, the differential meaning of private and public as a workplace, the gender-specific evaluation and the differential consequences of migration experiences for male and female migrants in the context of being couples, parents and families” (Lutz 2010: 1651). We currently see studies that could fall under any of these approaches (compensatory, contributive, intersectional or gender).
This dissertation stands with one foot on the intersectional approach and another one on the gender approach. In other words, I will put gender at the very centre of my discussion and look at how social constructions of masculinity and femininity both in Spain and in Senegal shape participants’ experiences of migration in fundamental ways. I conceptualize gender as a social and ideological construction that takes the inborn biological traits of an individual and uses them as indicators of proper behaviour, roles, and position in the social structure. Culturally defined gender roles and gender relations are factors that determine how biological sex is translated into gendered expectations in a specific context. But fundamentally gender norms are one of many ways used to distribute power in a society. In this dissertation, gender is considered a central organizing principle of international migration (Mahler and Pessar 2006, Lutz 2010) and treated as such.

Figure 1.3: Rapper Little Rawan poses with his two sisters, who represent new and old models of feminity in Senegal (the woman who builds a professional career for herself and the traditional wife who prepares thieboudienne in the background). Photograph by Javier Acebal (2009), reproduced with permission.

At the same time, I acknowledge and investigate how this socio-ideological construction (gender) is part of a larger matrix of difference that weaves into other factors like, for example, religious affiliation, socioeconomic status, place of origin and settlement, or family structures. To capture this inter-dependency I use the term “intersectionality” to signify “the complex, irreducible, varied, and variable effects which ensue when multiple
axes of differentiation – economic, political, cultural, psychic, subjective and experiential – intersect in historically specific contexts” (Brah and Phoenix 2004: 76; see also Vives 2010).

The tensions between the multiple gender ideologies that I encountered in Senegal and in Spain (within and beyond the immigrant population) and my own runs deeply throughout the entirety of this dissertation. I cannot assume that complete understanding of the many intricate ways in which differences of class, ethnicity, caste, religion, or geographical origin were woven into existing gender ideologies within the migrant families that I worked with, resulting in gendered social hierarchies that can be very different from those found in so-called “developed countries.” Being allowed into Senegalese households where gender relations were so unlike anything I had ever seen before; where polygyny (a form of polygamy where a man has more than one wife) was widely practised; where anything from household spaces to professional occupations to the division of labour was clearly demarcated as either male or female; where marriage was agreed upon by the family and it became one of the most significant events determining a woman’s social status; where female genital mutilation was still commonly practised; where, as a Wolof saying goes, “a woman’s worth is in her womb” and young girls were raised in the belief that their fertility was their most valued treasure – all these things tested both the limits of my empathy and of my analytical capacity. I felt torn between the need to preach about gender equality and my curiosity as a researcher. Soon I realized that the former was both inappropriate and a sure way to fail in my study, and proceeded to disagree quietly and from a position of respect with the daily practices of many of my respondents. I met my participants as a young white married woman and left many of them as a young white married woman who had become a friend, without ever challenging the gender relations that were the foundation for their lives. Rather, my objective has been to understand how femininity and masculinity, as they are constructed and practiced both in Senegal and in Spain, has impacted participant’s options to travel to Europe, the transnational spaces and resources available to them, and the difficulties found once in Spain.
1.7 “Mujeres y Fronteras:” raising awareness

If imposing my world view was not my goal, it was nonetheless my mission to invite participants as something more than “subjects of (my) research” and make my findings available for a wider audience outside of academia. Inspired by the works of a number of feminist geographers (e.g., Caitlin Cahill 2007, Domosh 2003, Pratt 2007) I aimed to make this a participatory research project, and also give something back by disseminating my results within a larger audience. In this sense, this dissertation always had a public vocation: it aimed to talk about, engage with, and to some extent challenge the people who were involved, as either migrants, citizens of the country that had received those migrants, or policy makers that created the conditions for their migration.

I will discuss some of the aspects of the project we called “Women Through the Border” (in Spanish, Mujeres y Fronteras) in Chapter 4. We received funding from the European Union, the Spanish Ministry of Education, and the regional government. A team comprising a handful of participants, an outstanding Spanish photographer, a writer, two graphic designers, and myself put together a photo exhibit, a multi-cultural concert, two story-telling sessions for school-aged children, and three movie screenings. All of these activities evolved around Senegalese society and the migration of women (and men) from this country to Spain. I guided over 250 children through the exhibit and many more people came to visit independently. All the shows sold out.

The event was a huge success covered by the local, regional, and national media (press and radio). And yet the most meaningful moment for me was one day when the exhibition room was almost empty. It was near closing time and man in his late twenties was standing in front of the picture of a woman dressed in pink, half smiling (see Figure 1.4). That same man had been there the day before, and the day before that, and all the days since we opened the exhibit: he would come and stand in front of that particular picture for a very long time;
then he would walk around the room and leave. I approached him and asked what he liked so much about that image. He looked at me and said: “this lady looks so much like my mother I come here to pray with her.” He kept coming every day until we took down the pictures.

Figure 1.4: Senegalese woman dressed for a wedding in Casamance. Photograph by Javier Acebal (2009), reproduced with permission from the author.

The night of the concert was our busiest night at the photo exhibit. There were three hundred people waiting for the doors to open (both the exhibition room and the auditorium were part of a main public library). The whole team was there, two of us walking from picture to picture in case anyone in the audience (most of them, Spaniards) had a question. We soon realized we were not needed: a group of Senegalese migrants that were not part of our project had claimed ownership of the space. They did not wait for people to ask. Instead, they stood by their favourite picture and explained it to the people who were around them. A man from Guédiawaye talked animatedly by an image of a group of women doing the laundry (Figure 1.1) and said: “See? This is my neighbourhood, and when I lived there our
courtyard was exactly like this one. Women in my family also do the laundry by hand.” Another migrant kept guard by the picture of a group of women selling mangoes under a tree in Casamance and explained to Spaniards the basics of the conflict between the region’s nationalist militia and the government of Dakar. And so on.

The events of Women Through the Border were meant to give something meaningful to my respondents in return for their participation. Also, they were an awareness-raising project that aimed to make some of my findings accessible to school children and adults who were not necessarily knowledgeable about the phenomenon of Senegalese migration to Spain aside from what they saw in the media. There were some unexpected outcomes too: being involved in this project gave me legitimacy in the community and opened a number of doors also in Senegal, where I found out some of my respondents from the government had seen (and loved) the pictures. It also gave me access to a collection of beautiful photographs to illustrate this dissertation and make its reading a lighter task. Unless otherwise specified, the images used here are part of the collection that Javier Acebal and I put together for the project Women Through the Border. These images were selected by participants (from among the many taken in the field) as those that they felt best captured their experiences prior to, during, and after migration. The images were used with participants’ permission. A catalogue of the complete photo exhibit is available at http://issuu.com/mujeresyfronteras/docs/exposicion_myf.

1.8 Chapter outline

This dissertation starts with an overview of past and present migrations from Senegal to Europe (“Chapter 2: From Senegal to the World”). Here, I introduce the economic, political, cultural, and demographic profile of Senegal. The core of this chapter is the discussion of gender relations in the country. Once the context of origin is introduced, I turn to existing studies on 20th-century Senegalese migrations to Europe. I present the disparate findings of the few scholars who have focused on the experience of Senegalese migrant women in
Spain and point to some of the contributions to this area of this literature that I aim to make with this study.

The theoretical framework that I used in this dissertation is discussed in Chapter 3 (“Where Theory Meets Migrants”). In this chapter I draw from critical and feminist political geography to explore the contemporary geopolitics of immigration control at the border of the EU. I also discuss the concepts of migrant transnationalism and transnational social networks and run a preliminary test of their validity for the study of Senegalese citizens’ experiences in Spain. In a somewhat unusual move, I have decided to include a discussion of my research sites in the theoretical chapter. I have used only a minute fraction of the vast amount of theoretical work available on migration, transnationalism, borders, and geopolitics because that was the literature that helped me interpret the things I found while doing my fieldwork. I hope that, by forcing theory and empirical evidence into the same chapter the criteria I used to select relevant literature will become evident.

In Chapter 4 (“Multi-Sited Research and Feminist Practice”) I engage with the concepts of situated knowledge, positionality, and research through difference from a critical standpoint. I argue that there is enormous potential in multi-sited ethnography for both feminist and mainstream migration scholarship. I then discuss the specifics of the fieldwork that grounds this dissertation, present the characteristics of my sample, and elaborate the methods I have used to gather the information. I also contend that despite the challenges I encountered, my approach allowed for both a better understanding of participants’ experiences and a more reciprocal relation with the migrants involved in this study. Finally, I introduce the statistical sources I used to put my findings in a larger context.

Chapter 5 (“Building the Wall”) discusses national (Spanish), supranational (EU) and regional (West African) strategies to manage and stop the illegal inflow of Senegalese migrants to Spain between 2005 and 2010. I argue that these responses were articulated through preventive and defensive measures in several areas of policy. I focus specifically on
how development aid, managed migration programs, and the militarization of the land and sea borders were geared towards stopping illegal migration from Senegal.

In Chapter 6 (“Networks”) I contend that the strategies analyzed in chapter 5 failed because they were based in false premises (notably, that migrants who were in Spain without status had entered the national territory illegally). My argument is that unwanted migration continued and even grew thanks to the resources that migrants’ transnational social networks provided. I discuss the experiences of participants according to their means of arrival (by plane, land, or sea). Throughout the chapter I delve into participants’ experiences and pay special attention to the ways in which gender was woven into respondents’ migration opportunities and the social networks that were available to them.

Finally, in Chapter 7 (“Trouble Beyond the Border”) I discuss some of the obstacles that participants found upon their arrival in Spain. I begin with an exploration of how migration forced migrants to re-define themselves as gendered subjects both within their household and as part of the workforce. I also explore participants’ negotiations of their relationship with other marginalized groups and illegal activities, mainly drug trafficking and prostitution. The bulk of the chapter explores the integration of participants into the Spanish labour market by employment sector. I conclude this discussion with an unexpected finding: the centrality of motherhood in Senegalese migrant workers’ experiences and how children became, for a number of participants, a foothold for meaningful cross-cultural alliances with the local Spanish population.

In summary, my goal here has been to reconstruct the journeys of a group of migrants and the barriers they confronted, using their experiences to draw a series of implications that apply to academic research practice, migration literature, and policy. I have very intentionally made the migrant the centre of the narrative, by emphasizing both their agency and the specific strategies that they adopted to achieve their goals. At the same time, I reconstruct the structural conditions that surround their migration as faithfully as possible.
To this end I gathered information from numerous secondary sources and conducted interviews with people who helped create this larger context. I believe that this combination of perspectives will help us understand structure as the result of individual agencies, and migrant agency as a series of actions that adapt to, push against, and transform those structures. Drawing from such a varied set of sources and respondents presented its own rewards and challenges. It is to a more detailed discussion of these methodological issues that I will turn in the chapter that follows.
2 From Senegal to the World: inheriting a long history of (gendered) migration

2.1 Introduction

The desire to migrate reaches the level of a collective obsession among Senegalese youth. Walking on the streets of Dakar, taking a taxi to Guédiawaye, at a restaurant by the side of the road somewhere on the way from Saint Louis or in the middle of a rice field just outside of Ouassuye in rural Casamance, people would approach me to ask if I could open the doors of Europe for them. Gender, socio-economic class, and rural or urban origins were of little importance: everyone wanted to leave a place where they saw no future. Les émigrants, Senegalese migrants abroad, where revered because they possessed what few other people had in the country: money and prestige. Migrants sent remittances that kept their families afloat. They built houses and opened businesses. They lived in El Dorado, the promised land where “you can pick up money from the ground as you stroll down the street.” And, when migrants came back, “they had the biggest cars and were always surrounded by beautiful women. Their wallets were bursting fat, and with them they bought respect, you understand, money made people kiss the ground they walked on, even if their nails were black from the dirty jobs they had [in Europe]”. These impressions, shared by a respondent who had lost his fiancée to a migrant and decided to leave for Spain as a result, were common among Senegalese young people.

In this chapter, my goal is to discuss the economic, social, and political conditions that have resulted in this collective dream of migration for both men and women. I begin by introducing the national context of origin, Senegal (section 2). In the third section I briefly talk about the status of women in the country and the meaning of marriage as a first insight to the heavy gender imbalances of migrants headed towards Spain. I then turn to migration

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8 People often referred to Europe as El Dorado in their daily conversations. El Dorado (literally, the Golden One) is a legendary place somewhere in Latin America, a kingdom of endless richness that has eluded explorers and treasure hunters since the time of Spanish conquistadores in the 16th century.
flows originating in Senegal in the 20th century: their main destinations and some of the characteristics that set this population aside from others. Finally, in section 5 I focus on the migration of women and try to answer the following question: why is their migration to Spain so rare when compared to men’s?

2.2 Senegal

Ours is a country of passings and encounters, of hybrids and exchanges.

(L.S. Senghor, first President of Senegal after independence, quoted in Diouf 1998, 8)


9 The reader should be warned that while my discussion of Senegal focuses mainly on the socio-cultural and economic context, when I talk about Spain I tend to refer to the politico-institutional context. There are several reasons for this. On the one hand, I have a particular interest in the obstacles to migration created by the Spanish state through its migration and border policy; when it comes to Senegal, I am more interested in the (social) conditions behind the existence of very dense migrant transnational social networks. On the other, this difference in my treatment of both national contexts is a result of my limited ability as a foreign researcher to scrutinize the workings of the Senegalese state. Unlike the case for Spain (the country where I grew up and where I had close personal connections within the socialist government in power at the time) I had few entry points into the Senegalese state -- and not as deep an understanding of its internal functioning. As a result, my treatment of the institutional context in Senegal is not as nuanced or detailed.
Fishing and agriculture are the engine of the Senegalese economy.\textsuperscript{10} Despite the use of outdated artisanal methods, the fishing industry feeds both local and international markets. The agricultural sector is focused on food crops (millet, rice, corn, and sorghum) and cash crops (peanuts, sugarcane, and cotton). The top agricultural exports in the country are gum arabic and peanut-derived products. Senegalese agriculture is characterized by its dependence on the natural seasons, the importance of subsistence agriculture, and its low productivity; it is estimated that local production meets about 30 percent of the population’s needs, making the country painfully dependent on foreign imports (particularly rice). This makes the Senegalese economy “extremely vulnerable to climatic variations and fluctuations in the international markets” (Ndiaye 2007, 3). Peanut, the production “engine of the rural economy” (4) occupies about 40 percent of agricultural land and employs roughly one million people, but it is particularly sensitive to variations in rain patterns. Today the economy depends to a great extent on remittances (between 15 and 20 percent of the GDP) and foreign aid (Daffé 2008).

\textsuperscript{10} Unless noted otherwise, the information in this paragraph is from Ndiaye 2007.
Since the 1970s, the Senegalese economy has received a series of hard blows. Authors attribute the worsening of living conditions (and real income) to a series of environmental, economic, and political factors. Repeated droughts devastated the local peanut industry in the 1970s-1980s. More recently, a succession of plagues has decimated production (Ndiaye 2007). The instability and decreasing productivity of the land resulting from drought and plagues led to a rural exodus to the major cities, in particular to Dakar, fuelling the emergence of poor and under-serviced suburbs in the Cape Vert peninsula (Tall 2008). This explains the growth of the urban population, from 33 percent of the nation’s inhabitants in 1969 to over 45 percent in 2000\textsuperscript{11} – with more than half the country’s urban population living in the capital (Diouf 1998, Fall 2010). At the same time, there has been an extraordinary decrease in the productivity of the fishing sector, mainly due to the use of out-dated and largely manual methods as well as to the over exploitation of coastal waters by foreign companies, who use more advanced technologies (Diop 2008). The Structural Adjustment Programs promoted by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund since the 1980s are believed to have aggravated the situation of poverty within the population (Diop 2008, Fall 2010, Moreno Maestro 2008).

Due to Senegal’s dependence on a chronically flawed primary sector and the under-development of both industry and services, the population faces a severe lack of employment opportunities. According to the IOM (2009) between 40 and 50 percent of the active Senegalese population is currently unemployed (either inactive or active without a job). Of those with a job, most are employed in the informal sector, which in 2007 constituted roughly 60 percent of the country’s GDP (IOM 2009). The main occupations in the underground economy are industry work, street commerce and services, which offer much lower salaries and little or no protection to workers. Currently, 30 percent of the workers express lack of satisfaction with their current occupation and 20 percent are employed part-time. Those with secondary education, urban dwellers, youth, and women have been particularly hit by the lack of employment opportunities. As a result, the exodus

\textsuperscript{11} The rate of urbanization has dropped slightly since 2000: more recent estimates calculate that 42 percent of the Senegalese population will live in cities by 2010 (UNPD 2009).
of highly-skilled migrants is an important phenomenon: this “brain drain” included 51 percent of medical doctors and 27 percent of nurses licensed in the country between 1995 and 2005 (IOM 2009).

Figure 2.2: Woman selling onions and fish at a local market. Informal commerce is one of the main niches for Senegalese women. Photograph by the author (2009).

Together with environmental and economic factors, the endemic corruption of the Senegalese political class has resulted in a draining of already scarce public resources (including international aid) away from the general population and into the pockets of government officials. This corruption is commonplace both in the everyday interactions of citizens with local government workers (“low-level corruption”) and in the practice of using public resources of the state for officials’ private benefit (“high-level corruption”; USAID 2007, 39 and 62).
Corruption and a failing economy exacerbate the challenges posed by a rapid demographic growth. The Senegalese population has increased almost four-fold growth since the 1960s.\textsuperscript{12} Most of this increase is due to natural growth, which has decreased slowly yet steadily in the last few decades (in 2009 the country still had a fertility rate of 5.0) (UNPD 2009). The lack of economic opportunities for this increasing body of young workers has resulted in poverty being a daily experience for large sectors of the population. In 2009 more than a third of the country’s 12 million inhabitants lived under the country’s poverty line, with the average income per capita just slightly over the region’s average, at $1,666 US per year (UNPD 2009). Less than half the population was literate, with illiteracy higher within the non-urban population (58 percent of the total) and women: only 33 percent could read and write, compared to more than half (52.3 percent) of the men. Women were also disproportionately impacted by poverty; health problems; and restricted access to education, the labour market, professional occupations, and political positions (Dial 2008, Heyen-Pershon 2005, UNDP 2009). Single mothers and divorced and widowed women were at very high risk of falling through the cracks. In the near total absence of a functioning state,

\textsuperscript{12} In 1960 Senegal included 3,110,000 inhabitants, while in 2009 the total population amounted to 12,171,365 (Diouf 1998, IOM 2009).
this group, young children from rural areas, and the handicapped formed a large and rapidly expanding urban homeless population that lived in utmost poverty (HRW 2010).

### 2.2.1 The people behind the numbers

Indicators, statistics, and negative economic assessments developed by foreign organizations hide the demographic and historical processes that have taken the country to its current situation. Senegalese society is extremely complex, marked by ethnic, cultural, religious, and linguistic heterogeneity, and by a strongly hierarchical traditional social organization that varies according to ethnicity but is generally based on caste, age, birth order, and gender. Political economist Makhtar Diouf (1998) considered this heterogeneity as a mixed blessing – at once an obstacle for development and a testimony to the country’s cultural wealth. Offering one of many categorizations that exist of the Senegalese population, this author proposed that five ethnic groupings dominate Senegalese demographics: the Wolof (including the Lebou), the Haal Pulaar (including both Toucouleur and Peuhl), the several Sereer groups, the Jola, and the Manding (including the Soninké, the Malinké, Jaxanke, and Bambara). Other minority populations native to neighbouring countries exist as well. These ethnic groups are not geographically segregated, with the possible exception of the Jola who are concentrated in the southern Casamance region.

Language is the chief instrument to delimit ethnicity, although in some parts of the country the “wolofization” of the population through cultural influence and inter-ethnic marriage has rendered this measure inadequate (Diouf 1998). Today, French is the official language in the country. There are six other national languages recognized and many others that are spoken daily in certain communities although some (like Sereer) are expected to disappear within the next few decades. Despite conflicts over the cultural dominance of the Wolof group and
with the exception of the Casamance separatist movement, inter-ethnic relations are largely peaceful. Nevertheless, mixed marriages remain rare everywhere but in Dakar, proving the resilience of ethnic differences (Dial 2008).

Besides ethnicity, other axes of social differentiation include religion and social caste. The country’s population is overwhelmingly – and increasingly – Muslim (roughly 95 percent at present). Senegalese Islam is of a peculiar kind, mixing North African teachings and religious texts with local traditions (Cissé 2007). The Muslim population in the country is spread between several brotherhoods or confréries, of which the Tijaniyya (originating in Algeria and popularized in Senegal through the work of El-Hadjj Malick Sy) and the Muridiyya (which draws from the labour of spiritual master and creator Cheikh Amadou Bamba) are the most central. Other brotherhoods include the Qadiriyya (imported from Iran) and the Laayeen (a local brotherhood particularly important among the Lebou, a Wolof sub-group concentrated in the coastal areas). Religious leaders, called marabouts, exert great political influence in the country, leading some observers to blame the dysfunctionalities of the Senegalese state to the influence of religion and in particular marabouts in the country’s politics (Fall 2010).

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13 The Casamance region has a long story of resistance against foreign political powers. Historians date the current conflict to a promise supposedly made by the first President of Senegal upon independence in 1960 that were the region to join Senegal for 20 years, it would be given status as an independent country afterwards. By 1980 and with Senghor still head of the state there was no sign of it happening, and protests began in Ziguinchor, the region’s capital. Since then, there has been a low-intensity civil war fought between the central Senegalese government and the Mouvement des Forces Démocratiques de la Casamance (MDFC).

14 Marabouts are Muslim religious leaders in contemporary West Africa. They are well-versed in the Quran and other sacred texts of Islam and offer spiritual guidance to their communities. At the same time, in Senegal they have continued pre-Islamic practices: they read the future, provide health remedies for all kinds of diseases from infertility to migraines, and ensure divine protection through the selling of lucky charms that protect the person wearing them from anything ranging from infidelity to death during the sea voyage to the Canary Islands. More unfortunate is the involvement of “false-marabouts” (people who do not have any interest in religious teachings) in the exploitation of children (see HRW 2010).
Islam coexists peacefully with other imported (Christian, mostly Catholic) and local animist practices, although the latter are losing ground rapidly. Families with different members professing several faiths (at times a combination of two, usually Islam and animism or Christianity and animism) are not rare, particularly in Casamance. Private Catholic schools enjoy a good reputation throughout the country, and Muslim families do not hesitate to send their children there and to Islamic schools separately on weekends. Despite fears that Muslims may proselytize to Christians and vice versa, religious diversity has not been a challenge to the country’s stability. However, once again, the rarity of mixed marriages signals the limits of religious tolerance: inter-religious marriages between Muslim men and Catholic women are exceptional. Muslim women are banned altogether from marrying Christians unless their fiancés convert to Islam – but families generally oppose these kinds of unions (Dial 2008).

Figure 2.4: Girls in a Tijan Mosque in Sedhiou, Casamance. Photograph by Javier Acebal (2009), reproduced with permission from the author.

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15 It is remarkable that, in a country with such an overwhelming Muslim majority, the first President of Senegal was a Catholic Sereer man, Léopold Sédar Senghor. Abdulaye Wade, President of the country during my fieldwork and member of the Mouride brotherhood, is married to a Catholic woman. I made a point of talking about this issue with everyone I could, and, although my sample was by no means representative, I did not find anybody who showed any discomfort about the presence of Catholics in the country or in preeminent positions in the government (Senghor’s influence is undeniable: he is one of the most influential figures in Senegalese history, a widely respected intellectual and statesman). If anything, Catholic and non-Mouride Muslims alike showed certain discomfort with Wade’s disdain for religious groups other than his own.
The vast majority of the population, over 80 percent, belongs to ethnic groups with a social hierarchy based on a unique sort of caste system where high-class groups are called “non-caste” and low-class are thought of as “casted” individuals (Babou 2009, Dial 2008, Diouf 1998, Rosander 2001). Scholars agree that the term “caste,” imported from the Indian context, is applicable to talk about some aspects of the highly hierarchical Senegalese societal structure; however open discussion of the caste system remains a taboo (Diouf 1998, Rosander 2001). Rosander uses a definition by historian and anthropologist Abdoulaye Diop, according to whom Senegalese castes are “endogamous and hereditary groups with a professional specialization, maintaining hierarchical relations” (quoted in Rosander 2001, 492). This author adds that further ideas about purity / pollution are relevant, and that caste status is a hereditary affair. In contrast to other contexts where the term caste applies (notably India) the low-status (“casted”) population in Senegal is a minority, between 10 and 20 percent of the total. The remaining 80-90 percent (the “non-caste”) are considered upper class, a sort of nobility. In Wolof non-caste citizens are called guèer; they are (or were originally) mostly land owners. Caste groups are the ñeeño, and they branch into manual workers and artisans (jëf-lekk), traditional singers or griots and griottes (sab-lekk), and other lower class workers (i.e., courtesans, waiters and jesters, known as ñoole). The caste system remains very much alive in current Senegal. Nevertheless, traditional hierarchies have been displaced by the monetarization of social relations, and today economic success seems to be the main indicator of an individual’s position in the social hierarchy – particularly in areas of widespread emigration and in Dakar (Dial 2008, Fall interview, Sarr interview).

In summary, today Senegal is a poor but, for the most part, peaceful country that prides itself in its hospitality (teranga in wolof), one of the dominant national values. The society is incredibly complex, including a variety of ethnic groups, religions, and other lines along which its members are positioned, including caste, birth order, and gender. Using inter-marriage rates as an indicator of the continuity of ethnic, religious, and caste divisions, we can conclude that these remain strong to this date, although the behaviour of city dwellers
(notably in the Dakar area) and certain groups offer a stark contrast to the reality of rural and poorer populations (Dial 2008).\textsuperscript{16}

\section*{2.3 Gender and marriage in Senegal}

In an exceptional book by Fatou Binetou Dial, titled \textit{Marriage et divorce a Dakar: itinéraires féminins} (2008), the author argues that marriage marks the coming of social age in Senegalese society. This is the case for all citizens, but particularly for women. Marriage, she says, is a decision made early on by the family. Through marriage women achieve social status (an unmarried woman has none), economic status (as tradition and family law establishes that the man is responsible for providing food and shelter for his spouses and children), and respectability (because every single woman is potentially a sexual deviant, that is, she is susceptible to engaging in extra-marital sex). Senegalese society overall being fundamentally conservative on all issues related to gender, the safest option is to marry a woman as early as possible.

Professor Fatou Sarr, from the Université Cheikh Anta Diop in Dakar, explains how the choice of spouses is generally made:

\begin{quote}
The “best” marriage is considered the marriage chosen by the family. We can’t talk about freedom in the way the term is used in the West. Nobody, \textit{nobody} has the right to choose his wife by himself. See, there are desired marriages, advised marriages, preferred marriages. And when [the union is] not one of the above, complications are unavoidable. (...) We can’t really talk about “forced” marriages; the term “consented” is more appropriate, even though the future spouses – in particular, the woman – may not always be in a position to contradict the decision made by her elders (Sarr, interview January 2010, my translation).
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{16} It should be clear after this discussion that it is impossible, due to the complexity of Senegalese society, to talk about “a Senegalese culture”. In the remainder of this thesis there are points where I refer to Senegalese traditional values, the tenets of a common national identity, or compare Senegalese and Spanish dominant cultures. I do so for the purposes of efficiency when making an argument, aware that such generalizations are fraught with tensions and contradictions and without any intention to oversimplify or caricature a culture or a group.
According to tradition, the preferred marriage is that which takes place between two crossed cousins within the extended family – i.e., the closest family member of the opposite sex beyond the taboo of incest (Dial 2008). All but one of the women who participated in this study, both as migrants and as members of a migrant’s close social networks in Senegal, were married within the family.17 Most of these women did not see their marriage as an imposition, but as advice given to them by loving, wise parents who knew what was best for them. The consequences of not abiding by this “advice” were significant: lack of status, loss of family support, and potentially ostracism. This contributed to their bending to their family’s wishes. Such was the case of Binta (the sister of a young man who lived in Spain and widow of a migrant who worked in Italy for a couple of decades), who reflected on the factors that made her accept to marry her maternal uncle:

We were not very close, I never ever thought that he would be my husband one day. He was ten years older than me and had moved to Italy in the 1980s. (...) He suggested the idea to my aunt who lives in Pikine, who talked it over with my parents, and my mother told me about it. I told my mother I wanted to think it over. But later on, I thought that for example, if I refused this marriage, if one day I had problems with a man, or if I got married with someone who abused me and I had trouble with him, what would I do? My parents wouldn’t help me, I would have brought that upon to myself for not agreeing to their will that I should marry this man. I told myself, well, maybe this is a good idea. (...) And I decided to marry my uncle. (Binta, 30-40 years old, teacher living in Grand Yoff, Dakar; my translation).

Other women offered similar accounts of the factors they considered before accepting their family’s proposed marriage. The decision was made by the family and accepted (sometimes enthusiastically, sometimes reluctantly) by the future spouses. Fatoumata, also married to a cousin living abroad and 18 years her senior, did not find her lack of voice in the matter the least problematic, and in fact most respondents found that their relatives’ choice was the

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17 The exception was Diabira, a young Catholic woman who traveled to Switzerland as an athlete. While her refugee application was being processed in Switzerland, Diabira met a Senegalese man and fell in love with him. Far away from her family, the couple formalized their commitment in front of some friends (they were never legally married). During one of our interviews Diabira said that she had always prayed to marry a Christian man, but then God had decided otherwise. She also admitted that although her family in Senegal was disappointed to find out she had married a Muslim and low-caste man, they saw this marriage as a lesser evil to her being single while a migrant in Europe.
best available option. Sometimes accepting the proposed deal provided these women with significant bargaining power. For example, when Fatoumata agreed to marry her cousin at 16, she did so on the condition that they would not consummate their marriage until her 18th birthday, thus giving her two years to finish a short post-secondary degree at the university before giving birth to her first child. Fatoumata then became a full-time housewife, but regularly reminded her husband that he had promised to pay for her studies if she decided to go back to university when her children were older.

Fatoumata and Binta were Wolof women from traditional families living in similar neighbourhoods in the Dakar metropolitan region, but while Fatoumata married at 16, Binta did so at 30. The great variation of the age of the first marriage among respondents illustrates what Dial (2008) calls “the silent revolution:” urbanization, the involvement of women in formal education and professional work, and, particularly, the worsening of the economic situation (which translates into scarcity of “desirable” men) have led parents to wait longer than ever to marry their daughters, especially in Dakar. Between 1978 and 1997, the median age to enter the first marriage increased from 16.1 to 16.4; the change for the city of Dakar was markedly bigger, from 18.3 to 19.6 for the same period (Dial 2008, 64). Marriage of women under 15 is now virtually non-existent; so are permanently unmarried women, as a woman who gets divorced or becomes a widow will remarry as soon as possible (Dial 2008).

Forced marriages are uncommon, but they do exist in Senegal. Batouly (a middle-aged migrant woman interviewed in Spain) described arriving home one day just to learn that she had been married at the mosque. This is possible because legal marriages are relatively uncommon in Senegal (Dial 2008, 59). Unions are traditionally formalized in the Mosque by a marabout and the bride and groom’s parents, not necessarily with the spouses being present, and their registration with government authorities often does not follow. This practice was frowned upon by respondents and researchers interviewed, but it still takes place. Dial (2008) found that forced marriages often end up in divorce.
2.3.1 Divorce and polygamy

So far, the discussion has referred mostly to the first marriage. However, it is worth noting that divorce is legal (and in fact, fairly common) in Senegal. Divorce from the first spouse can be complicated, since it requires the agreement of the extended family who made the initial choice. Further marriages involve less family involvement, especially since marriage compensation to the woman’s parents is low (or non-existent) and traditional marriages are easier and cheaper to dissolve than legal unions – which are almost unheard of for second and further marriages (Dial 2008).

Polygamy (more exactly, polygyny as regulated by the Quran) further complicates the discussion on marriage and the choice of spouse. Polygyny is a common practice in Senegal, affecting about 40% of the families in the country (Salif and Ayad 2006). It is embraced with enthusiasm by men and tolerated by women as a lesser evil to unmarried status – which is the worst possible situation for a “respectable” woman. For the first spouse, the arrival of a second wife is a penalty: it means that her husband and their families consider that she has failed to fulfill her duties as a wife because, for example, she did not bear children or behaved inappropriately (Dial 2008, Sarr interview January 2010). It could
also happen that the husband “inherits” his deceased brother’s first wife, in which case the second marriage does not harm the first wife’s reputation. Another possibility is that the husband (who lives abroad) decides to have a spouse join him abroad. In this scenario the family will likely want to ensure that the relation with the migrant remains strong (and remittances continue to flow). The migrant should then take a second spouse and leave the first one behind:

I often say that the [first] wife is a hostage taken by the family so that the migrant continues to support the family economically [through remittances]. Generally, families oppose the migration of the wife, because they’re afraid that will bring about a rupture in the relationship with the migrant. That explains that often, if the migrant insists that he wants to have someone with him in the country where he lives, the family may authorize for him to take a second wife (Fall, interview January 2010; my translation).

Female respondents saw polygyny with ambivalence. Women married to migrants had little choice on the matter, and all they could hope for is that their husband’s family would oppose the union. Educated devout Muslim women who lived in Senegal with their husbands did everything they could to distract their spouse’s attention from other women, mainly by devoting themselves to the satisfaction of his sexual needs and desires. Ningou, a veiled Muslim and professional woman in her late 20s, reflected on this:

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18 A classic piece of Senegalese literature reflects on the realities of polygyny from a female perspective. In Une longue lettre (So long a letter, 1981) by author Mariama Ba, Ramatoulaye Fall expresses her feelings as a first wife who is first betrayed by her husband (who takes a much younger woman as a second wife without her knowledge), then abandoned by him, and finally becomes a widow just to have her family try to marry her with her deceased husband’s younger brother. The novel was a raging success among Senegalese female audiences. More recent social commentaries on polygamy in Senegal include the play Polymachin, by local theatre group Cruellas.

19 According to Fatou Binetou Dial, the virtues of a good wife in Senegal are abnegation (towards her husband, her family in law, and her children) and the satisfaction of her husband’s sexual needs (2008, 80-82)
I pray to God my husband won’t take a second spouse, and so I’m always ready for him: I use the *bin bin*,\(^{20}\) the *petit pagne*,\(^{21}\) sexy underwear, incense ... I hope he will be so tired by the end of the night he won’t have the energy or interest to think of other women!! [laughs] But the Quran gives my husband the right to take up to four women – if he can support them, and their children, financially. So I hope, I pray to the good God that if that happens I will have so much work I won’t have the energy to think too much about it (Ningou, Dakar, interview January 2010; my translation).

Other Muslim women in Senegal agreed with this, while Christian women were happy not to have to worry about it – since, for the most part, neither divorce nor polygyny are considered an option for this group.\(^{22}\) Migrant women living in Spain were ideologically opposed to the practice, but saw some advantages to it, particularly since desirable (i.e., financially secure) men are so scarce in Senegal’s current economic climate. For example, Neyba, a Muslim woman living in an Andalusian city, entered a polygamous union as a second spouse shortly after her first husband passed away. Her second husband had to pay no marriage compensation to Neyba’s family because she was a widow. And since Neyba already had children from her first marriage that her second husband was not required to take care of, she could stay in the neighbourhood of Yembeul, a two-hour drive from her second husband’s residence who she saw two days a week. Her family responsibilities meant that Neyba could legitimately engage in small-scale commerce between Gambia and Senegal, and eventually migrate. Another case is that of Batouly, who married a second man as a third spouse after divorcing her first husband (to whom she had been forcibly married). Batouly saw this marriage as a key to her independence: her family stopped insisting that she should marry; she was not required to reside with her husband; and she could finally work with the full legitimacy that her married status gave her. As Dial’s work and these

\(^{20}\) *Bin bins* are loose belts made of beads of different materials, shapes, and colours worn around the waist, used as erotic artifacts in Senegal.

\(^{21}\) *Petit pagnes* are a sort of short skirt made of see-through fabric, used exclusively in the bedroom previous to sexual intercourse.

\(^{22}\) Young Catholic respondents expressed a strong belief that their marriage was to be monogamous and to last forever, or until death do them part, as predicated by the Catholic Church (Matthew 19,6: “Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder”; translation from the King James Bible). Older generations of Catholics (migrants’ parents) practiced a mix of local pre-Catholic traditions including polygyny. This was particularly common among families from the Casamance region, where anecdotal observation showed that older Christian families were often polygamous.
examples show, polygyny can take many shapes and sometimes, although not always, it may allow women to enter spaces where they would not be allowed if unmarried (mainly, economic activities and international migration).

2.4 A brief history of (male) international migrations in the 20th century

Senegalese migrants arriving in Spain today are a small portion of a much larger Senegalese “diaspora.” The use of the term “diaspora” to describe Senegalese migrants abroad is common among scholars; however as in the following quote from an interview with geographer Giulia Sinatti shows, its use is still controversial:

... [T]here are these two extremes, one that I call “diasporic cosmopolitans,” and other Senegalese that I call the “translocal conservatives.” The first being (...) basically a bunch of intellectuals or those rare Senegalese migrants who really stand out from the crowd if you like, they’re different, they are more cosmopolitan in their way of migrating, and they feel that they belong to a more abstract community of co-nationals, of people who have [gone through] the same experience of migration. But I find the majority of the Senegalese are closer to the extreme of the conservative translocal person, who lives very much in place, in either “little Senegals” that have been created outside of the home country or with a very, very strong attachment to the homeland as such, so they’re very much grounded in the actual places [where they live] (...).

So I think that you are right, the use of the term diaspora in the case of the Senegalese is still quite controversial because (...) it’s still early for that really diasporic sense of belonging to have been developed among the Senegalese. It’s a term that I would use with greater ease if I was thinking of highly skilled migrants, an intellectual diaspora I would consider as a diaspora, but the smaller transnational migrant who has his family back home and tries to go home as often as possible, who comes and goes between the home country and the country of immigration or even various countries of immigration, that migrant I find quite difficult to describe in terms of a member of a diaspora (Sinatti, interview, December 2008).

Translocal or diasporic, smaller or larger, older or younger, interconnected communities of Senegalese citizens can be found throughout the world, from Buenos Aires to Paris, New York to Kinshasha. Migration has provided a way towards economic prosperity for millions
of Senegalese citizens throughout the 20th century. Available information – particularly, statistical information – on past and present Senegalese migrations is fragmented, incomplete, and often contradictory (de Haas 2008; IOM 2008, 2009; ICDMP & IOM 2009; Sinatti 2010a). To this day, the Ministry of Senegalese Abroad, migrant organizations, and discrete surveys cannot agree on how many Senegalese citizens live outside of the country’s borders, giving figures anywhere from 479,000 to three million (IOM 2009).

It is worth noting that the studies analyzing the experiences of this group of migrants have been overwhelmingly about the migration of men. Whatever women were part of these migrations, their joys and tribulations have only exceptionally even been addressed by researchers.23 The next sections will provide a brief discussion of the main characteristics of these movements of population across international borders, focusing on recent flows towards Spain.

2.4.1 Old migrations, new migrations: from the 1940s to 2010

The recent history of Senegalese migrations is often discussed in periods that differ slightly from one author to the next. In its analysis of the Senegalese case, the IOM (2009) establishes three main stages. The first period (also called l’ancienne migration or old migration; Tall 2008) stretches from the 1940s until the mid 1970s. This was a time when the balance of net migration was positive, that is, the country received more foreigners than the number of citizens leaving for foreign countries. Senegal’s flourishing agricultural sector and its political stability attracted a large number of African students and seasonal workers, mostly from neighbouring countries (Cabo Verde, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, today’s Burkina Faso, Mali and Mauritania). Tall notes that, at the time, Senegalese citizens living abroad were mainly soldiers who stayed in Europe after fighting with the French army in the World Wars, as well as circular migrants who benefitted from relatively flexible temporary workers

23 In the case of Spain some exceptions worth noting here are the work of Oumoul Khäïry Coulibaly-Tandian (2005, 2008), Susana Moreno Maestro (2008), Eva Evers Rosander (2001), Papa Sow (2004), and Iria Vázquez Silva (2010).
schemes in France and free entry to the country’s territory. Other Senegalese migrants settled in West Africa (Mauritania, Mali, Guinea Conakry, Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Ivory Coast, and Gabon) and, during the early 1970s, Central Africa (current Congo and Cameroon) where they engaged in the trade of diamonds and other precious stones (Tall 2008).

A second period began around 1975, when the worsening of living conditions in Senegal and the success of previous waves of Senegalese migrants shifted the balance in favour of out-migration (IOM 2009). African countries (notably Congo and Cameroon) remained top destinations for migrants interested in trade; Gabon and Ivory Coast organized the recruitment of temporary construction workers and also attracted newly graduated professionals (mostly teachers) who did not find a place in the Senegalese labour market. This period came to an end with the increasing political and economic instability of the region in the 1980s (IOM 2009, Tall 2008).

The decreasing lure of other West African countries explains why in the third period, since the 1990s, Senegalese migrants have turned towards North Africa and Europe, expanding their areas of destination in their search for new labour markets. Countries like Libya, Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco, which Senegalese citizens can enter without a visa, have received these migrants since the 1970s and particularly in the 1990s. Today, North African governments’ alliances with the EU to stop undocumented migration from Sub Saharan Africa have made them less popular than ever. New favourite destinations emerged in the late 1990s, particularly Italy and Spain in Southern Europe (IOM 2009, Tall 2008). This migration is characterized by a high percentage of undocumented migrants at the destination both due to illegal border crossings and, mostly, to overstayers.

24 The EU has increased its diplomatic relations with the Southern Mediterranean basin (Libya, Morocco, Algeria) in an attempt to create a buffer zone for the control of undocumented migration to its territory. Status refugees, international students, visa holders, and transit migrants alike have been targeted by the security forces in these countries, resulting in physical violence, persecution, abandonment of arrested black migrants at the Southern border of these countries, and numerous deaths.
Further North, France continues to be a pole of attraction for Senegalese migrants, mainly due to the thickness of their social and associative networks in the country, family reunification procedures, and linguistic similarity between the two populations (Tall 2008). The following quote from a migrant living in Marseille shows the extent to which this is the case:

When I am in Palmarin [respondent’s home village in the Petite Côte, Senegal], young people ask me to help them come to France and I try to explain to them that life there isn’t easy. (...) Young people know it, they’ve heard about the many Senegalese who are returned to Dakar [by the French government], those things appear in the press and they have access to international information [via the internet] but they want to give it a try themselves. They think: “It can’t be worse than where I am right now.” For them, there is always something to do in European countries: there are factories, the service sector ... [they think] they’ll find a way to make it work (Tom Sarr, interviewed in Bertoncello 2009, 59; my translation).

Throughout the years, Senegalese migrants have shown an important capacity to adapt to changing conditions. Today the Mediterranean basin has become less and less attractive. Governments along the Mediterranean’s southern shore are increasingly hostile to black populations, who have given policy-makers much leverage in their negotiations with EU and its member countries. Spain and Italy, on the other hand, are immersed in an economic crisis and are putting in place more restrictive immigration policies for African migrants. Given the climate, it is clear that new destinations will arise, but which ones will they be? New York is already known territory for Mouride traders, and it is likely to increase in importance; new populations have settled in Latin American countries, where migration legislation is more favourable; and China seems, for some, the next territory to discover. This part of the history of the Senegalese diaspora is yet to be written.

25 North African countries have assisted the EU in the control of north-bound migration for some time now. In exchange of vast amounts of money and preferential trade agreements, several countries have acted as border guards to prevent the movement of black Africans towards Europe. Libya, Egypt, Morocco, and Algeria have all signed agreements either with the EU or with specific member states.
2.4.2 Transnational networks and the use of ICTs

When compared with other migrant populations, the Senegalese migrant population shows certain particularities. Foremost of these is the thickness of the transnational social networks, an issue that will be only briefly introduced here, since it is the focus of Chapter 6. The Senegalese population abroad deploys available new information and communication technologies (ICTs) to stay in touch with migrants throughout the world and with the community of origin in Senegal. The use of such ICTs is already intense among the Senegalese: virtually everyone owns a cellphone and internet cafes are incredibly popular, particularly among the youth.26 Tandian (2010) highlights that ICTs have also had a deep impact on Senegalese migrations in a variety of ways. ICTs have facilitated money transfers, which, together with cellphones, have helped bridge the spatial gap between migrants and their families. These technologies also provide migrants with quick access to domestic news through online news websites, making possible the emergence of “political transnationalism” among citizens residing abroad. The internet and cellphones have allowed both potential migrants and the Senegalese migrant population to create an accurate cognitive map of their national, ethnic, extended family, and religious networks abroad, allowing them to access help when needed, either from Senegal or during the initial stages in the life of a new migrant.27 Finally, cellphones and GPS technology have allowed undocumented migrants to navigate their way through the sea and land borders (Tandian 2010).

26 The cyber cafes (often owned by migrants and maintained with income from remittances) are mostly used to connect Senegal with other countries. Young people are savvy users of a variety of social networking websites, and online dating services through which young women expect to find a partner (in particular, a national of a rich country) are very popular. This is the case also in other parts of the continent (see Agbinya 2008, Venables 2008, Fair et al 2009). Internet cafes are also used to establish connection and stay in touch with Senegalese migrants through email, online social websites, and online video / voice services such as Skype.

27 All respondents in Spain affirmed relatives or acquaintances that had recently arrived from Senegal regularly contacted them. They were required (by tradition as well as social pressures) to provide these new migrants with a place to sleep, food, and guidance during the first 3 to 6 months, if they could do it. Respondents also received numerous calls from co-nationals in Senegal asking them for money: for food, religious celebrations, to help pay for the medical costs of a treatment for a relative, etc.
Through the use of ICTs, the Senegalese population abroad has the capacity to exert a great deal of influence in the economic, political, and social life back in Senegal. Their economic influence, in particular, is key. Roughly 20 percent of the country’s GDP comes in the form of migrants’ remittances (the exact figure is not known, since much of the money is sent through informal means; Daffé 2008). These remittances, when channelled through hometown associations (associations villageoises) and co-development projects, may result in important improvements in the living standards of the population. Another kind of money transfer often not taken into account is migrants’ contributions to their daara (the religious centre belonging to the religious Mouride brotherhood to which they ascribe, headed by a marabout or religious leader). These contributions, which can be quite substantial, are collected by the marabouts themselves during trips they take to visit migrant populations throughout the world. Both men and women make donations, however the latter are not part of decision-making processes and their interactions with religious leaders are limited to a few hours in the evening, after more important issues have been dealt with. The money is used for marabouts’ personal expenses and also for the maintenance of Islamic schools in Senegal (Rosander 2001).

Marabouts being among the most powerful political actors in the Senegalese political arena, their dependence on migrants’ remittances gives the latter significant leverage in domestic politics. However, migrants are politically active through their own means. Organized through local and national branches of the Fondation des Emigrés Sénégalais (Foundation of Senegalese migrants, FES), independent grass-root organizations, or through individual actions, Senegalese migrants have become an influential – and often mordant – voice in local as well as national politics. Not coincidentally, all four Presidents of the Republic of Senegal (Léopold Sédar Senghor, Abdu Diouf, Abdulaye Wade, and Malick Sall) resided in

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28 Rosander (2001) argues that the benefit of these visits is mutual. On the one hand, marabouts collect money crucial for the expansion of Mouridism, receive royal treatment, and continue exercising influence on the Senegalese population abroad; on the other, migrants (and in particular casted women) are allowed to reinforce their collective identity as Senegalese and Mourides and have very close contact with some of the most prestigious figures of Senegalese society. I personally attended a religious celebration in Spain with some marabouts from Senegal in attendance and was impressed by the amount of respect (and money) with which they were showered.
France for a significant part of their lives – Wade in fact ran much of his 2000 presidential campaign from Paris. Migration has triggered the transformation of some key social institutions such as hierarchy based on caste or gender, allowing women to make decisions on how to run the family and even catapulting “low-class” citizens to important public positions in domestic politics (Moreno Maestro 2008; Rosander 2001; Fall 2008; Sarr, interview January 2010).

![Image](image.jpg)

Figure 2.6: Women preparing nakh (a rice-based snack) in rural Senegal. Note the coexistence of old and new technologies: wooden pestles and cellphones. Photograph by Javier Acebal (2009), reproduced with permission from the author.

The influence of migrants in the economic and political life of the country, from the micro (intra-household) to the macro level (national politics) means that, today, migrants enjoy a great deal of prestige in the country. Migrants are heroes: the ones that keep the country and the family afloat, the ones that attract the most beautiful women and have the most expensive cars, and the ones that create employment. They are figures assimilated to the great prophet Cheikh Amadou Bamba, creator of the Mouride brotherhood, who in order to carry his divine mission had to first live in exile (Diop 2008; Rosander 2001).
The mere survival as well as the prestige and influence of migrants abroad depends on their social networks. A key factor, already mentioned, are religious brotherhoods, in particular the *Mourides*. Even non-*Mouride* Senegalese migrants pay their dues to the *Mouride marabouts* and participate in religious celebrations as a way to claim their national and religious collective identity when abroad. This is the case also for *Tijan* migrants, whose brotherhood is not as active outside of the country as the *Mourides*. Christian migrants, on the other hand, reach out both to Senegalese Muslim groups and to Spanish Christian institutions, using their identity as both Senegalese and Christian to access services and support networks that would otherwise be beyond their reach. These religious networks are activated by recent and not so recent arrivals. They are key in providing food, a temporary shelter, and vital information upon arrival. In the case of the *Mourides*, they are also crucial in getting migrants involved in street (informal) commerce, a common occupation for new arrivals (Moreno Maestro 2008, Rosander 2001; for the Italian case, see Sinatti 2008 and Riccio 2008). Other networks that are also employed are based on nationality (open to all Senegalese), extended family connections, and ethnicity.

### 2.4.3 Circularity and “mobile transmigration”

The high mobility of Senegalese migrants also makes this group stand out when compared to the broader foreign population in Southern Europe, particularly in Spain. However, the hyper mobility of the Senegalese can also be observed in other regions of the world, for example in Africa, where this population has been known, for decades, as international traders and manual workers (Tall 2008).

In Europe, mobility is an adaptation strategy: migrants move to wherever work and legal status are thought to be more easily available, following information which is spread through the use of ICTs across transnational social networks. A sizeable portion of the migrants interviewed for this study did not originally arrive in Spain: they held tourist visas for other European countries, and it was upon their arrival that they learnt of greater opportunities in Spain (mainly the availability of underground work and the possibility of
accessing legal status through an amnesty). Original countries of destination were often chosen due to existing bureaucratic shortcuts (e.g., easier access to tourist visas for Senegalese who wish to go to France, visa waivers for dual Senegal - Guinea Bissau citizens in Portuguese legislation) or well established social networks (notably in France and Italy). Although there is no data regarding the original country of arrival of Senegalese migrants currently living in Spain, the prevalence of such journeys among participants of this study suggests that it is not uncommon.

Another kind of mobility, well studied by Giulia Sinatti, refers to circularity and return. This author talks about the “mobile transnationality” of the Senegalese migrant population in Italy, and points to a new kind of transnationality (in fact, translocality) very different from that which is often discussed involving mostly wealthy migrants (Ley 2004, Ley and Kobayashi 2005). This author argues for a need to re-think the concept of return, which should not be seen as an ending to the migration cycle, but one more stage. In the case of Senegalese migrants, a perpetual cycle of temporary returns and re-migrations characterizes the experience of this group. She labels this “circularity” “mobile transnationality” (Sinatti 2010a).

This “mobile transnationality” is, in part, grounded on the impossibility of return for most Senegalese migrants. Migration being mainly a collective project, decisions and financing are achieved through the participation of the extended family; relatives invest in migration in order to reap future benefits in the shape of regular remittances. If the migrant succeeds in settling down in a foreign country and securing a job, families become dependent on money transfers. Marriage, the growth of the family, and the need to retain the social prestige that results from the status as a migrant (status earned through conspicuous consumption and the redistribution of wealth within the community of reference) increase this dependence. Such solidarity is at once imposed on the migrant and embraced by him or her, because it results in a significant augmentation of their social status in their home communities in Senegal (Daffé 2008, Diop 2008, Fouquet 2008, IOM 2009, Sinatti 2010a).
By the time the extended family has become dependent on the migrants’ remittances, it becomes impossible for a migrant to seriously consider returning. If departure is a collective project, voluntary permanent return is an individual one that clashes against many forces, most of which have to do with money. To return without money is not an option for migrants, because it would mean the loss of face and of all the prestige they have attained while abroad. Families often oppose permanent return, because it would imply putting an end to the flow of money.

To satisfy both personal and family preferences, the Senegalese living abroad often consider opening a business back at home. But the truth is that few businesses in Senegal are as lucrative as being a migrant worker in a richer country. Besides, many of these migrants are manual workers and lack the skills that would allow them to run a successful business in Senegal (Sinatti 2010a, 2010b). The small portion of migrants who succeed in starting a business often invest in the informal market, in niches already saturated by other migrants (e.g., informal taxis, corner stores, internet cafes) with the help of relatives who do not always have the knowledge, or the inclination, to run the business properly (Sinatti 2010a). Revenues are scarce if they exist, and these investments often fail within a short period of time. Although research on productive investments refers mostly to the Senegalese male migrant population in countries other than Spain, female respondents who participated in this study narrated experiences consistent with Sinatti’s observations.

The difficulties of securing a profitable business in Senegal make permanent return impossible, forcing migrants to re-emigrate continuously: “once they have engaged in the process of migration, they are unable to stop, trapped between the luxury of ensuring a better livelihood for those who have stayed behind and the need for geographic distance to uphold local demands” (Sinatti 2010a). Instead, Senegalese migrants return to Senegal as often as they can for as long as they can – considering the costs of the trip include the price of travelling but also large amounts of cash to distribute among family and neighbours to
buy the prestige they enjoy as migrants (Rosander 2001, Sinatti 2010a). Visits often coincide with important religious celebrations such as the tabaski (Eid Al-Adha, the Festival of Sacrifice) or the Great Magal of Touba (which commemorates the day that Cheikh Amadou Bamba, creator of the Mouride brotherhood, was sent to exile). On the one hand, these visits could potentially allow the migrant’s permanent return, since they provide an opportunity to research possible productive investments in the country. On the other hand, these trips are expensive and they postpone the migrant’s permanent return (Sinatti 2010a). In the end, this situation turns Senegalese migrants into “mobile transnationals” (Sinatti 2010a): migrants that shuttle back and forth, with a strong foothold in both countries of origin and destination that challenge mainstream definitions of (elite) transnationalism.

### 2.5 The migration of Senegalese women to Spain

![Graph 2.1: Growth of the Senegalese population in Spain by sex (2001-2011). Source: INE (2001-2011).](image)

The previous discussion focuses on the migration of Senegalese men to Europe. Scholars have focused on this group on the basis that most Senegalese migrants are men (see Graph 2.1); but often their bias remains unacknowledged, and it is assumed that women’s
experiences will be equivalent to men’s or (potentially) irrelevant, since they are after all a small percentage of the group.

Currently there are over 55,000 Senegalese citizens registered as inhabitants in Spain; of them, 17 percent are women (see graph 2.1 above). The population is distributed unequally through the national territory, as shown in map 2.2.

Map 2.2: Distribution of the Senegalese population in Spain. Data from INE (2008).

The statistical data beg the question: why are women such a small percentage of the Senegalese immigrant population in Spain? Researchers point at gender roles in Senegal, where women carry the burden of domestic responsibilities and their respectability (which is equivalent to their submission to their husband) is paramount. Women cannot, generally speaking, migrate without their family’s acquiescence. Besides, the Senegalese population being still young in Spain, it is often considered dangerous for women to migrate alone; sea and land migration are deemed particularly risky for women, which may help explain that only women in extreme circumstances (unmarried pregnant women, women fleeing abusive relations) engage in this journey, often alone and without their family’s support (AI,
When asked about the relationship of Senegalese women with migration, Professor Papa Demba Fall, geographer and leading scholar of Senegalese migration studies, distinguishes three categories. He calls the first “immobile women:” wives whose husbands have migrated but who have stayed in Senegal, usually with their in-laws. The second category is “dependent women” who migrate to join their husbands in Europe through family reunification procedures. Finally, there are “independent migrant women”, a relatively small group of women who have left Senegal with or without their family’s accord, either to study or to work in Europe (Fall, interviews April 2009 and January 2010). According to Fatou Sarr, director of the Centre for Gender Studies and Scientific research at the University Cheikh Anta Diop in Dakar and migration scholar, the strongly hierarchical and patriarchal organization of Senegalese society is an important factor preventing the migration of women, particularly to new destinations like Spain where the Senegalese diaspora is still not fully rooted (Sarr, interview January 2010).

In Spain, anthropologist Susana Moreno Maestro applies similar categories to those used by Professor Fall in her study of Senegalese migrant women’s involvement in the informal labour market (i.e., street peddling and braiding) in Seville, in Southern Spain. This author reluctantly accepts the terminology proposed by Senegalese scholar Ba and distinguishes between “active migrants” (who work or engage in an economic activity independent from their husband) and “passive migrants” (who depend economically on their husband and devote themselves to unpaid reproductive work). Moreno Maestro concludes that “women who remain at home are a small minority that responds, at times, to the [husband’s] desire to

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29 All large ethnic groups in Senegal practice what in social anthropology is known as patrilocal residence or virilocality: married couples tend to live close to, and often with, the husband’s family.

30 Moreno Maestro’s reservations have to do with the “ideological construction of gender [that this categories imply]” which renders unpaid domestic work invisible. She accepts the terms however because “in Seville we have in fact found all the situations that [the author] proposes” (Moreno Maestro 2008; my translation).
have a ‘traditional wife’ after having had a bad experience with local [white Spanish] women” (Moreno Maestro 2008, my translation).

Like Moreno Maestro, Eva Evers Rosander (a Swedish scholar from the religious studies field who has spent decades working with migrant women from the Mouride brotherhood) is inclined to give Senegalese women very strong agency in migration. Focusing on Senegalese women in Tenerife (Canary Islands) she concludes that their number is much larger than it is usually thought.  Rosander (2001) believes that, although unequal gender and caste relations find their way out of their country through the behaviour of migrant populations, women migrate independently and make decisions regarding their occupations and the administration of their earnings while abroad. “Senegalese men both want to control women outside their homes, which means restricting female spatial mobility, and to have economic benefits from the income generated by women’s trading outside of Senegal” (Rosander 2001, 491). The networks which enable these trading women to migrate to the Canary Islands (notably, religious networks) are run by men; in this sense, and given gender roles in this group, migrant women’s independence is restricted. Nevertheless, women find in migration a legitimate means to earn a living that allows them to become respected members of their community despite their social background at origin. In summary, Rosander sees women’s actions as strategic towards an advancement of their autonomy and prestige at origin.

Another scholar, sociologist Iria Vázquez Silva, has focused on the situation of Senegalese migrants in the northwestern province of Galicia. Her focus is on the organization of family work in Senegalese transnational households, with a particular interest on women’s care work. Vázquez Silva (2010) concludes that the global care chain theory is relevant in the study of this specific group, although it is slightly altered by the specificities of the Senegalese family organization. For this author, women from this group who live in Galicia

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31 Although Rosander’s work spreads through several decades, the paper on which this discussion is based is from 2001. Her conclusions could be outdated. Also, the paper includes no information about the methodology used (size of the sample, recruitment method, date of collection of data, etc.).
are mainly dependent migrants who have followed their husbands and who have experienced little, if any, gains in gender equality within their households – however they enjoyed a much improved social status upon their seasonal returns to Senegal. Among the women that she interviewed there were some who engaged in paid work outside of the home, mainly to complement household income (brought by their husbands) during their periodic stays in the country. Maybe more interestingly, Vázquez Silva has called attention to the emergence of a quintessentially Senegalese figure: the “transnational daughter in law” who devotes herself to the care of her husband’s family at both ends of the migration journey.

Unlike Moreno Maestro in Seville and Rosander in the Canary Islands, Vázquez Silva has encountered mostly women who fit the profile of the “dependent woman” (Fall, interviews) or the “passive woman” (Ba, in Moreno Maestro 2008). This may be due to her focus on families. Another scholar who has researched the issue, geographer Papa Sow, agrees with her conclusions. In 2004 Papa Sow published a pioneering article on Senegalese and Gambian “migrants and / or wives” of migrants in Catalonia, a region in the northeastern tip of the Iberian Peninsula showing the highest concentration of Senegalese migrants in Spain. Despite the title, the paper focuses exclusively on women who have migrated through family reunification procedures. Not making a clear difference between Senegalese and Gambian women, this author concludes that some of them carry paid work outside of the home, often in sectors where they had little or no experience (i.e., intercultural mediation). However he notes that:

this professional evolution of migrants’ wives [in Catalonia] (...) only includes a minimal percentage of this group. The vast majority continues to perform old tasks such as “domestic work” and [perpetuate] social patterns in the country of origin: to play the role of mothers and guardians of the home, the children, and the family’s belongings. The dominant ideology in the country of destination (...) has, to this date, been unable to [make this women forget their duty] to devote themselves to the home, as it is conceived by the wives of migrants. (...) The rapid adaptation to the social model at destination (where women demand the right to [paid] work almost without
exception in equal terms to men) seems to run parallel to a maintenance of practices at origin (Sow 2004: 85, my translation).

These authors’ conclusions regarding the migrant status of Senegalese women in Spain (as independent migrants or family members), their involvement in paid work distinct from those of their husbands (“passive” or “active” migrants), and their relative empowerment through migration varies greatly. There are several reasons for this. First, there is no public data on foreigners who have migrated to Spain through family reunification procedures, thus all studies must rely on information gathered at a small scale through qualitative methods. Second, each of these authors has different interests and areas of specialization (anthropology, religious studies, demography / sociology, and geography). With the exceptions of Rosander and Vázquez Silva, none of them has a long-standing interest in gender issues. Furthermore, their methodological and geographical approaches are different. Although they all rely on ethnographic work (in the case of Vázquez Silva, multi-sited) we learn little about the size of their samples or their recruitment methods. Their geographical interests could not be more varied: including my work, we have covered all four extreme corners of the Iberian Peninsula (northwest, in Galicia; northeast, in Catalonia; southwest in Seville; and southeast in Eastern Andalusia), Madrid, and the Canary Islands. This dispersion could account for much of the divergence in findings: as we have learned, networks are a powerful force in Senegalese migrations, and I have found strong evidence of chain migration (this will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 6). This means that migrant women may have very different profiles depending on their region of settlement.

In summary, we know little about the migration of Senegalese women to Spain. Taking all the above mentioned contributions and my own work, what we know is that they are a minority of the Senegalese population in the country, and that the majority arrive either on tourist visas to a European country or as family members who reunite with one of their relatives (usually their husband) in Spain, although the exact numbers for each group are unknown. We also know that regardless of geographical location, their main areas of
activity in Spain are unpaid domestic work, street peddling, and small commerce from home – not necessarily in that order.

Like men, they depend on their transnational social and religious networks in all stages of the migration process. Very importantly, most of the women must first obtain their family’s (as well as their husband’s family’s) permission prior to their departure, and they remain in a situation of relative disempowerment in relation to their male counterparts even after migration, often being in charge of unpaid domestic work at both ends of the journey in the communities of origin and destination. However, all scholars (with the exception of Sow) agree that migration allows these women to improve their positions in their communities of reference in Senegal. Indeed, it seems to be that remittances inject some degree of flexibility into traditional institutions cementing social hierarchies in Senegal, allowing migrant women (and also migrants’ wives who receive money transfers under their name and are then in charge of administering them) to negotiate their position in the society of origin.

2.6 Discussion: Senegal as a country of origin, transit and destination

In this chapter, my goal has been to discuss briefly the main institutions and processes that form the backdrop against which the contemporary migration of Senegalese women takes place. The most significant are the social divisions that organize the society of origin along ethnic, religious, caste, age, and gender lines. Poverty is a major force pushing both men and women beyond the country’s international borders. The extent to which potential international migrants are able to realize their dream of going abroad depends on their particular positioning in Senegalese society. This is especially the case for women, who more often than not depend on their family’s approval to make the move.

International migration to the Global North is a chief aspiration for Senegalese citizens, particularly for the youth. This aspiration has been paved by previous waves of migrants who, since the first half of the 20th century, have made their fortunes abroad. Soldiers in the times of French colonization, diamond traders, merchants, artists, and manual workers alike
have left Senegal empty handed only to return with pockets full of money – at least according to the urban legend that feeds the dream of the youth. These migrants (mostly men) and international media have helped construct an imaginary of Europe as El Dorado, a land of infinite wealth. Faced with daily scarcity and a lack of opportunities, young men – and, increasingly, women – locate their hopes outside of their country of birth.

At the same time, however, it is worth noting that Senegal continues to be a pole of attraction for migrants in West Africa due to its political stability and relative prosperity in the region. As de Haas (2008) has shown, Senegal is at once a country of origin, destination, and transit for international migrants. The work presented here is focused on the country’s role as a source of emigration and the growing participation of local women in international movements of population. This focus should not prevent us from seeing Senegal in a broader setting. The opposite only serves to perpetuate the vision of Africa in general, and “Sub Saharan” (black) Africa in particular, as a source of needy male migrants willing to take any risk to touch the prosperity of Europe. Instead, Senegal is a country with a complex and rich involvement in international migration, of which contemporary migrations to Southern Europe are only a fraction of a much broader historical process.

The historical period inaugurated in the 1990s with the first significant settlement of Senegalese migrants in Italy and Spain is a testimony to the adaptation capacity and flexibility, of international migration flows. The growth of the Senegalese population in these two new countries of destination has been made possible by the use of ICTs, transnational social and religious networks, and traditional forms of solidarity – as well as by the entrepreneurial behaviour of Senegalese migrants. The migration of women to Southern Europe remains marginal in absolute numbers; however there is evidence that their involvement has increased in recent years. Furthermore, international migration has given these women leverage to negotiate their social and economic standing in Senegal. Much is yet to be known about this group, which has only in the last few years attracted the attention of researchers. Some of the questions that the information discussed in this chapter poses
will be tackled in the pages to come: these include an analysis of women’s migration trajectories, their dependency on their husbands, and their use of transnational social networks.
3 Where theory meets migrants: geopolitical approaches to borders

Figure 3.1: Morocco and the fence seen from Ceuta. Photograph by Javier Acebal (2009), reproduced with permission from the author.

3.1 Introduction

There is a terrace in front of the dormitory area at the CETI (*Centro de Estancia Temporal de Inmigrantes* or centre for the temporary stay of migrants). The fence with Morocco is visible to the left. In a clear day one can also see the Iberian Peninsula, ahead across the Strait of Gibraltar. As I leaned on the veranda to take a break after a difficult interview, I could hear the muffled cries of many babies behind me, a basket ball bouncing on the pavement, and the wind across the eucalyptus forest. Imagine spending years to get this far, having crossed so many borders and overcome so many hurdles, and now all that remains between you and the dream of Europe is this stretch of water, I thought to myself. Imagine being so close and yet so far. Imagine what it feels like to find yourself in a limbo called CETI. That day, struggling to make sense of what I had found during my fieldwork, I turned
my mind to the body of migration and border theory that had guided me in the initial phases of this project.

In the following pages my goal is to provide the reader with a theoretical framework to interpret the findings that I will be discussing in the next chapters. This framework will, of necessity, have a dual focus: theories of borders and border control, on the one hand; and theories of transnational social networks on the other. I say “of necessity” because, as I will discuss further throughout this dissertation, borders and migrant networks are inextricably linked.

For the last three decades Spain has been immersed in a never ending re-definition of its external border. Entry into the EU in the mid 1980s and the challenge of illegal migration since the late 1990s have triggered a struggle over the surveillance and control of the external border. Attempts to completely seal the border against unwanted illegal migration have failed, however, because migrants have been using a crucial resource out of the reach of policymakers: their transnational social networks. These networks have been deployed to avoid, move through, and manipulate the external border of the EU / Spain. By constantly trying to anticipate each other’s moves and reach their ultimate goal (in the case of the state a sealed border, in the case of migrant a porous one) the border and the network have become mutually constitutive. Once migrants reach their destination (in this case, Spain) they continue to use their transnational social capital to overcome boundaries that, while not strictly speaking state borders, result from the internal application of the same arguments that contemporary anti-immigration border control has been built upon.

I do not intend to summarize all the available literature on borders and migrant transnationalism, and thus some notable theoreticians will be left out – not because I disagree with their findings, but because they did not help me answer the questions I posed in Chapter 1. The first section of this chapter addresses some of the work that I have found particularly useful in the area of geopolitics and migration control at the border. This is a
selective reading of a very large body of literature. Section 2 introduces the theoretical framework I have used for issues having to do with migrant transnationalism, focusing on the concepts of transnational social networks and spaces. The different research sites will be discussed in the last section of the Chapter to illustrate my choice of scholarly work.

3.2 The (Spanish) state and borders in the context of migration control

The research presented here aims at understanding the obstacles that Senegalese migrants (particularly women) found in their migration to Spain between 2005 and 2010, and the strategies that they used to overcome these obstacles. My discussion of borders, border control, and the role played by transnational social networks is defined by the context in which it happens: one that is politically, socially, administratively, and financially organized around the institution of the nation-state. In this context, international migration from countries of the Global South to the Global North is currently securitized, criminalized, and, in most cases, unwanted.

In his classic book *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson defined the nation as “an imagined community ... imagined both as inherently limited and sovereign” (1991: 6). The emblem of this institution became – and remains – the sovereign state: an “imagined collective actor in whose name individuals are interpellated (implicitly or explicitly) as citizens or subjects, aliens or foreigners, and which is imagined as the source of political authority for a national territory” (Painter 2006: 758). Geographical discourse and, more precisely, cartography, has since the emergence of modern (state-centred) geopolitical thinking contributed enormously to this ideological construction whereby territory, power, and population can be separated into geographically distinct entities. Borrowing from Derek Gregory’s work, Heffernan has drawn a direct line between the emergence of the idea of

32 See discussion on methodological transnationalism below.

33 The account presented here refers to the way the nation-state and its borders have been constructed in contemporary Spain and, more generally, in Europe. It does not aim to be representative of, for example, how national identity, the state, or its borders are experienced in Senegal. Other authors have explored these themes (see for example Diouf 1998, Suarez-Navaz 2004: 162-171).
Europe and the modern way of “conceptualizing and understanding space [as] geometrically ordered, discrete, bounded, and controlled territory” (2006: 32). Sparke has further contributed to this debate, arguing that maps, “as technologies of spatial abstraction, (...) are indeed constitutive of the state” (2005: 9). The abundance of coloured maps representing the migration of Africans towards Europe are an extension of this way of thinking (see for example maps in Appendix B).

Embodied in these maps are two core concepts of the nation-state system: territoriality and sovereignty. These will also be central to the discussion of borders that follows. According to Sack, territoriality is a more effective “means of establishing differential access to people, or resources than is non-territoriality. It can be bounded and thus readily communicated; and it can be used to displace personal relationships, between controlled and controller, by relationships between people and ‘the law of the place’” (1983: 57, quoted in Johnston 2001: 684). As the quote suggests, territoriality is one of the many forms of possible spatiality whereby “space is constituted socially and mobilized politically” around the nation-state and the territory is manipulated for political and economic ends (Kuus and Agnew 2007: 100, Agnew 2007). Non-spatial political organizations do exist, particularly in the current context of expanding globalization. However, territoriality remains a major component of state formation.

Since the birth of modern geopolitical thinking around the turn of the 20th century (Heffernan 1998) territoriality has been intrinsically linked to the idea of sovereignty, which Murphy defined as the “idea that final authority over most if not all social, economic, and political matters should rest with those in control of the territorial units that make up the system” (1996: 82). Insofar as there is a commonly accepted understanding of the geographical and functional delimitations of their power, governments are considered the legitimate actor in charge of managing the territorially sovereign nation-state (Kuus and Agnew 2007).
The contemporary nation-state (imagined, limited, territorial, and sovereign) is at the front and centre of not only the construction of national identities, but also of the production of geopolitical knowledge. “Methodological nationalism” – the assumption that the nation-state is “the natural social and political form of the modern world” (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002: 302) – finds its maximum expression in the field of geopolitics. Most research in the sub-discipline falls into the “territorial trap” (Agnew 1994), which is built upon three assumptions. First, that states are fixed units of sovereign space. Second, that their territorial boundaries define oppositional political identities (the domestic vs. the foreign). And finally, that states are ‘containers’ of internally homogeneous societies (Agnew 1994 and 2007). In summary, “the modern state has co-opted our spatial imaginations. And the co-opting has been so far-reaching that we accept it unproblematically” (Murphy 1996: 107). The state has become the master of mainstream geopolitical thinking, instead of a concept to be studied. This is not to say that other approaches do not exist, but most (including mine) suffer from some degree of state-as-territory fixation.

For example, critical political geographers have been adamant of the need to deconstruct the territorial power of the state and approach it and its borders as processes constituted through constant performance (Amoore 2006 and 2011, Mountz 2010, Rumford 2011, Salter 2011). Feminist political geographers, on the other hand, have insisted that we de-centre the state as the main object of the sub-discipline (Hyndman 2004 and 2007). Researchers in both groups urge us to reveal the agents and the faces behind border policy and gain a better understanding of how decisions are being made (Mountz 2004 and 2010, Kuus 2011a, Bialasiewicz 2012). Finally, debates that are critical of traditional ways of understanding both states and borders are particularly lively among scholars interested in migration control in the EU (Kramsche 2012, van Houtum 2010, van Houtum and Boedeltje 2009, Ferrer Gallardo 2011). These are the discussions that will inform my theoretical approach to EU anti-immigration border control along the Spanish-Senegalese border.
I will now discuss some of the characteristics of the Spanish state that confronts and tries to control (more truthfully, to stop) unwanted migration originating in Senegal. In political terms, Spain works within the limits of representative democracy and within the context of the EU. This means that public opinion (generally volatile when it comes to migration-related issues and greatly influenced by the media) can, through democratic elections, overthrow a government. In a context of politicization, securitization, and criminalization of international migration from the Global South (Huysmans 2006, Mountz 2010), the political class has incentives to adopt populist discourses and pass anti-immigration policies that will help them win votes, regardless of empirical evidence of their long-term impact.34 With the worst economic crisis in recent Spanish history serving as the backdrop for my discussion, anti-immigrant sentiment has found fertile soil. As I will often refer to media coverage of black African migration in Spain this is something to keep in mind.

While the Spanish state remains the master of its territorial affairs, membership in the EU has fundamentally transformed the geopolitical context where it functions. The EU has required that member states yield much control over territorial, economic, and political matters that are now decided in Brussels. Internal mobility of both goods and citizens goes largely unrestricted – and in many cases, unrecorded. At the subnational scale, the EU has encouraged the devolution of power to the regions. As a result state sovereignty has been “eaten up” by the EU, the region, and the hegemonic global neoliberal economic regime. This does not mean that the state has or will disappear any time soon, but that we are witnessing another iteration of this institution at a time when both financial and political decisions are more and more embedded in a neoliberal and increasingly supranational global arena. The narrow margin left to Southern EU governments to solve their current (2008-2012) financial crises is an example of how things have changed for the state in the last decades.

34 These discourses and policies focus on (but are not limited to) migrants from non-EU countries or those who have only recently joined the Union.
EU membership has brought a tidal change into the ways migration is being governed and regulated by member states. For one, citizens and permanent residents can move freely inside the EU space, no longer bothered by internal controls and limited in their choices for residence and work only in marginal ways (King 2002, Peixoto 2001). Non-EU citizens face far more stringent restrictions. Although there is no common legislative framework for the migration of Third Country (non-EU) migrants, there have been numerous attempts to create and merge EU-wide government databases to regulate their movement. The most important ones are the Schengen Information System (SIS) and the Visa Information System (VIS). The SIS I (there is a second version scheduled for 2013) contains information on lost and stolen property and wanted individuals. It is not meant exclusively for non-EU nationals, but as it was designed primarily for the purposes of border control their mobility is affected by it. The VIS was created in 2004 and contains information (including biometrics) about visa applications for EU member states. In 2011 the VIS was expanded to North Africa. What are the implications of this for the territorial and sovereign integrity of EU member states? And what kind of territorial space results from it? These are questions I address in the next pages.

3.2.1 Theorizing the borders of the EU

For the institution of the nation-state to make sense, territory must be bounded. State borders are just one kind of boundary deployed to this end; transition zones, frontiers, border regions, and other kinds of borders (internal to the state or, as in this case, to a supra-national entity like the EU) are also key pieces of the puzzle that make up contemporary visions of the territory (Anderson and O’Dowd 1999). In what follows I do not analyze the border as a geographical site, but as a process and a form of exercising power over both the relation between seemingly disparate groups of people and human mobility.

Insofar as they are material, symbolic, and ideological constructs, state borders are instruments used in the exercise of power that prove to be more problematic than the lines that represent and re-create them on maps: contrary to what modern cartography may
suggest, “[t]he border is not a line of zero width” (Sidaway 2002: 149). Like other kinds of boundaries, state borders fulfill a variety of functions: “they are instruments of state policy and territorial control, markers of identity and discourses manifesting themselves in legislation, diplomacy and academic or scholarly languages” (Paasi 2005: 666). To reflect a growing trend whereby borders are made and enforced away from the administrative limit of the state, during the last decade scholars have been using the term “bordering” (Johnson and Jones 2011).

Critical geographers consider state borders the totems of nationalism; they are complex semiotic systems, symbolic assemblages, and condensation points ideal to track changes in the state system (Sidaway 2002, Paasi 2005, Sparke 2005). Because borders are polysemic and multiple, they are charged with contradictions; and because they are socio-political constructs imposed on continuous space, they leak – people, goods, ideas, identities, and languages all cross borders. State borders are not permanent constructions, but processes constantly being negotiated and re-created through their daily performance in a context of ongoing collaboration and struggle over space (Amoore 2006, Mountz 2010, Salter 2011, Wastl-Walter and Staeheli 2004). The following quote is useful to understand what scholars mean by this:

Sovereignty, like gender, has no essence, and must continually be articulated and rearticulated in terms of “stylized repetition of acts” of sovereignty. The state, through its policies, actions, and customs, thus performs itself as sovereign – and this is particularly visible at borders when the self-evidence of the state’s control over populations, territory, political economy, belonging, and culture is so clearly in question (Salter 2011: 66).

In other words: state borders would not exist without the governments, citizens, NGOs, multinational corporations, and other actors who “enact and resist the dominant geopolitical narratives of statecraft as they cross, or are prevented from crossing, borders” (Salter 2011: 66).
Economic globalization and the emergence of sub- and supra-national territorial regimes (e.g. the “Europe of the regions” or the EU) led some scholars to prematurely announce the death of the state and, with it, of the border (e.g., Ohmae 1995). But while the creation of the EU may have challenged traditional geopolitical wisdom on state borders – revising their established definition and functions – they are in fact far from dead. The American “War on Terror”, for example, has been particularly effective in enforcing the role of the state in the international arena (Mamadouh 2012, Paasi 2011).

Today, the argument that borders are disappearing is untenable, particularly when it comes to the study of South-to-North international migration in the context of the EU. The border does not disappear: it morphs. New borders and bordering practices (both in the EU and elsewhere in the Global North) “seek to reconcile security and mobility and sovereignty with economy” (Amoore 2001: 64). Novel forms of inter-governmental cooperation (such as FRONTEX) and alliances with the military security industrial complex have been key methods to achieve this objective. As it affects human mobility the goal has been twofold. First, states have aimed at identifying, detecting, and deflecting threats before they reach the border. To this end we have seen the emergence of figures like immigration control offices abroad; the re-territorialization of certain spaces like airports and islands, which have been excised from the sovereign space of the state for migration purposes; the institutional disregard of international legislation for the protection of human rights and in particular the right of asylum seekers and refugees; cooperation with governments in countries of origin and transit of north-bound international migrants; as well as the increasing use of high-tech devices such as biometric passports (Amoore 2006 and 2011; Amoore and de Goede 2008; Bigo 2000; Coleman 2007; Feldman 2007; Mountz 2004, 2010 and 2012; Sparke 2006; Walters 2006).

Second, states have enhanced their capacity to efficiently (and quickly) identify threats at their borders. Here, the filtering function of the border gains importance. With assistance from the security industry, travel documents (such as visas and passports) have become very
sophisticated devices, almost impossible to forge (although in the following pages we will see how some migrants address this problem). Security at the airport and other official ports of entry has been heightened with the assistance of the security industry and the pooling of data on international migrants and asylum seekers among governments in the Global North (see for example the VIS). Airlines are now legally held responsible for the validity of travellers’ documents: migrants who attempt to enter the EU without a valid visa are returned to their country of origin at the cost of the company that flew them in. To perfect the practice of “bordering” (or the enforcement of the state away from its national territory) cooperation with countries of origin and transit has become common. At the land and sea borders, securitization has translated into higher fences, movement and heat detectors, high-pressure water jets, blinding lights, and the deployment of military resources. Inadequately undocumented migrants still manage to cross the border without permission from the state, while detention and forced return to their countries of origin have become common place (Crépeau 2011, Ferrer Gallardo 2008 and 2011, Mountz 2010 and 2011b, van Houtum 2010).

In a context where the filtering function of the border is of great importance, the interdiction of CTAs (Clandestine Transnational Actors, Andreas 2003) has become a priority. These are “nonstate actors who operate across national borders in violation of state laws and who attempt to evade law enforcement efforts” (Andreas 2003: 78). Undocumented migrants are, of course, included in this category. They have existed for as long as border and migration laws have been in place. However, with the securitization of state borders and the criminalization of the figure of the irregular migrant, this group of CTAs has become a prime target. Since illegal migrants are perceived to be the main vehicle through which Islamic terrorism (and other criminal organizations) enter Western nations, national origins, phenotype, and religious practices have been used as a proxy for “threat.” More concretely, the borders of the EU have been designed to flag and repel travellers who fall on the wrong side of these categories (van Houtum 2010).
The challenge for EU border scholars is to account for all this in a context where the national is but one of several scales at which the border is being created and performed. The EU is a supranational political institution that is neither sovereign nor can it place any territorial claims upon its member states. However, in the area of border control and the management of illegal migration, the Union has been incredibly effective at bringing its members together. In the case of border states (those at the external borders of the EU) this has implied yielding part of their territorial power to both FRONTEX and the specific governments that participate in land and sea operations.

How do we account for this, theoretically, as political geographers? The term that has articulated discussions in this area is reterritorialization: the redefinition of the state in territorial terms. (Note that this does not equal deterritorialization, or the disappearance of the territorial border.) In the context of the EU, scholars have tended to differentiate between diverging processes of reterritorialization. On the one hand, they have noted that intra-EU obstacles (including borders and document controls) have virtually disappeared, facilitating internal human mobility and resulting in a somewhat more homogeneous internal space in the EU. On the other, external borders have been reinforced. Both processes of internal “softening” and external “hardening” of EU borders are seen as mutually constitutive (Bialasiewicz, Elden and Painter 2005, Scott 2011 and 2012, Scott and Liikanen 2010)

As the current case study proves, the construction of the external border has been achieved through the involvement of multiple actors. The EU has provided the political context for this; its border agency (FRONTEX) has facilitated cooperation among member states and advanced the interests of border countries in the area of migration control (it is not a coincidence that the Agency was created in 2006 and that Spain was one of the main voices advocating for its need). Individual states have advocated for stronger external borders, fearing that the EU would suffer an “invasion” of destitute migrants from south and east. Private companies provided the technical support that made the securitization of the external
border of the EU possible. Finally, other non-state actors such as the Red Cross and the IOM provided the know-how and the logistic support to design and implement specific anti-illegal migration programs, as well as to manage the complications arising from forced deportations.

Scholars have struggled to make sense of this increasingly complex borderscape. Those working in the Mediterranean basin have noted other phenomena besides the multiplication of actors. They include the militarization of the border (Carter and Merrill 2007, Collyer 2005, van Houtum 2010), a fragmented process of europeanization of procedures beyond the limits of the EU (Bialasiewicz 2012, Jones 2005), as well as the inclusion of migration and readmission agreements in negotiations having to do with international trade – particularly in the area of natural resources (Bialasiewicz 2012). In this dissertation I will discuss how europeanization, externalization, outsourcing, and the pervasiveness of migration in international relations shaped the Spanish - Senegalese border between 2005 and 2010.

Specific processes are easy to discuss, but how do we capture this overall complexity in a way that is easy to grasp? In recent years political geographers and border scholars have tried to capture the evolving EU borderscape with a variety of metaphors. The most popular (in the sense that it found its way into non-academic fora) is that of Fortress Europe (Geddes 2000, Carter and Merrill 2007). This image emphasized the ongoing militarization of the Union’s borders, but failed to account for the complex filtering systems that allowed entry to some but not all. In the second edition of his book Immigration and European integration (2008) Geddes moved beyond this notion to account for the combination of openness and closure towards human mobility originating outside of the EU. Walters (2004), looking at the case of the UK, proposed that the ideology governing contemporary border control policies in the Western world is that of “domopolitics” (literally, the politics of the home). “Domopolitics” is based on the opposition of the state (the “home”) as a pace of certainty, belonging, and safety to that of the non-home, which is foreign, dangerous, and threatening.
This reactionary ideology aims to impose a static form of citizenship, an immobility that anchors bodies in territory and imposes the securitization of the border at all costs (Walters 2006). Similarly, van Houtum and Pijpers (2007) reacted to the image of Fortress Europe comparing the EU border regime with a “gated community.” These authors argue that the EU migration policy is a “clear-cut form of socio-spatial insolidarity” (303) put in place to protect the luxurious “capitalistic lifestyle” (292) of a few against the racialized threat coming from the outside. Selection of “economically desirable migrants” (302) is used here to argue in favour of a more nuanced analysis of the border as a filter, and not as a wall. In more recent contributions van Houtum has taken this argument further and called the EU’s external border regime a new form of apartheid. According to this argument, economic desirability would not be the main factor determining whether or not a migrant qualifies to enter the Union: racial profile (inferred from a migrant’s national origin) could be even more important (van Houtum 2010).

Also in an attempt to concisely convey the workings of the EU borders, Rumford (2006) coined the term “networked border.” With this metaphor Rumford aimed to highlight the decreasing importance of borders that are fixed in territory, and argue that Europe’s new forms of spatiality impose a kind of border that is based on connections (“networks”), mobile, and diffused throughout society (Rumford 2006). Following the theme of the non-geographical border and building upon the comparison of the EU with a “gated community” (van Houtum and Pijpers 2007), Walters (2006) tried to capture the increasing complexity of EU border control practices with the image of the “firewall.” According to Walters this image is particularly well suited for a variety of reasons. First, it emphasizes the filtering function of the border and the fact that this objective is achieved prior to the arrival of the migrant to the physical border. Second, it conveys the border as embedded in social relations of power built upon space. Finally, comparing the EU border with a firewall highlights that migration control requires continuously adapting to new routes and strategies, and brings the ”relationship between borders, technology and space” (Walters 2006: 153) to the forefront of the discussion.
Together, these complementary ways of understanding the border and migration control in the EU will guide my analysis in the following chapters. They show borders and migration control as guided by domopolitics, similar to a gated community, with an important yet often ignored racial imperative, built upon new forms of spatiality, and embedded in networked social relations of power. It is my contention that these images and comparisons are powerful tools to understand the ways in which new forms of territoriality in the EU are tied changes in state sovereignty and the governance of borders, particularly when it comes to the management of human mobility.

Furthermore, some scholars have used metaphors to conceptualize not the shape or specific mechanisms through which the EU borders are being built, but their underlying logic. For example, Johnson (2012) has noted certain similarities between the functions of European medieval cities and the external border of the EU. According to this author they both served to filter human bodies, “purifying” the internal space and protecting the political and economic privileges of those inside. This is also an approach I have found particularly useful to account for some of the processes that transformed the border in the first decade of the 21st century.

### 3.2.2 Feminist geopolitics

So far, this discussion of territoriality, sovereignty, and state borders has drawn mostly from the work of critical political geographers. These scholars seek:

to problematize [the] epistemological assumptions and ontological commitments of conventional geopolitics [a panoptic form of power/knowledge at the service of statecraft that relied in declarative and imperative modes of narration]. It deconstructs its ocularcentric objectifications of world politics, and challenges its commitment to particular state-centric political practices. (... ) [Critical geopolitics] seeks to deconstruct hegemonic geopolitical discourses and to question the relationships of power found in the geopolitical practices of dominant states (Ó Tuathail 2000: 166).
Critical geopoliticians have effectively moved the sub discipline beyond former dominant “realistic” approaches to space and territory (Koopman 2011). Deeply influenced by Foucault and Derrida’s work, they have explored how relations of power, imagination, and discourse are used to describe, construct, and manipulate space (Gilmartin and Kofman 2004, Power and Campbell 2010). For this reason Ó Tuathail has said that critical geopolitics is a form of “resistance to geography as imperial truth, state-capitalized knowledge and military weapon” (quoted in Hyndman 2004: 310). Their contribution is significant, particularly in the theorization of the EU project and its borders in the last few decades.

Nevertheless, another group of scholars (feminist geographers) have raised a number of concerns about critical geopolitics. Four of these criticisms are particularly relevant for the study of Senegalese migrations to Spain. In the first place, despite their challenge to the epistemological and ontological assumptions that conventional geopolitics relies on, critical geopoliticians have, as a whole, failed to move beyond “big P” politics (i.e., those that affect and evolve around the state) (Koopman 2011, Staeheli and Kofman 2004).35 The problem of embodiment is significant, as the state remains a rather amorphous entity that is often taken for granted; and the perspective of the researcher is rarely examined, let alone problematized (Hyndman 2004, Mountz 2004 and 2010, Staeheli and Kofman 2004). Feminist scholars have also argued for research that engages a variety of scales, from the body to the supranational, in the study of geopolitics; this would allow for the inclusion of aspects that remain under-studied in this area of inquiry, such as race (Gilmartin and Kofman 2004, Hyndman 2004, Staeheli and Kofman, 2004). For geographers, the focus should be on how difference is exercised through space, and although gender remains at the forefront of feminist political geography, it is understood through its relationship with other categories such as race, religion, and phenotype that are “exclusionary, discriminatory, and even violent” (Hyndman 2004b: 308). And, finally, feminists have accused critical

35 Authors from within the field of critical geopolitics often disagree with this claim, arguing that there has been an increasing “displacement of state-centric readings of world politics and the recovery of the complex and prosaic practices that constitute the modern inter-state system” (Power and Campbell 2010: 244).
geopoliticians of being more interested in deconstructing than in providing alternatives – a stated but largely disregarded goal of the latter group.

To be sure, there are a number of scholars who straddle the divide, and the challenge of embodying critical geopolitics has been taken up by some. The book edited by Staeheli, Kofman and Peake (2004) offers some examples. In the area of human mobility, Jennifer Hyndman has challenged the traditional conception of (state) security that permeates most research in critical geopolitics (2004, 2007). Fluri, in her work, has brought the body to the forefront and centre of her analysis of armed conflict (2006, 2009, 2011 and 2012, among others). Lorraine Dowler has also focused on gender and the militarization of society (Shirlow and Dowler 2010, Dowler 2012); while Joanne Sharp has written extensively on postcolonial ideologies and development aid in Africa (2004, et al. 2010 and 2011, among others). And yet, despite these approaches, the relationship between critical geopolitics and feminist political geography could still be described as “two solitudes” (Hyndman 2007).

My goal is to contribute to build connections between these two bodies of literature. I find feminist geopolitics is particularly useful in the study of how bodies are categorized prior to, during, and after crossing the border – a key aspect of my research, and one that has not received much attention from critical geographers. To provide examples of how this happens in my case study, in a Europe defined as white and Christian (Goldberg 2006; see also Vives 2011) Senegalese migrants are signalled as different at a variety of levels. Their bodies are different because they are marked as “other,” “foreign,” and “threatening” in ways that escape the analysis of both traditional and critical political geography. The experiences of the migrants who participated in this research were heavily mediated by their gender as well as their race and their foreign status. Women’s bodies underwent mutually reinforcing processes of hypersexualization and racialization because they were “seen” through discourses of blackness and sexuality. Due to their gender, women were constructed as migrants with only a subsidiary form of agency and often considered victims in need of assistance.
Once in Spain black participants in general were perceived to have entered Spain illegally. Besides the presumed irregularity of their stay in the country, women participants were often cast as prostitutes by the local (white) population. This made respondents the target of abuse and sexual harassment on the part of both state security forces and citizens, pointing to the many ways in which borders are reproduced beyond the literal territorial limit of the state (which I have referred to as “boundaries”). Finally, women were seen as vehicles for the perpetuation of otherness within the national territory in both biological and cultural ways. It is my contention that this perception is behind the absence of mechanisms to protect migrant pregnant women and mothers against both unlawful treatment in the workplace and also discriminatory treatment in the immigration law (for a detailed discussion, see Chapter 7).

The threat that black African Muslim men pose was more immediate, for they were seen as active, independent migrants – the primary “invader” that subverts the national order of things marked by and at the border they so seek to overcome. The place accorded to each gender in Spanish anti-immigration geopolitical practice is quite clear. Men (active migrants) are acted upon at the border: most funds have been invested in the militarization of land and sea borders in the Canary Islands, Ceuta and Melilla, and the Maghreb. Information gathered during my fieldwork also suggests that the Spanish government has only deported Senegalese men. In contrast, female migrants were acted upon beyond the border, prior to and after migration. In Senegal, they were recruited and given permission to migrate as spouses; in Spain, they were prevented from accessing the labour market and in many cases deprived of their legal status and forced to become undocumented upon giving birth thanks to legislation that, though ostensibly “gender neutral,” was in fact incredibly pernicious to migrant women. These processes of racializing and gendering border control practices normally escape both traditional and critical geopolitical analysis, which is why at points I turn to feminist geopolitics in search of epistemological tools.
3. Transnationalism and international migration

In this dissertation I aim to identify some of the borders that a group of Senegalese women has encountered in their migration to Spain, but also some of the strategies these migrants used to overcome them. Senegalese citizens abroad (often referred to, somewhat problematically, as “the Senegalese diaspora”) have created a very peculiar kind of transnational space that enables such strategies. Available research explores this phenomenon drawing chiefly from the experience of Wolof *Mouride* men. While it is true that this is the largest group and also the most peculiar in terms of their transnational practices, extrapolating from them to the broader Senegalese migrant population is inaccurate. In the opinion of two local migration scholars, this tendency to identify *Mouride* migrant men with the totality of Senegalese citizens living abroad may have a great deal to do with the fact that most of this research is done by white westerners, who impose a single preconditioned vision on Senegal and its migrants. Focusing on the role and workings of *Mouride* networks, they argued, allows international researchers to discuss what may be more foreign and even exotic to their readership, which is also mostly white and western: pre-modern systems of authority, superstitions and magical beliefs with no grounding in modern science, tribalism, poverty and rural exodus in Africa, parochialism, and, overall, the persistence of Islam as the organizing centre of social and political life (Fall, interview January 2010; Tandian, interview January 2010).

Whether or not this is the case, the sample from which I draw my conclusions includes migrants with diverse religious, ethnic, and geographical backgrounds. Maybe more important than this diversity was the mere fact that many were women, and thus subjected to a different set of rules regarding proper behaviour and socially acceptable modes of migration (for a discussion on gender roles and the migration of Senegalese women, see Chapter 2). The transnational social space that framed these migrants’ experiences was at once broader and more restricted than that explored by other scholars, as were the unique transnational practices in which they engaged (which, besides the religious and financial spaces experienced by men, included transnational spaces of motherhood and care work).
Before discussing specific findings, in this section I first propose a broad definition of transnational space and networks. I then turn to outline a theoretical framework on these issues that better fits the experiences narrated by participants. This discussion will serve as a general theoretical introduction for Chapters 5 to 7, where I further elaborate on respondents’ transnational social practices before, at, and beyond the territorial border of the Spanish state.

3.3.1 Towards a working definition of migrant transnationalism

It has been argued that transnationalism is the new paradigm in migration studies (Boyle 2002, Levitt and Jaworski 2007, Vertovec 2003 and 2009, among others). It may well be so, but it remains rather unclear what migrant transnationalism is about. Castles defines transnational communities as

> groups based in two or more countries that engage in recurrent, enduring, and significant cross-border activities, which may be economic, political, social or cultural in character (2003: 20).

As a process, transnationalism refers to the characteristics, processes of emergence and maintenance, and broader impact of the “linkages and ongoing exchanges among non-state actors based across national borders” (Vertovec 2009: 3). Here I am particularly interested in the linkages and exchanges at the sub-national level. I focus on the exchanges happening among individual migrants and their families, to study the transnational spaces they inhabit, the networks they are part of, and the resources that these spaces and networks make available to migrants. Agency, locality, linkages, and empirically grounded research are key to this perspective. In other words, I aim to contribute to discussions on “transnationalism from below” (Smith and Guarnizo 1998), those transnational processes happening across state borders at the local level.
Ongoing interdisciplinary efforts have contributed to the theorization of this phenomenon (among the main recent contributions, see Vertovec 2009). However several factors stand in the way towards conceptual clarity. The broadness of the concept, its polysemy, the fact that it may not be at all new, and the possibly limited number of migrants involved in more rigorous definitions are some of the ongoing criticisms of transnational theory since it was first developed in the field of migration studies in the early 1990s (Portes et al. 1999, Levitt and Jaworski 2007). Skeptics have also pointed out that the literature puts too much emphasis on migrant agency and too little on structural constraints (Bailey 2001, Portes 2001); that, too often, discussions rely on small-scale qualitative research (Hiebert and Ley 2006); that they focus on the experience on a privileged group of migrants (Sinatti 2005); that they neglect or assume a rather uncritical role of space (Bailey 2001, Hiebert and Ley 2006, Ley 2004, Ley 2010); and that they can be excessively celebratory in assuming the liberating and progressive aspects of the transnational experience (Grillo 2007, Ley 2004).

Despite these criticisms, there is much potential in the transnational perspective, particularly as it may help us understand social and economic practices poorly encapsulated in the framework of the nation-state. This potential has encouraged the advance of scholarship in this area, something that has been achieved mainly by breaking down the concept into a number of useful categories according to different criteria. Thus, depending on the actors involved we may talk about “transnationalism from below,” “above,” and “in-between” (Smith and Guarnizo 1998); or about transnational migrants, transnational social movements, or transnational businesses (Vertovec 2003). The phenomenon has also been analyzed, as the quote above suggests, according to the sphere of action, resulting in economic, political, or social transnational practices.

For the purposes of this research I have found two concepts particularly relevant: transnational social spaces and transnational networks. The remainder of the theoretical reflection in this chapter is devoted to their discussion as they help us understand the Senegalese experience in Spain.
3.3.2 Transnational social networks and spaces

The study of transnational social networks owes much to social network theory, which in turn depends on the concept of social capital. Pierre Bourdieu defined the latter as:

the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition – or, in other words, to membership in a group – which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectivity-owned capital, a ‘credential’ which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word (2004: 51)\(^{36}\)

According to Bourdieu, an individual’s amount of social capital depends on the number, strength, and relevance of connections that she could actually mobilize, as well as on the other kinds of capital (symbolic, economic, human and cultural) that she and those in her network have accumulated. Intra-network solidarity is, according to Bourdieu, both the origin as well as the engine of social networks themselves. The concept has been explored by a number of North American scholars, mainly in the field of Sociology, most notably James Coleman (1988), Robert Putnam (1993), and Alejandro Portes (1998). These authors have deepened our understanding of the functions of trust, social capital, its relational nature, and the role of socially-established rules of solidarity and obligation in the functioning of social networks.

The uses and working of social capital become more apparent in the operation of the social network. This is a structure (network) formed by individuals (nodes) linked (connected) by different sorts of relationships (family, friendship, work, community of origin, ethnic or religious affiliation, and so on). Granovetter’s article “The strength of weak ties” is seminal in the study of transnationalism. The author argues that the strength of social connections within networks is of extreme importance. This strength is considered “a (probably linear)

\(^{36}\) This paper was first published in French in 1980. This quotation is from the English translation, published 24 years later (Bourdieu 2004).
combination of the amount of time, the emotional intensity, the intimacy (mutual confiding),
and the reciprocal services which characterize the tie” (Granovetter 1973: 1361). As a result,
ties may be strong, weak, or absent. The resources that connections provide depend on the
strength of the link.

A number of scholars have taken up the task of operationalizing the concept of social capital
and networks for the study of migration and transnationalism. Thus, Vertovec (2003) and
Portes (2001) have argued that migration studies would benefit from analyzing the size of
transnational networks, the density of the connections between members, their multiplexity
(i.e., the overlapping of such networks in different institutional areas), the existence of
clusters or cliques, the strength of the ties, their durability over time, and the frequency of
contact among a specific network’s membership (Vertovec 2003: 647). Similarly,
Granovetter’s concept of embeddedness (the fact that all social behaviour happens within a
specific social context) can be broken down, as Portes has argued, into relational and
structural embeddedness in the study of transnational social networks (Vertovec 2003: 649).

International migration both depends on social networks and is, itself, “a process of network
building” (Portes and Bach cited in Vertovec 2003: 650). Seen this way,

[m]igrant networks are sets of interpersonal ties that connect migrants, former
migrants, and nonmigrants in origin and destination areas through ties of kinship,
friendship, and shared community origin. They increase the likelihood of international
movement because they lower the costs and risks of movement and increase the
expected net returns to migration. Network connections constitute a form of social
capital. (Massey et al. 1993: 448).

Transnational social networks thus link, in fundamental ways, migrants’ spaces of origin,
transit, and destination. The linkages connecting these people and spaces may be of a
different kind (tangible, regulatory, or relational) and involve different actors such as states,
collectivities, families, and individuals (Fawcett 1989). Resources critical to migrants can be
accessed through these connections, including information about possible destinations and
routes, money, room and board during the initial stages of settlement, access to the labour market (however precarious it might be), assistance with legal procedures, emotional support, moral guidance, etc. What sets these social networks apart from others is their absolute dependence on people, ideas, and practices rooted in different national contexts that include, at least, migrants in countries of origin and destination – however this space may also be broadened to include migrants of the same origin who have migrated elsewhere and also “locals” in the reception country. New communication technology has transformed the ways transnational social networks are built and maintained (Vertovec 2009).

To map these social networks (their extension, membership, functions, and the types of linkages at work) is to engage in a cartography of migrants’ social spaces, defined as “combinations of ties, positions in networks and organizations, and networks of organizations that reach across the borders of multiple states” (Faist 2000: 191). These spaces are dynamic and varied and although they are (in a purely physical way) deterritorialized, they are built upon specific places or locales: space still exerts a deep influence on all transnational practices (Bailey 2001, Hiebert and Ley 2006, Ley 2004, Ley 2010).

Much social network analysis has been conducted through the use of mathematical models and quantitative data. This study relies on none of these, but the fascinating case of Senegalese transnationalism can be used to explore all of the concepts mentioned above. Senegalese transnational spaces and networks present a series of unique characteristics, supporting the argument that transnationalism is far from a monolithic experience (Riccio 2001b, Grillo 2007). These migrants’ experiences also challenge some common understandings in transnationalism studies. For example, a careful analysis of practices and networks makes clear that, although migrants’ social networks and spaces are intensely transnational, in practice they might be better studied as “translocal” (Grillo 2007, Sinatti 2006). Explorations of chain migration and migration as a “family business” (Herman 2006) may also benefit from incorporating the experience of this particular group.
3.3.3 Some preliminary observations on Senegalese transnational spaces and networks worldwide

Senegalese national identity is based on a feeling of fraternity through difference – ethnic, linguistic, and religious difference. The set of values cementing this sense of commonality has been referred to as “Black Islam” (Suarez-Navaz 2004). Black Islam emerged under French domination in the country as an ideology of resistance, through the hand-in-hand work of colonial administrators and Wolof religious leaders, mainly the Mouride. The contribution of Senegalese Catholic intellectuals like Senghor – who provided the philosophical concept of *négritude*, which refers to the overall set of cultural values of Black Africa – is thoroughly implicated, however, which means that Senegalese national identity is based upon Islam but not exclusionary of other religious practices. Once in Spain, the sense of national identity that is powerfully instilled in all citizens of Senegal promotes the crystallization of the group. This sentiment combines with the rejection experienced by its members in their relationships with the local population. Together, both forces of inclusion and exclusion trigger a reaffirmation of black (Muslim) sociocultural identity of the immigrant population. Migrants look for solace in every nook and cranny of this “diasporic” space and ideology, thus contributing to a thickening of the network.

Senegalese mainstream social norms of obligation and solidarity, in particular those within extended family groups, further contribute to the reinforcement of these networks. I have already argued that money is the chief reason for migration, which is, generally speaking, a collective project managed by the family’s elders. In this sense, migration can be understood as a family business (Herman 2006). The yields of this investment are expected to be shared with those around the migrant’s family as well. As Professor Fatou Sarr put it, “in Senegal ... it’s not having money that contributes to your social status, but one’s capacity to distribute that money” (interview, January, 2010). This obligation strengthens the bond
between the different “nodes” of the network (i.e., migrants and their relatives) across international borders.

Religious institutions also play a crucial role in creating and maintaining transnational networks and spaces. The religious and economic practices of the Mouride brotherhood are arguably the most striking example of this. The transnational model upon which it is based provides Senegalese migrants around the world with emotional and material support during all stages of this challenging experience which is international migration. Mouride leaders fill the journey with spiritual and social meaning: migration is often depicted as an exercise of self-discipline and sacrifice for one’s people akin to the experience of prophet Cheikh Amadou Bamba’s exile to Mali. The marabouts (religious leaders) are also key messengers with the power to build up the prestige of Senegalese migrants back in their communities of origin, where their economic contributions to the advancement of the brotherhood are publicly praised.

Based on the Mouride experience, Suarez-Navaz has proposed four elements supporting the expansion of Senegalese transnational social spaces around the world and, more specifically, in Spain:

- “a hierarchical division of labour to organize the domestic sphere and productive relations;”
- the development of “semiautonomous networks of transnational trade able to absorb newly arriving Senegalese into street commerce;”
- the “complex and conscious flow of persons, commodities, and information across residential units (...) across the geographically scattered sites of the Senegalese global diaspora. They use networks of religious, familial, territorial, and commercial ties to create and maintain their migratory circuits, which are daily strengthened by informal visits, phone calls, and letters, remittances, commercial and financial exchanges, and religious rituals;” and
- the emphasis of “common religious and cultural values over ethnic, political, or religious differences among Senegalese people. The most important of these values are those of solidarity and hospitality, of a strong work ethic, of emigration as process
of learning and struggle for their own community, and of collective life as part of the self-denial inherent in purity and religious virtue” (Suarez-Navaz 2004: 175-176).

The strength of religious networks could also have a negative impact on migrants, however, as leaders exercise a high degree of social control through the enforcement of traditional social hierarchies on migrants (hierarchies based on the position within the religious community, age, gender, and so on). There is much room for conflict and exploitation, not least because leaders of these networks impose a compulsory focus towards the inside of the group, alienating migrants from the social context of reception (Riccio 2001b and 2008, Rosander 2001, Sinatti 2006, Suarez-Navaz 2004).

The role of other non-Mouride social (in particular, religious) networks and spaces has been largely ignored in the literature. Significantly, non-Muslim Senegalese migrants also make good use of very diverse transnational networks that have mostly escaped the attention of researchers. As we will see, these networks (which often include both immigrant and local members) play a key role in facilitating the integration of migrants into the Spanish labour market and social fabric. The transnational spaces of both Muslim and non-Muslim Senegalese men and women will be at the centre of the discussion in the next three chapters.

3.3.4 Gendering transnationalism

Besides non-Muslim and non-Mouride Senegalese migrants, another group that scholars have generally disregarded is women, thus building a strong gender bias into their research. In the case of Southern Europe, the choice to extrapolate findings based on the experience of men has been justified upon numbers: women are, after all, a small proportion of this group (around 15% both in Italy and in Spain). This argument does not hold for a number of reasons. First, the percentage has been growing steadily in the last few years. Second, women’s migration trajectories and experiences have been found to be so different from
men’s that we can no longer pretend that by understanding the former we have a grasp of the latter.\textsuperscript{37}

Overall, Senegalese migrant women are also much less accessible than their male counterparts. But there is ample evidence that gender is an articulating factor in the migration experience, and thus one that is worth exploring despite this obstacle. Feminist migration scholars have studied, among others, the role that intra-household dynamics and power relations at origin shape migrants’ trajectories (Lawson 1998, Walton-Roberts 2004) and the ways in which supposedly gender-neutral migration laws and policies play out on the ground (Raghuram 2004). They have concluded that gender cannot be analyzed in isolation, but in its articulation with other axes of difference such as race, class, religious practices, legal status, and so on – thus calling for an intersectional analysis of the whole migration experience (Lutz 2010, Mahler and Pessar 2006).

During the last decades there has been an increased emphasis on gender in studies of transnationalism. Early migration studies paid no attention whatsoever to gender, partly because well-off global citizens were seen as the model transnational migrants and this was a group dominated by men. Analyzing how gender roles made their transnational lifestyles possible was not a priority. When migrant women were considered, the tone remained excessively celebratory: gains in gender equity were exaggerated, while the remainders of patriarchal institutions were brushed off (Pratt and Yeoh 2003). More work needs to be done in this area, and in this dissertation I want to problematize the relation between transnationalism and the advancement of gender equity for migrants. Evidence shows that these gains tend to be contradictory, context-dependent, and precarious (Mahler and Pessar 2006, Pratt and Yeoh 2003). For example, gender relations within the household may become fairer at the point of destination, but revert to their original form during periods of vacation at home; gains may be prevented by those “gender-blind” policies that in fact discriminate against migrants according to their gender; migrant men and women from a

\textsuperscript{37} See for example Moreno Maestro (2008), Rosander (2001), Vázquez Silva (2010).
specific group may enjoy equal participation only in certain spheres of everyday life (e.g.,
paid employment); and these expected advances may get tangled in the patriarchal relations
that exist wherever migrants settle. All these are concerns in the study of Senegalese
migrants in Spain.

As was the case in the theoretical framework used to analyze the bordering of the EU for
migration purposes, feminist literature has helped me make sense of the material gathered
during my fieldwork on transnational practices and spaces. Traditional gender roles travel
with, and are challenged by, migration, in a context where both continuity and change are
made possible through a densely webbed transnational space. The tensions between stability
and innovation, and between imperfectly assembled constellations of power based on
gender (and other forms of differentiation) in Senegal and Spain reach dramatic levels for
both men and women – albeit in different ways.

The role of gender for the migration and integration processes of Senegalese citizens within
the context of transnationalism in Spain will be addressed in the next two chapters. But
before that, I present an overview of the trajectories and nature of transnational networks
found in the field.

3.4 Practice: bringing the migrant in

The family (...) held out a specific model of what an emigrant should be: a
man who sacrifices himself for his people and struggles against adversity in
Toubab land (the land of white people). Whatever legal and social difficulties
he might encounter along the way did not matter. The family looked at such
obstacles with skepticism, while expecting the migrant to send gifts,
shipments, and letters, and make telephone calls and frequent visits. An
emigrant who could fulfill these expectations would acquire social prestige
and authority while strengthening his identity as an adult man. The image of
the good emigrant as fulfilling family obligations was deeply instilled in the

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38 For a more detailed discussion on the specificities of the fieldwork refer to Chapter 4.
In previous pages I have briefly introduced the theoretical framework for this discussion. So as not to lose sight of the empirical material that has motivated my choice of academic contributions to the literature, the following pages are devoted to a discussion of the places and circumstances where I encountered participants. To gather evidence to study gendered migration from Senegal to Spain I relied on secondary sources (government documents, official statistics, and media) and, primarily, on multi-sited ethnographic research (discussed in detail in Chapter 4). This is not a new approach neither in geography nor in migration studies: previous works using this methodological approach include, to name just a few, Kearney’s research on transnational communities in California (with Nagengast 1989, 1995); Kyle’s study of the transnational practices of a group of Ecuadorian migrants (2000); Walton Roberts’ analysis of Punjabi marriage migration in Canada (2004); and Mountz’s work on transnational Mexican migrants in Poughkeepsie, New York (with Wright 1996) and Salvadorans in New Jersey (with Miyares, Wright and Bailey 2003)

This section is divided in three parts according to where I met migrants and the routes they used to enter Spanish territory – or attempted to do so. Throughout the discussion, both respondents’ encounters with the border of the state and their use of transnational social networks are sketched. They will be discussed in detail in Chapters 6 and 7.

The primary group of respondents for this study were 17 women I interviewed in three different research sites in Spain: a medium-sized city in the southern region of Andalusia (with under half a million inhabitants); a rural town in the same region (around 8,000 inhabitants); and Madrid, whose metropolitan area is the home of about 6 million people. These 17 women all arrived in the EU by plane, some directly to Spain, and some via another European country. The reconstruction of their personal journeys from their communities of origin in Senegal to these three sites informs the core of this dissertation. In order to understand these women’s trajectories, I engaged in participant observation and
interviewed other Senegalese migrants, who were members of the women’s close social networks. Most of the men and all the women interviewed had entered the EU through an official checkpoint at a European airport.39

Beyond these three primary research sites I also met migrants in Ceuta (a Spanish territory in Northern Africa) and Tangier, Morocco. The degree of variation in terms of migration experiences and transnational practices and spaces between migrants encountered in Spain and in Morocco / Ceuta was astounding. This may be a result of the recruitment method used (snowball sampling). But the reason is likely to be more interesting than that: in fact, chain migration and the migration route participants used played a crucial role in shaping respondents’ journeys.

Finally, I also travelled to Senegal twice to meet the people who had been crucial in shaping and facilitating participants’ migration. I spent most of the time between Dakar and Saint Louis, where most of my respondents came from, and also where agencies involved in the control and management of international migration towards Europe were established. A large percentage of participants came from the impoverished peri-urban areas of the country’s capital. Besides the homes of these migrants in the neighbourhoods of Guédiawaye, Yembeul, and Pikine, I visited the families of most of my respondents starting in the south of the country and proceeding northbound. In this way I met relatives and government officials involved in the recruitment of temporary agricultural workers in the village of Ousuye, a few kilometres from the border with Guinea, as well as in Bignona and Ziguinchor, in Casamance; the cities of Kaolack, Mbour, Touba, and Thiés in the centre of Senegal; and in the North, the village of Gandiol, the city of Saint Louis, and the processing camp of Rosso in Richard Toll, across the border from Mauritania.

Chain migration depends on social capital and the existence of transnational social networks. It has been defined as the “movement in which prospective migrants learn of

39 Methodological issues are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4.
opportunities, are provided with transportation, and have initial accommodation and employment arranged by means of primary social relationships with previous migrants” (MacDonald and MacDonald 1964: 82, emphasis in original). This movement can happen through formal (e.g., family reunification procedures) or informal ways (such as when an undocumented migrant moves towards the closest member of her social network settled in Spanish territory). As a result, members of the same family, religious group, or community of reference in Senegal end up settling close to one another once in Spain. This pattern emerged clearly during my research, particularly in the first two research sites, where Senegalese migration is more recent than in Madrid.

3.4.1 Senegalese men and women in Spain: three sites, three incarnations of the same network

My first research site was a medium-sized Andalusian city. Here, I interacted with 150-200 Senegalese men and women. They had mostly arrived after 2005 and had settled in the city relatively soon after their arrival in the country, compared to respondents in the other research sites. Participants’ residential stability was denied by their precarious economic and administrative situation: as a result of their involvement in illegal street peddling, most migrants had trouble making ends meet and obtaining or maintaining their legal status in the country. Migrants in this city overwhelmingly had a Wolof (or derived) background. They came from the poor suburbs of Dakar described by Prof. Sarr as “semi-rural,” largely dependent on fishing and informal commerce (personal communication, February 2010). Participants identified themselves as Muslim and were socially conservative, particularly in regards to gender relations. Gaining access to the women was very difficult: I only managed to interview them after men decided I was “safe” (i.e., after I interviewed them first). This was only the first of many instances in which social control of women by the Senegalese transnational network revealed itself in this research site.
In this first research site slightly under half the men had migrated to Spain illegally, usually after entering the EU as visitors via another country (France or Italy). Most women had entered Spain as tourists, aided by their relatives (who had paid for their visa and the trip) or through family reunification. Migrants’ transnational social networks were built primarily upon religion, family, and ethnicity / nationality. The network’s membership seemed cohesive from the outside, but internal conflicts were more common, divisive, and exclusionary than in the other two research sites. Those within the network, however, were received generously, particularly during the initial stages of settlement in Spain. Women were few and occupied a marginal role in religious networks. They tended to depend on more intimate members of their network to whom they were related through kinship. These women’s responsibility was to be the guardians of moral and religious continuity, to behave as “good women” – in other words, to be dependent, quiet, to take care of the reproductive labour of the household, and to work outside the home only under the direct supervision of other male relatives. The independent migration of women was generally frowned upon by most men I encountered. There were exceptions to this, particularly among older Muslim
migrants who had a family to support back in Senegal and Catholic women, both of whom enjoyed a greater degree of independence.

The second research site was in the countryside, in an area dependent on greenhouse agriculture that prior to the economic crisis had demanded significant numbers of undocumented migrant workers. Here, I met all the Senegalese migrants in the community (about 100), who were of different geographical, social, and educational backgrounds but who shared a rather cohesive network comprised of co-nationals. Migrants were sought mostly to work in greenhouses, a job for which women were not required. Thus, men had usually settled first, bringing their wives afterwards. Other women had migrated through the temporary agricultural worker program and overstayed their visas. Chain migration worked best at this research site, its foundations deeply rooted onto close (primary) relations of kinship and ethnicity. As we will see in Chapter 5, here I found an example of “migration as a family business” at its best. But upon arrival, perhaps because of the small size of the community, nationality and a sense of shared hardship galvanized the group, and pre-existing divisions receded to the background. Well-settled families with three to five children (who were, at the same time, part of larger networks of extended families) shared work and homes with single, young, and undocumented men. Catholic migrants and those from rural areas of Senegal were overrepresented in this population; however the division between Catholics and Muslims was largely anecdotal. Here, women’s engagement in independent paid work (on the fields, at stores, and in community organizations) was highly esteemed. Both men and women occupied important positions in political groups and labour unions representing all immigrant workers and stretched across boundaries of nationality and legal status in Spain, which made this site more accessible than the previous one.

The third research site was Madrid, which houses the largest concentration of Senegalese migrants of all three sites. This was the oldest, best settled, but also most internally diverse group. Here I met about 100 migrants. Participants were professors, writers, businessmen, politicians, fishermen from Casamance, manual workers, street pedlars, and students.
Migration strategies and journeys, as well as the role played by respondents’ transnational networks, varied greatly, much more than in the two other research sites. As a testimony to this diversity and to the maturity of Senegalese migration to the city, this group’s political struggles focused not only on improving its members’ living and working conditions (as happened in the other two research sites). Certain migrants went much further, engaging in larger discussions of collective black identity in Spain that originated in Senegal and were articulated around the philosophical and anti-colonial concept of *négritude* (“a quiet demonstration of our pride at being both black and African,” according to an interviewee). Upon arrival, transnational networks relied at once on a complex combination of kinship, ethnicity, religion, and nationality.

A pattern of particular interest in Madrid was the arrival of Senegalese *en masse* to one central neighbourhood (Embajadores / Lavapiés) that has, for years, acted as a magnet for migrants of different nationalities (see Figure 3.3; for a deeper analysis of this neighbourhood, see Pérez-Agote et al. 2010: 131-282). Today, services targeting the Senegalese community (cultural organizations, restaurants, corner stores, etc) are concentrated in this neighbourhood. Once migrants felt they could handle their new
environment they moved to the suburbs, where rent was cheaper and there were more employment opportunities. This “flight to the suburbs” pattern was particularly strong among migrants starting a new family. The size and internal diversity of the Senegalese community meant, for these women, a much lighter social control and dependency upon their networks than participants in the other two research sites.

3.4.2 Migrants in “the city of dreams”

I met and interviewed a number of Senegalese migrants in the cities of Tangier (Morocco) and Ceuta (one of two Spanish enclaves in north Africa, together with Melilla). The ethnographic research in these two cities was rather exploratory: first and foremost, it aimed at corroborating the often unchecked assumption that Senegalese women do not undertake this journey by land.

My contact in Tangier was Omar, a young Senegalese man who I first met in the fall of 2007 during a field trip to this city. Omar was from Guédiawaye. On 2004 (at 16) he had taken a pirogue and reached the Canary Islands. His family had paid for the trip, but the boat he travelled in was intercepted. Together with the other passengers, he was flown to Madrid, where he then was taken to a detention facility.\(^\text{40}\) At this time Omar wrote a letter to the Spanish authorities explaining that he was a minor (he produced a copy of this letter during our interview). But the bone scans contradicted his argument\(^\text{41}\) and, a few weeks later, Omar was deported to Mauritania.

A few months later (after being robbed, beaten, and exploited at various jobs several times along the way) Omar arrived at the fence between Morocco and Ceuta. He lived in a tent settlement in the bush by the fence with other black African migrants where they faced a

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\(^{40}\) It is possible that, at the time, detention facilities in the Canary Islands were overcrowded. In that case the standard procedure was to take migrants to another facility in the Iberian Peninsula where they were kept until they were either deported to their country of origin (or any other country in the region willing to take these migrants) or released.

\(^{41}\) The Spanish Ombudsman published a detailed report in 2011 denouncing the many problems with bone scans to determine the age of undocumented migrants (Defensor del Pueblo 2011).
number of police raids. It was the Fall of 2005, a period of great concern over “attacks” to the southern EU fence. After attempting, unsuccessfully, to cross over to Spain in 2007, they decided to step back and rent a filthy, tiny garage in an illegal settlement outside Tangier (see Figures 3.4 and 3.5). This is where I first interviewed them. Two years later, in the fall of 2009, Omar had moved to another building in the same settlement, where he lived with a number of other West African undocumented men (most of whom were also Senegalese). They felt safer this way, more protected from the abuses of the local population and the Moroccan security forces. His prospects of crossing the border had not improved at all.

One of his roommates, Pape, introduced me to Ouly, a 25 year old Senegalese woman who lived at a hostel for immigrants in downtown Tangier. Encouraged by her half-sister who lived in Rabat, Ouly had taken advantage of the visa waiver program for Senegalese tourists in Morocco to travel by bus from Dakar, hoping to find a job to support her family. When I met her (three months after her arrival to Tangier) she was employed without a contract but had not managed to secure a working visa. Eventually, Ouly returned to Senegal in the winter of 2010.

Figure 3.4: A Senegalese migrant in an illegal settlement near Tangier. Photograph by Javier Acebal (2009), reproduced with permission from the author.

42 Police brutality in this area has been extensively covered by the media. For coverage of some events that took place in late 2005 see for example Tremlett (2005).
Another woman, Sagar (unrelated to Omar’s network) was in Tangier at the time of my interviews. She was in her early 40s, a mother of four, and the primary breadwinner of her household. Sagar first migrated to Morocco in 2005 as a live-in domestic servant working for a Senegalese family. Tired of the exploitative conditions (she received $100-150 CAD per month and worked or was on call every hour of every day) in 2008 Sagar became a merchant. She bought merchandise in Senegal and Gambia and travelled to Morocco regularly to sell it as a street peddler. Like Ouly, Sagar was interested in crossing the border to Europe, but neither of them had definite plans to achieve this goal. Both also had in common a strong desire to remain independent from their co-nationals, although where Sagar was ferociously independent Ouly was simply cautious. Rumour had it that even co-nationals would be ready to take advantage of vulnerable migrant women by forcing them into sex work. Ouly and Sagar’s experiences, albeit anecdotal for this study, shed some light onto the yet unknown journey of Senegalese women land migrants.

3.4.3 The CETI

After spending some time in Tangier, I crossed the fence between Moroccan and Spanish territory through one of the designated points; I did so with great ease once my temperature
was taken\textsuperscript{43} and my passport checked. In Ceuta I visited the CETI. There the now former director of the centre granted me access to the facilities and permission to interview the staff and any migrants who volunteered to talk to me.

Map 3.3: Spanish and Moroccan territories around the Straits of Gibraltar, showing the enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla. Photo from Wikimedia Commons under Creative Commons License.

There are two CETIs, one in Ceuta and the other one in Melilla (see Map 3.3). Both were (at the time) run by the Bureau of Immigration and Emigration (\textit{Secretaría General de Inmigración y Emigración}, a government agency dependent on the Spanish Ministry of Labour and Immigration). Ceuta’s CETI opened in 2000 and has 512 beds, although in the last few years the facility has not been running at full capacity. In November, 2010, 470 foreigners lived in the centre, including 15 families and 12 pregnant women (El Pais 2010). Roughly 20,000 migrants have stayed at this centre since its creation. The facility runs on a 4 million euro annual budget.

\textsuperscript{43} At the time, border officials were concerned about the spread of the H1N1 flu virus and took travellers’ temperature as a cautionary measure.
The CETIs are not detention centres but shelters where undocumented migrants having crossed the borders of Ceuta and Melilla can access services provided by the state: room and board, social and cultural services (including sexual education and Spanish courses), psychological and medical care, legal aid, and organized leisure activities (see Figures 3.6 and 3.7). Residents may leave the facility at any time, although there is a curfew and their entries and exits through the front (and only) gate are carefully recorded by the security guards each time.

As Ceuta has become a popular destination for different groups, the composition of the CETI’s residents has varied. Overall, Sub Saharan Africans of different nationalities have been the bulk of its population since the centre first opened. Certain Asian nationalities (e.g. Bangladeshis, Afghanis and Pakistanis) are regularly represented. Originally designed for stays of 6 to 12 months, today the average foreigner stays there for about 18 months, with some registered stays of over three years. But because Ceuta is outside Schengen space and very few asylum seekers are granted refugee status in Spain, most of these migrants find themselves trapped in Ceuta, unable and unwilling to go back and prevented from moving forward unless they manage to reach the Iberian Peninsula by boat or, more often, hidden underneath a truck. Women’s chances to continue their journey are particularly low because most of them are responsible for one or more infant children. These migrants are not allowed to work legally, and thus men and women residing at the CETI engage in illegal

44 Detention centres are called CIEs (Centro de Internamiento de Extranjeros or Internment Centres for Foreigners).

45 The Schengen Area or Space was created in 1985 (it has expanded ever since) to eliminate national border controls for the purpose of travel within the EU. Although Spain is part of Schengen, Ceuta and Melilla are excluded from it. This means that international migrants and asylum seekers alike must cross the border between these territories and the rest of the EU space as if crossing an international boundary. As a result, foreigners who manage to cross the fence between Ceuta and Morocco have indeed not advanced much in their journey towards Europe. Similar geographical strategies have been adopted by other countries such as Canada or Australia in an attempt to make undesired immigration more difficult (see Mountz 2010 and 2011b).

46 In 2009, 3,000 people applied for refugee status in Spain – 34% less than the previous year, mainly because tighter border controls kept the rest of potential asylum seekers out of Spanish territory. Of these claims, 48% were rejected at once due to formal problems with the application, usually a lack of supporting evidence. Of those who succeeded in having their claims processed, only 4 percent were granted refugee status (172). Another 4 percent were granted another form of protection (162) and 8 people were given permission to stay in Spanish territory for humanitarian reasons (CEAR 2010).
activities. In the case of women, sex work is one of these activities, contributing to a circle of exclusion and gendered violence. Meanwhile, children are being born and raised at the CETI.

Figure 3.6: African migrants attend Spanish lessons at Ceuta’s CETI. Photograph by Javier Acebal (2009), reproduced with permission from the author.

Roughly 70% of the 20,000 migrants who have stayed at the CETI since it first opened were asylum seekers. As such they were entitled (in theory) to special protection. In practice, however, several organizations have claimed that foreign delegates are often given permission (in fact, invited) to visit the facilities, presumably to identify asylum seekers from the countries they represent and launch their readmission procedure (CEAR 2008). Journalists are also allowed to take pictures of migrants in the dormitory area, which is explicitly forbidden in the centre’s internal regulations to protect residents’ privacy and safety (or the little that remains of those, given the conditions in which they live). During my visit it became clear that there were Senegalese residents in the centre. However, none of them would actually volunteer this information, as it was a common strategy within the group to declare being citizens of other African war-torn countries. By doing this they hoped to increase their chances of being granted refugee status. Only a young man acknowledged being Senegalese and approached me for a conversation. Soon after the beginning of our interview, it became obvious that he was a minor who had travelled to Ceuta by himself and
had become an object for local men’s sexual pleasure. He was completely cut off from other residents, isolated, and depressed.

Figure 3.7: Overview of the dormitory area in Ceuta’s CETI. Each room has six beds. Photograph by Javier Acebal (2009), reproduced with permission from the author.

3.4.4 Senegal

I spent a total of four months in Senegal divided in two visits, one before and one after my fieldwork in Tangier and Ceuta. I had three main reasons to carry out this work in Senegal. First, I wanted to understand the motivations behind participants’ migration and the circumstances of their lives before departure; notably, I wanted to become acquainted with gender norms and expectations in respondents’ social contexts of origin. Second, I aimed to identify the main members of participants’ social networks that had enabled, facilitated, obstructed, or shaped their migration experience. Finally, I wanted to interview representatives of organizations and government agencies (both Spanish and Senegalese) to understand how migration was approached and managed at the point of departure. My goal was to have a more complete perspective of the actors involved in the management of international migrations towards Europe, as well as of the structural conditions surrounding participants’ journeys to Spain.
My base was in Dakar, where I lived first with a family in Guédiawaye and then with a woman who worked for a French pro-human rights NGO. Living with the Sow-Sane family in the poor neighbourhood of Guédiwaye (a city where the vast majority of families depend, totally or partially, on remittances) I plunged into the lives of the wives of migrants who had stayed in Senegal. Not only was my host family dependent on the remittances of two migrant men, but most of their neighbours where in the same situation. In this highly feminized environment I was often invited to share my knowledge of Europe or give my opinion on a number of matters. Heated debates often followed the comparison of Senegalese and Spanish ways of doing things. Under my host family’s supervision I underwent an intensive internship on traditional family forms, gender expectations, and *Mouridism*. While I resided with the Sow-Sane family, I visited the households of participants I had encountered in Spain and met with mothers, fathers, sisters, friends, and neighbours of migrants who were in Spain at that time. One of my respondents visited her family while I was in Dakar, and so I met with her family three times, twice alone and another time with the participant. Other times I visited respondents’ families more than once simply because we enjoyed each other’s company (or because they were convinced that I needed tutoring because my cooking skills were not good enough to keep a husband happy).

In Dakar I also interviewed a number of government workers in the Spanish Bureau of Labour and Immigration and the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation and Development (AECID), as well as several employees working for the Senegalese government. These were contacts that I had made prior to my departure or that I met through other interviewees I encountered in Dakar. Finally, I met with representatives of large pro-migration organizations who received their financing from international sources, mainly the Red Cross, Amnesty International, the CIMADE, the COFLEC, and the head of an organization that brought together a group of forcibly returned migrants. These organizations gave me the information I needed to form a more critical approach to government initiatives. My interviewees in the INGO sector were passionate about their mission and shared their vast knowledge on the issues surrounding international migrations.
in the West Africa Region, without the reserve that sometimes characterized government workers.

My second urban research site (Saint Louis) was the origin of an high number of undocumented sea migrants who had arrived in Spain after 2006. Besides a number of migrants’ relatives, here I met three people involved in the recruitment of temporary agricultural workers and a policeman who worked in border control. In Saint Louis I became acquainted with a part of the Catholic Senegalese community and, for the first time, witnessed the strategies and consequences of transnational motherhood.

The other sites I visited more briefly, but they nonetheless gave me insights into other parts of the country, other ethnic and religious groups, and the ways in which migrants who were part of extremely thick networks or belonged to more affluent families than those in Dakar and Saint Louis reached their goal to migrate. Thus, in Casamance I met another group of Catholic migrants who became, in this research, a perfect example of chain migration. In Bignona I interviewed a government worker who openly admitted he couldn’t care less about what happened to temporary workers once they succeeded in being selected to migrate to Spain – that is, once he had pocketed their bribes. His cynicism helped me interpret some of the testimonies I had collected but could not believe (for example, the story of a woman recruited for temporary work who gave birth at the Madrid airport, or that of workers who left Senegal thinking they would make ten times more money than was stipulated in their contracts).

In the cities in the centre of the country I found families that did not fit the stereotypical image of the Senegalese migration. For example, in Mbour I met with the family of a highly educated woman who had migrated to Germany to learn the language and then moved to Spain to live with an uncle, finally being the main applicant in her husband’s family reunification procedure. In a small town nearby Touba I stayed with the family of a temporary agricultural worker (a woman) who was unemployed in Spain and whose only
ambition was to go back to her parents and children. And in Kaolack, a city a few hundred kilometres north of the border with Gambia, I stayed with the family of Paulette, a migrant whose husband ensured me she had a comfortable journey to Europe, but who adopted the role of an abused wife and sea migrant to receive help from her Spanish neighbours and employers. Both the family in Mbour and the family in Kaolack were part of the very thin Senegalese middle class.

At the same time, in Ousuye and in Diourbel (Touba) I had the opportunity to witness the extreme living conditions of the rural Senegalese population. Participants in Ousuye lived in a forested area ravaged by decades of civil war; their access to any kind of services we take for granted in more developed countries (like health or education) was minimal in the best of cases. Knowing this, those who remained in the area had organized in groups to cover the needs of the community, each contributing with their own means. For example, despite their poverty, members of the family I interviewed spoke an impeccable French and had advanced knowledge of European geography and history: the head of this family (a school teacher before the Casamance conflict began) ran a school in his backyard on a voluntary basis. The situation was also less than ideal in the village near Touba, where the consequences of the debacle of the Senegalese peanut industry on the health and the well-being of the population were only too tangible: only here did I see malnourished children. In the fishing village of Gandiol (nearby Saint Louis) I stayed with a fisherman’s family. While with them I saw first hand the struggles of those who depended on the sea for their survival. This was the family of a sea migrant turned smuggler. Farther up yet, by the shore of the Senegal river that separates Mauritania and Senegal, I visited the place where many sea migrants’ journeys end: the processing camp of Rosso, run by the Red Cross and financed by the Spanish government. This was a place of hopelessness. In this lot of barren land surrounded by a crumbling wall the last leg of the trip for those migrants deported from Mauritania was decided.
The fieldwork I conducted in Senegal often took the form of participant observation and informal interviews around a plate of *yassa au poulet* (chicken with onion sauce) or in a patio killing time between domestic chores. During this conversations I obtained invaluable information about daily life in Senegal, home economics, family forms and structures, gender roles, perceptions of international migration, the nature of Senegalese transnationalism, and the relations between the different groups that co-exist in Senegal. All these informed my choice of theoretical framework.

### 3.5 Discussion

In preceding pages I have presented the theoretical work that informs my interpretation of the evidence found in the field. Underlying this discussion is the idea that the mobility of certain people (marked as unwanted outsiders due to their phenotype, nationality, economic status or religious affiliation) has been pathologized (Malkki 1992), particularly but not exclusively in the EU. This pathologization imposes that their bodies be tied down, contained to spaces defined – in maps, collective imaginations, and the workings of power – by the clear-cut lines of the state and the dominant ideology of “domopolitics” (Walters 2004b). These people’s crossings of borders has been securitized, often criminalized, in particular ways since the turn of the 21st century. We must question these processes and the conceptual and ideological foundations that anchor them: nation-state, territoriality, borders. Nobody does this questioning better than unwanted migrants themselves. They (and their bodies as they move through the cracks in the system) force us to think at different scales simultaneously – and to consider gender, race, and violence, while questioning the concept of security that justifies efforts to govern their mobility.

The work of critical political geographers discussed here has helped me conceptualize the external border of the EU. This body of literature has brought into view the discursive mechanisms allowing for the construction of the EUropean project and its borders. Central to the chapters that follow is the claim that territory (and thus, borders) are processes constituted through and by power struggles. These processes include not only the EU and its
member states, but also states and territories beyond their geographical borders. The metaphors that critical geopoliticians have used to theorize the changes to the Westphalian state system brought by the EU will also prove useful in this analysis of migration from West Africa to Spain, in particular the idea of “domopolitics” (Walters 2004b) and the “networked border” (Rumford 2006).

That said, I have found this work lacking in several areas. The absence of people (those making decisions as well as those moving through the border or wanting to do so) is one of them: the pieces that I found theoretically inspiring failed to put a face behind the decisions that have made EU borders what they are today (but see for example Bialasiewicz 2012). With the exception of van Houtum (whose analysis also remained largely theoretical) there was no questioning of the factors that may “harden” or “soften” this border for the migrants who encounter it – differences of class, gender, race, or national origin. To find guidance on how to approach the issue of interlocking scales and differences I have turned to feminist geopolitics, a body of work that pushes critical geopolitics to engage more fully with the concepts of scale and embodiment.

My goal is to draw from both approaches and contribute to building bridges between these two areas of the sub discipline by looking at the state in conjunction with other scales, mainly the body, the household, the local and the supranational (EU) levels. To analyze the phenomena pertaining to state and EU borders I turn to critical geopolitics, its interest in discourse and its sceptical approach to taken for granted assumptions in the state system. But, following the argument of feminist geopoliticians, I argue for a more hands-on approach to the border. In this approach location is key to understand the “dimensions of power and identity that contribute to the very constitution of people and places as subjects” (Hyndman 2004) that are classed, gendered, and racialized even before migration occurs. With my analysis I also aim to “populate” the account of the geopolitical phenomena surrounding the management of human mobility from West Africa to Southern Europe, and more specifically from Senegal to Spain. Here, the border emerges as a process
of control managed by a group of people who work with specific (gendered and raced) assumptions of South to North migration, and whose knowledge and skills have limitations that may at times shock the reader. The migrant, both prospective and actual, is also humanized and cast (more than like a victim or a criminal) as an agent who has and makes choices. Finally, the position and limitations of the researcher (myself) are also discussed to problematize the seemingly hegemonic view that is sometimes found in critical geopolitics – a body of work that nonetheless I engage with fully precisely because I believe in its potential.

The other body of literature that informs this thesis is academic writing on transnationalism. Here, I have moved towards interdisciplinary work and dwelt on well-established concepts such as social capital and social networks. I have intentionally proposed a rather lax working definition of migrant transnational spaces of networks. I remain unsatisfied with existing theoretical approaches to Senegalese transnationalism, which are limited to male Mouride migrants. My goal is to take the general theory on social networks and migrant transnationalism presented here and use it as a broad framework for my study. Throughout the next three chapters I will elaborate on manifestations of this process as they involved participants, producing information as to the location, resources, members, and quality of the links involved in the transnational social networks and spaces they used to migrate.

The fieldwork, which I have introduced in the second part of this chapter, imposed itself upon the theory – as it should. Migrants’ backgrounds (ethnic, religious, geographical) as well as the routes travelled and the destination in Spain have defined the obstacles, networks, and strategies used to cross the many borders participants found throughout their migratory experiences. With the theoretical tools that I have presented here, in the next two chapters we turn towards these experiences and their implications for future scholarship.
4 Multi-sited research and feminist practice

4.1 Introduction

In this dissertation I aim to understand the obstacles that Senegalese migrants faced in their migration to Spain between 2000 and 2010, and the strategies that they used to overcome these hurdles. I pay particular attention to, on the one hand, obstacles placed by national (i.e. Spanish) and EU actors: immigration laws, border control practices, and so on. On the other hand, I am interested in the facilitating role played by transnational social networks – in other words, how these networks enabled and shaped this particular migration through their provision of information and resources. Methodologically, addressing these issues has been a challenging (and at times, messy) enterprise. Fieldwork has taken place in three languages and two primary national contexts, Spain and Senegal, requiring regular travel between several political spaces and ways of seeing and living. In the following pages, I discuss the epistemological position taken in this study, explain the advantages and limitations of the primary and secondary sources used, and discuss how I have dealt with the difficulties encountered in the field.

This chapter begins with an overview of the concepts of situated knowledge, positionality, and difference as they have been elaborated in feminist and migration scholarship (sections 2 and 3). These are concepts that I challenge throughout the chapter and, more generally, throughout this dissertation. In section 4, I introduce multi-sited ethnography as a methodological approach particularly suited to conduct research in migration and transnationalism. This is an approach that a number of geographers and migration scholars have effectively used in their study of human mobility and transnationalism (see for example Kearney 1989 and 1995, Kyle 2000, Walton-Roberts 2004, Mountz and Wright 1996, and Mountz, Miyares, Wright and Bailey 2003). The remainder of the discussion

focuses on specific aspects of my own research on the migration of Senegalese men and women to Spain. I begin by introducing the reader to the characteristics of my sample and the research sites where the ethnographic data were collected (section 5) and by discussing some of the challenges found during fieldwork (section 6). Using examples from my fieldwork, in section 7 I argue that multi-sited ethnography offers insights for research and engagement in at least three areas overlooked by traditional single-sited ethnography: the constitutive connections between different spaces of migration, the possibility of fostering relations of reciprocity and solidarity across borders, and the strategic agency of migrants. The use of secondary sources is explained in section 8.

4.2 Within and beyond situated knowledge and positionality

Academic feminism is committed to producing “scholarship and practices that pay explicit attention to women, gender, and sexuality, and the ways in which other axes of identity are intertwined with these in the relations of power, oppression, and domination that organize and construct the social world” (Brown and Staeheli 2003, 247-248). Knowledge that can be labeled as “feminist” differs from more traditional and mainstream scientific knowledge in at least four ways. First, feminist scholarship rejects the possibility of objective, exhaustive and absolute knowledge (Haraway 1991; Rose 1993; Gilbert 1994). Second, it emphasizes that participation and emotional connection are valid research tools (Bondi 2003; Blake 2007). Third, it aims to deconstruct and eventually debunk the figure of the “master subject” (the judgmental, all-knowing white, bourgeois, and heterosexual male scientist) and to produce knowledge about and from positions of subalter(n)ity (Haraway 1991; Rose 1993; Gilbert 1994; Mohanty 2002). Fourth, the ultimate goal of feminist scholarship is to produce knowledge that leads to action: to make inequalities of power visible in order to contest them (Mohanty 2002). Beyond this rough common ground, academic feminism is heterogeneous in its purposes and its methods – and, perhaps ironically, fraught with internal conflicts and inconsistencies.
One of the main sources of tension in feminist discussions of ethnographic fieldwork is that, while we want to write about and from positions of subalternity, feminist scholars are, overall, a rather privileged bunch (Kobayashi 1994). Given the circumstances, how are we to straddle the many differences that separate participants and researchers, and engage in “read[ing] up the ladder of privilege, [beginning] from the lives and interests of marginalized communities of women” (Mohanty 2002, 511) without exploiting them?

Power and difference are central to the feminist project. Feminists do not (or should not) claim to produce absolute knowledge. Rather, they draw attention to the “situatedness” of their research, and acknowledge their (and all scholars) limited vision of the world and their involvement in complex relations of power (Haraway 1991; Rose 1997). Situated knowledge requires the researcher to address how her complex identity and positionality (her belonging to certain categories of gender, race, socio-economic class, nationality, and so forth) influences each and every stage of the research process. Reflexivity becomes critical to the feminist enterprise. However, if taken too far, the claim for reflexivity (which Gillian Rose [1997] described as “transparent reflexivity”) can be criticized on the grounds that it presumes that both self and context can be fully comprehended. Limitations inherent to human knowledge, the dynamism of social relations, and the ever-shifting interaction between the many axes of social differentiation tend to be forgotten when we assume that the understanding of self, other, and context are all fully accessible to us.

Besides the tensions that arise from the unequal relation between researcher and participant in the field, and the limitations of the concepts of reflexivity and positionality, another pitfall of feminist methodological discussions is that participants’ agency is rarely problematized, and often not discussed at all (Domosh 2003). Obviously, participants in qualitative research are at least as strategic in their actions as researchers. They do much more than reveal the truth to us: they choose, filter, and shape the information they share, constructing “a productive other” (van Liempt 2007, 68) vis-à-vis the researcher. It is thus
necessary to move beyond simplistic self-reflexivity to consider how our positionality as researchers combine with participants’ identities, positionalities, and interests.

4.3 Rethinking research across difference in migration studies

After decades of debate, the question of sameness and difference in fieldwork remains controversial. It has been argued that “auto-ethnography” (research within the researcher’s community of reference or research through sameness) results in a more sophisticated understanding of participants’ experiences, which are assumed to be similar to those of the researcher. Sameness is also said to allow for more egalitarian relations in the field and facilitate access to hard-to-reach groups (England 1994; Blake 2007). Skeptics of the sameness perspective, however, point that the “native” may take for granted some of the key elements that shape participants’ experiences, because they are an integral part of both participants and researcher’s socialization. Also, were researchers to limit their scientific interest to what they know best through their personal experience, whole sections of the population would be left unrepresented – some of them among the most disempowered groups in society whose circumstances, according to Chandra Talpade Mohanty (2002), are considered fundamental for transnational feminist solidarity. More importantly, sameness is constructed upon an essentialized take on complex identities. Reflecting on this issue, both Melissa Gilbert (1994) and France Winddance Twine (2000) conclude that assuming sameness based on gender or race ignores the relevance of other interlocking axes of social differentiation key to research in the field such as age, socio-economic class, education, citizen / immigrant status, sexuality, religion, and so on.

If complete sameness is impossible and maybe far from ideal, then my argument is that feminist migration research practice can and in fact should work through differences of class, race, gender, or citizenship, instead of shying away from them. Ideally, research on racialized migrant groups should be conducted by mixed teams to make the best of the insider / outsider positions. To explore the benefits of this approach (proposed, among
others, by Twine [2000]), a black Spanish woman of Equatorial Guinean origin named Sesé Sité and I carried out ten in-depth interviews with migrant and second generation black women in Madrid (Vives and Sité 2010). Our objective was to understand their experiences of discrimination in the city (or lack thereof). We found that participants interviewed by Sesé were inclined to present black women as a more or less homogeneous group (“community”), and articulated their narratives of discrimination around issues of political engagement, beauty standards, and interracial relations. But when I (a white Spaniard) interviewed them, participants emphasized the heterogeneity of the black population in Spain; existing internal hierarchies along the lines of gender, religion, and legal status in the country (undocumented migrant, legal resident, or citizen); and the challenges of a complex identity, in particular for the second generation.

Figure 4.1: The author taking pictures of children to take to their relatives in Senegal. Photo by Javier Acebal (2009), reproduced with permission from the author.

Taken on their own, participants in each set of responses clearly took into account (deliberately or instinctively) the types of discourses we were already familiar with, provided the kind of information they thought would be relevant to us, and, in short, tried to relate to us in ways that were meaningful for both parts on either side of the voice recorder. Perhaps more importantly, both sets of participants aimed at drawing us to the political
struggles they saw us as being part of: Panafricanism in Sesé’s case, anti-racism in mine. Together, the narratives of native and foreign black women allowed for a much more sophisticated understanding of their experiences of discrimination (Vives and Sité 2010). What emerges was a picture of black women who positioned themselves strategically within their group of reference (the black community in Spain) and in relationship to the majority of the local population (white), which in this case I represented. Our experience supports the claim that both research through sameness and difference are useful – and at times complementary – approaches to research on race and migration.

4.4 Choosing multi-sited ethnography

Ethnography is a popular methodological approach in contemporary migration research, and one particularly employed by feminists (Gilbert 1994). Reflecting on the study of world systems, anthropologist George E. Marcus (1986, 1995) has proposed that contemporary ethnographic work tends to be either intensive and single-sited (“classic”) or multi-sited. He labeled the latter “mobile ethnography,” arguing that it is a quintessential postmodern methodology arising “from anthropology’s participation in a number of interdisciplinary (in fact, ideologically anti-disciplinary) arenas that have evolved since the 1980s” (Marcus 1995, 97). According to Marcus, the multi-sited approach placed particular emphasis on “ethics, commitment and activism” (99).

In reality, multi-sited ethnographic work is far from new and it is not necessarily post-modern or politically motivated.48 However, in the context of a rapidly globalizing world, it becomes increasingly necessary to address the circulation of goods, meanings, and practices from a systemic, transnational, and mobile perspective. This is particularly the case in migration studies. For example: an exhaustive study of Senegalese women’s migration to Southern Europe should consider the enormous power differentials between the Global

48 Malinowski’s classic 1922 study, “Argonauts of the Western Pacific,” provides an early example of a pre-globalization and non-postmodern multi-sited ethnography.
North and the Global South, as well as the key economic and symbolic role that remittances play in source countries (Diop 2008); it should reflect on the tensions that exist between the status of women in communities of origin and destination (Pratt and Yeoh 2003; Dial 2008), and on the role of well-established networks in the migration process (Sinatti 2008; Riccio 2008); finally, this study should relate these phenomena to the racialization of non-EU (European Union) migrants in Spain (Vives 2011; Vives and Sité 2010) and the increasing securitization of migration to countries in the Global North (Huysmans 2006; Geddes 2008). Multi-sited ethnography is particularly useful to grasp the interconnectedness of these multiple processes. In fact, it is difficult to imagine a research design able to address these interconnections without adopting a multi-sited approach.

The rise of transnationalism as a new “paradigm” in migration studies has triggered greater interest in multi-sited ethnographic work. For example, Margaret Walton-Roberts’ (2004) fascinating study of marriage and the role of Punjabi transnational networks between India and Canada greatly benefitted from her use of a multi-sited ethnographic methodology. Iria Vázquez Silva (2010) has also used a similar approach to study the transnational domestic duties of Senegalese women reunited with their husbands in Spain. These and other studies using an epistemologically feminist and methodologically multi-sited approach have challenged the implicit masculinization of transnational studies, which remain largely dominated by the study of male migrants (Pratt and Yeoh 2003).

It is true that multi-sited ethnography has important limitations. First, if relying on participants’ accounts, this model is only valid for contemporary migration and it requires that participants be alive, able, and willing to talk. Second, the scholar will likely need more time and money (both scarce resources in academia) to carry out a rigorous study using this methodology, because research sites are more numerous and often far apart. Third, the multiplicity of research spaces may become an obstacle in building relationships of trust with participants, since the researcher is never fully “here” but “There ... and there ... and there!” (Hannerz 2003). Multi-sited research may also require language skills and a certain
taste for challenging experiences. Finally, as with traditional single-sited ethnographic work, research carried out in contexts unfamiliar to the researcher bring with them certain risks. As other authors have noted, the researcher’s (gendered, racialized, exoticized) body may make her a target for sexual harassment, monetary extortion, more or less flattering marriage proposals, or even straightforward racialized discrimination (Warren 2000; Sundberg 2003).

From a theoretical point of view, multi-sited research “tests the limits of ethnography” (Marcus 1995, 99), since it does not produce information as steeped into the realities of everyday life as classic single-sited ethnographic work. It does not aim at presenting an all-comprehending explanation of a smaller unit of observation, but a partial explanation of a phenomenon conceived of as part of a much larger system. It could also be assumed that the power of fieldwork is also weakened through its dispersion and that the point of view of the subaltern (the supposedly disempowered migrant) gets lost with so much travelling back and forth (Marcus 1995).

The challenges of multi-sited research are real, but so is its potential. Besides, most of these limitations can be said to affect most other forms of qualitative research methods. There has been little reflection on how to combine feminism and multi-sited ethnography within migration studies. And yet, it is my contention that multi-sited work is better suited than other qualitative approaches to provide a robust foundation for research on the experience of racialized and gendered international migrants from a feminist perspective.

4.5 Research sites, sample, multi-sitedness

The information provided by official statistics served as a starting point for the design of this project, which relies primarily on information collected during 12 months of ethnographic fieldwork with a relatively small sample (n = 100). The aim of this research was not to gather a representative sample, but to offer a tentative interpretation of the
obstacles migrants found and the strategies they adopted to overcome them through the experience of a limited number of people.

The fulcrum of this research is a set of 17 life histories conducted with Senegalese women living in Spain at the time of the interviews (see Tables A.1, A.2 and A.3 in Appendix A). I recruited these women through snowball sampling with 4 entry points: one Spanish pro-immigrant organization, a Senegalese union member, the leader of a Senegalese religious organization, and a Senegalese researcher. For the life histories, respondents were asked to complete a timeline and give details about their experiences before, during, and after migration. Three areas were indicated as particularly relevant to respondents: family and residential status (marriage, separation, birth of offspring, change of residence), professional experiences, and their migration experiences (previous migrations, first thought about migrating to Europe, when they or someone else started planning the trip, the negotiations and purchases involved, the obstacles they found to migrate within their families and social circles as well as administrative obstacles, the details of the trip, etc.). I met formally with each of these 17 participants twice; the sessions were between 1 and 2.5 hours long. In these occasions we met either at the participant’s home or in a public place upon her request. I recorded respondents’ narratives in all but two of the case studies where women asked me to take notes instead. Both the recordings and the notes were partially transcribed to a digital file and analyzed thematically.

In Spain I also interviewed 23 migrant men (see Table A.4 in Appendix A). As in the case of the women, these participants were recruited through snowball sampling with 6 entry points (the same used for women respondents and two others that I met through my own social network). I conducted semi-structured in-depth interviews of between 1 and 2 hours long. The interviews all took place in public spaces and none of the respondents refused to have the conversation recorded. The bulk of the interviews with men focused on the migration experience (primarily on the strategies they had used to overcome administrative barriers to their migration, who had assisted them, and the specificities of their journey). Gender
relations were often discussed during the last part of the interviews upon respondents’ request.

Life histories and in-depth interviews in Spain took place during two periods of fieldwork (Winter and Fall of 2009). In the Spring of 2009 and the Winter of 2010 I also did fieldwork in Senegal (see the specific research sites in Map 4.1). The research sites were diverse and pointed to the varied ethno-religious and socio-economic backgrounds of my participants. The main differences that I found were between rural and urban areas (and, particularly, between the Dakar metropolitan area and the rest of the country). These differences helped explain participants’ reasons for migration as well as the routes they had used. For example, in the poor neighbourhoods of Dakar where I did most of my fieldwork young men experienced great pressure to migrate to Europe: migration meant, in a way, a transition into full manhood. At the same time, government services and foreign embassies were concentrated in the capital, and thus migration procedures were simpler and cheaper to access for those who lived in Dakar. Besides this urban-rural division, during my fieldwork in Senegal I found the southern region of Casamance to be exceptional in many ways (for example, many participants had left their communities of origin in search of safer places, given the ongoing conflict). Religion was a decisive factor everywhere, but particularly in the region of Saloum and Saint Louis, where I found strong Catholic Serer communities; and in Kaolack, Diourbel and Touba, where I met three Mouride families (Peuhl, Wolof, and Toucouleur) with the most conservative views on gender relations and the migration of women of my sample.

As I reconstructed participants’ journeys back to their communities of origin in Senegal, I engaged in participant observation and formally interviewed 54 other people who played key roles in shaping these migrants’ journeys (see Tables A.5 and A.6 in Appendix A). In Senegal I was invited to spend time (between one full day and 4 days) at migrants’ family homes with their parents, siblings, and other relatives. I conducted interviews with those that respondents in Spain had identified as key to their migration. During our interview
sessions (between 1 and 2 hours long) relatives and friends were asked to elaborate on the reasons behind their involvement, the specific role they had played in respondents’ migration, the actions they had taken to facilitate it, and the time and money invested. All respondents accepted to have the interview recorded. Most interviews were conducted in French, although an interpreter was available at all times.

Respondents recruited in Spain had mostly traveled to Europe by plane, with some who had made the journey to the Canary Islands by boat and had them been taken to continental Spain by Spanish authorities. To gather information about the experience of Senegalese land migrants I also conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews in Ceuta and Morocco (a key transit country; see Table A.7 in the Appendix A). I used three entry points for this group. These encounters were, in the majority of cases, awkward: migrants were in extremely vulnerable situations. Most of them chose to use a pseudonym during the interview. In Tangiers I met migrants in their private quarters (hotels and shared rooms) where they felt safer; in Ceuta, my only interviewee chose an open space in the CETI. The migrants in Tangiers chose to have me interview them in front of other co-nationals, but they did not oppose to me recording the conversation. Although the situation was far from ideal, these interviews provided some interesting insights into the experiences of land migrants.
All the participants that I interviewed in inland Spain, Morocco, and Ceuta, as well as their relatives, friends, and other facilitators, were black. Most of them were Muslim with working-class backgrounds, although a smaller number of participants were Catholic and at least two respondents came from wealthy families. Approximately half of the respondents came from the Dakar and Saint Louis urban regions, while the other half came from rural areas in Senegal. Regarding their ethnicity, the sample was quite diverse, with members of all major groups (Wolof, Haal Pulaar, Serer, Jola, and Manding).

Finally, I also interviewed 20 experts: academics, NGO workers, and civil workers both in Senegal and in Spain (see Table A.6 in Appendix A). In Senegal I found this group to be comprised mostly of white expats (Swiss, French, Spanish, and Italian) or members of the local upper social class. Our conversations focused on aspects of their work that impacted participants’ journeys to Europe. These interviews were conducted in French, English, and Spanish, and were in all cases recorded with interviewees’ permission.

Besides these interviews and life histories, during most of my time in Senegal I lived with a migrant’s family in the town of Guédiawaye, Dakar, where a large number of my participants came from. Eight women resided in the household permanently, living off the remittances sent by two men, an internal migrant living in Mbour and another living in Spain / Italy. These women became my friends, my guides and a family of sorts in the Senegalese way. By the end of my stay they referred to me by a Muslim name and introduced me to their neighbours using their own family name to highlight the strength of the bond between us. This association provided me access, legitimacy, and protection as I came to be known as “Madame Toubab” (the white lady) in the marginal neighbourhood of Marché Boubesse.

4.6 A brief reflection on the challenges encountered

The difficulties of studying the migration of Senegalese women to Spain started early. Accessing participants proved to be extremely challenging, as became clear the day I met
Codou, my research assistant. We met at one of the main public squares in the city where she lived in Southern Spain. She had replied to the ad that I had left at a pro-immigrant organization where she, like many other immigrant women from Senegal and elsewhere, went looking for employment. I waited by the fountain where we had arranged to meet. Codou, a tall, imposing woman, walked towards me while she talked on the phone. She was looking left and right, right and left, and stayed on the phone (making several calls) until we sat down at a coffee shop of her choice. Later on she told me those calls were to reassure her relatives that I was safe: to tell them where we were, where we were going, and what I looked like – just in case. There were rumours that some black African women had been kidnapped and forced into prostitution; Codou was also afraid that I might work for the police.

Although Codou was soon reassured, it took me a month to convince participants at my first research site (which I had anticipated to be much easier, because of my existing networks) that I did not work for the police. During this month and thanks to Codou’s mediation I became increasingly involved in the activities, religious celebrations, and everyday life of the community. However, interviews simply did not happen: three times interviewees canceled shortly before our meetings. Each time I asked why, and each time I received the same answer: “Pape [or Mamadou, or any other male name] told me they saw you talking to a policeman.” Eventually I realized that bypassing the men had not been a smart move. Several interviews with men later, and after a full day assisting in the preparation of one hundred kilos of lamb for the *Magal*, I was deemed safe, and from then on I encountered few problems recruiting participants. Other non-Senegalese interviewees in Spain were easier to access, notably civil workers, thanks to the networks I had established in previous research.

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49 The *Magal* is a religious celebration observed by the members of the Senegalese Sufi *Mouride* brotherhood. The celebration (today occasion of the largest pilgrimage in the country) commemorates the day that the head of the brotherhood was informed by Allah that his mission to re-establish Islam in the country had been accomplished.
Fieldwork in Senegal was challenging for different reasons: for the first time in my life, I experienced the pervasiveness of racialization. Being a white woman in Senegal gave me uneven access to the field. On the one hand, I, like the rest of the privileged white population, was perceived as the key to easy money, easy sex and/or easier migration to Europe. As a white Spanish worker of the Red Cross put it, “we’re a passport, a wallet and a bed all rolled up in one.” The reputation is well earned: Senegal has become a cheap exotic escape for Europeans who go there to spend vast amounts of money on luxuries often off limits for the local population, including but not limited to sex tourism. White women are not an exception to this rule.

Being put into the category “white tourist” made spontaneous interactions awkward at first, despite the fact that they regularly took place in the deprived neighbourhood where I lived, where I soon became a familiar sight. Early on I learnt that if I was to conduct my fieldwork comfortably I should focus on the families that I was working with, avoiding (as much as possible) interacting with men or even venturing into men’s spaces in the household. This way, I got to spend most of the time in the food sections of popular markets, kitchens, women’s quarters and in the living room where women ate and spent most of the time together (in many households it is customary for men and women to eat separately). As long as I respected these rules my relationship with the members of the household was comfortable and even playful, and it took very little time for me to have long, intimate conversations with participants, particularly with women. In all cases I offered to conduct formal interviews in the local language, although only in three cases did participants prefer using an interpreter to speak in their mother tongue, probably because we were by then quite used to speaking in French to each other. Also, having an interpreter meant an extra pair of ears hearing things that, in some cases, should remain private.

Other interviewees (the “experts”) were overall very accessible in Senegal. NGO and INGO workers were often Europeans working on the field who were only too happy to talk to another “expat.” Few of these participants were Senegalese citizens themselves. Both locals
and Europeans accepted to participate in this study: some of them had been interviewed for similar projects and asked to have access to the transcriptions before anything they said became public. Senegalese civil workers in government and security forces were easy to get an interview with, in part thanks to the doors opened by one of my participants, but the rules that governed our encounters were tricky. For example, in my one and only interview with a Senegalese police officer in charge of border control my interpreter was ordered to leave the room: my participant did not approve of his outfit. In some ways it was useful for me that men in positions of authority were often keen on the idea of acquiring a white wife. However, negotiating the tensions that this brought into the interview required a fair amount of juggling, and I was always eager to return to my kitchen of women in Guédiawaye.

These interviews with government workers were relatively uncomfortable yet safe interactions. By the end of my second stay in Senegal I was put in a more compromising position by one of the interpreters that had assisted me during the first trip, who decided to attempt to extort money from me. In a fashion that (I learnt afterwards) is not uncommon, this man harassed me, offering to stop only if I gave him half a million CFA francs (almost one thousand CAD $). He went as far as to visit my host family with the hope that I would agree to pay him the money and buy him a plane ticket to Spain to quiet him down. My host family chased him out of the house (kitchen knife in hand) yelling insults at him for trying to harm a woman whose husband was away, threatening even to go to a marabout to curse him for life. I never heard back from this man.

In summary, the fieldwork was far from easy. But despite the challenges, I found multi-sited ethnography to be a robust methodological approach. In the next sections I elaborate on three reasons to advocate for multi-sited ethnography in its “follow the people” version.50 I argue that this approach offers insights for research and engagement in at least three areas

50 Technically, in this dissertation I follow the network, not the migrant, since I start at the point of destination and trace participants’ journeys back to their communities of origin. My focus has been on nodes and connections, that is, in reconstructing the network, which explains why I conducted fieldwork in Morocco even though none of the core participants in Senegal had migrated by land. Having said this, I still find that the idea of “following the people” applies to this ethnography due to the centrality of migrants’ journeys in it.
overlooked by traditional single-sited ethnography: the constitutive connections between
different spaces of migration, the possibility of fostering reciprocity and political
participation across borders, and the strategic agency of migrants. My experiences in the
field and the findings resulting from this study will allow me to make a contribution to the
small but increasing body of work on gender and transnationalism that uses multi-sited
ethnography as a primary approach to research.

4.7 Multi-sited ethnography: contributions to feminist research and the
study of gendered migration

4.7.1 “Here” and “there” as interdependent spaces in the geography of
gendered migration

Following migrants through different spaces puts the researcher in a good position to
understand how identities and positionalities before, during, and after migration shape the
opportunities that are open to them – and how these positionalities are tied to processes at a
larger scale. If we were to limit our enquiries to the experiences of Senegalese migrant
women since their arrival in Spain (a very common approach in migration studies) we
would be tempted to cast them in the terms often used in the society of destination: as either
victims or criminals (Agustin 2003; Sánchez Leyva et al. 2010). Because of the narrow
perspectives used to look into migrants’ lives, it is not rare to find studies that portray
migrant women primarily as victims of gender violence, domestic abuse or patriarchal
family structures (e.g., polygyny); human trafficking; gendered poverty in Africa, and so on.

From the perspective of receiving countries, migrant women are also seen as criminals
(particularly in the media) insofar as they are often perceived to be in Spanish territory
through illegitimate means (as undocumented migrants, illegitimate spouses, fake tourists,
or bogus refugees) or to be engaged in some kind of undocumented activity such as
underground work in the sex trade (Sánchez Leyva et al. 2010). While none of these
assumptions is necessarily false in specific cases, they are by no means an exhaustive description of women’s experiences as immigrants. Their limited framing of the issue distorts our understanding of the migratory process. Three examples of how the methodology proposed here may deepen our understanding of migration are briefly discussed below.

4.7.2 The case of the strawberry pickers

Multi-sited approach offers insights into how migration is interlocked with other, larger and interconnected processes that impact people’s lives in a way extremely hard to grasp through the use of secondary sources. A look at the selection process through which seasonal agricultural workers (in particular, strawberry pickers) were recruited to work in Spain between 2006 and 2008 illustrates how, in order to understand the impact of Spanish legislation on who leaves, who stays, why, and how, we need to reconstruct the migration journey from the point of departure. During that period, government-managed recruitment of Senegalese temporary migrants for agricultural work was largely dominated by women (IOM 2009). Following previous experiences in Morocco,51 the Spanish government asked its Senegalese counterpart that healthy women with dependent children under the age of 14, not pregnant, and with experience working the land be selected and recruited to work in Spain.52

Research in Senegal reveals another reality. In practice, corruption during the selection process meant that the characteristics defined by Spanish policymakers had no influence over how women were selected at origin: what counted were their connections to the state bureaucracy in Senegal. Middle-class university students who not even in their wildest

51 See Juana Moreno Nieto (2009).

52 Men and single women were thought to be less likely to return after the end of the contract. Based on the interview with an official from the Spanish Bureau of Labour in Senegal, May 2009; interviews with officials from the MTIN in Spain, February 2010. I will elaborate on the case of temporary agricultural workers in Chapter 6.
dreams saw themselves picking strawberries were recruited, together with pregnant women who arrived in Spain only to give birth days or weeks later. Some women abandoned their group at the airport, before even getting on the buses that took workers to the fields; others ran away before finishing their contracts – in some cases due to sexual abuse on the part of their employers; and roughly 90 percent never returned to Senegal, according to the experts interviewed for this study. Those who stayed in Spain beyond the extension of their contract automatically became undocumented migrants, and that is all they have become for the Spanish administration and for those scholars who have studied their case. Nothing, however, is being said about how faulty recruitment procedures or a poorly designed legislation have played a role into their becoming “illegal.” These aspects only become fully understood when research is done on both ends of migrants’ journeys.

4.7.3 Paulette

The case of Paulette, a Senegalese woman, illuminates the many links that bind origin, transit, and destination in the process of migration. From a poor Muslim family, Paulette was forced into a polygamous marriage with an abusive man she did not love. Since childhood, she had harboured the hope of migrating to that land of milk and honey that she saw on TV: Europe. When, shortly after her marriage, Paulette got pregnant, she said to herself: “either I leave now or I stay here forever.” She then negotiated her trip with a local fisherman, who smuggled her through the border in a boat that left the coast of Mbour at 3 am on August 22, 2004. Paulette was one of the pioneers in illegal migration from Senegal to Spain by sea. A year later, black Africans began to arrive by the hundreds to the Canary Islands. Others attempted to jump over the razor-wire fences that separate Morocco and the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla with more or less luck. The pressure that these

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53 Interview with representative from the IOM in Senegal, April 2009; interview with recruited woman in Senegal, May 2009; interview with representative of the ILO in Senegal, January 2010.

54 According to Fatou Binetou Dial (2008), forced marriages are rare in contemporary Senegal, although they still happen. Often marriages are decided by the families and “consented” by the couple, the union between crossed cousins being preferred whenever possible (interview with Fatou Sarr in Senegal, January 2010).
migrants put on the border was so intense that it became one of the main factors in the justification of the creation of FRONTEX,\textsuperscript{55} the European Union’s agency for the coordinated protection of its external borders (Vives 2009). But that night was more important for Paulette than for any of the Euro-bureaucrats that participated in redefining the region’s borders. During one of our interviews she spent forty-five minutes describing the trip to the Canary Islands in painful detail:

> We were at least eighty people. The boat was very, very large. There were children, women with babies, and men (...). The first days were ok, but then we run out of water and food. (...) Some people got very badly sunburnt. I don’t even want to think about it, because when I do I get a sharp pain here, behind my eyes. The neurologist says that it’s the stress, that I’m still hung up on what happened in that trip. (...) I don’t even remember how long it took us to arrive in Spain. The days were very long (...) [But] the worst were the children: when the mother doesn’t eat the milk stops flowing, and children cried all the time (Paulette, life history, research site 1, February 2009; my translation).

Two and a half months after our first interview in Spain, I met Paulette’s family in Kaolack, a city of 150,000 inhabitants South of Dakar. When her husband told me that he had paid over 4,000 euros to buy Paulette a tourist visa and a plane ticket to Rome I thought he was saving face. Then her mother and sister\textsuperscript{56} insisted that they had said their farewells to Paulette personally at the airport when she left to join a cousin in Italy, but shortly after she heard that achieving legal status was easier in Spain and moved there.

Back in Spain, I asked Paulette why I had been given two different versions of her trip, and why she had asked her family to tell me the truth. Her answer was: “I wanted you to

\textsuperscript{55} From the French Frontières extérieures or external borders, this is the EU agency responsible for external border security. Its legal name is European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union.

\textsuperscript{56} In Senegal, people who are emotionally close refer to each other as sister/brother (if they are of the same age), father / mother (if they are older), or daughter/son (if they are younger) regardless of the blood relationship. In this case, the woman that Paulette was referring to as her sister was her best friend and business partner.
understand that I had to look for ways to make my life easier.” She said that upon her arrival in Spain she had spent the last months of her pregnancy at some friends’ home watching TV and trying to learn more about Spanish language and culture. Only then did she learn about the drama of undocumented migration of black Africans by sea. She realized that undocumented boat migrants triggered a collective imaginary of Africa as a place of extreme poverty and desperation and, more importantly, a feeling of Catholic piety towards (in her words) “those poor black people.” At that time, the Spanish government also got involved in a campaign to raise awareness against domestic violence in the country. Paulette then embraced the labels that she was given as a “black,” “poor,” “illiterate,” “dominated woman,” a victim of domestic abuse and human smuggling who needed to be saved, and made herself a new persona with them. By all accounts, her appropriation of widely available gendered, racialized, and postcolonial prejudices served her purposes well.

Of course, Paulette’s story brings up the challenge of participants’ deception in social research. Some of the questions that we may want to ask are: what part of her narrative was true and what was not? Is deception a generalized problem in my sample, which is already small and not representative? And more importantly, how does that affect the findings of this research project? There are several ways to answer these questions. First, whenever we depend on people answering a set of questions deception is always a challenge; that is the case for census data, surveys of all kinds, quantitative and qualitative data. Second, Paulette may have lied, but the “real” story emerged thanks to the research methodology I used: multi-sited ethnography. My approach required different people contributing to reconstruct one migrant’s migration trajectory, which made deception easy to spot: other studies that rely on single-sited ethnography or a survey will also suffer from participant deception, but the researcher will lack the information to find the problem and solve it. Finally, whether Paulette told the truth or not is not all that relevant after all. For me, her case was very illuminating precisely because of the ways she manipulated, cajoled, and negotiated with everyone around her to reach her objectives. In other words, the reasons and rationales behind her lies were more illuminating than the bare truth of how she made it to Spain.
In summary, the cases of temporary agricultural workers, wives brought to Spain through family reunification procedures, and Paulette’s story point to the potential of the multi-sited ethnographic approach for the study of gendered experiences of international migration and transnationalism. Without the information collected at the country of origin and about the migration process itself, our knowledge of the circumstances under which these women migrated and settled into Spain would have been incomplete, at best. It is the richness of the discourse that emerges from multi-sited ethnography that can help us have a more sophisticated understanding of, among others, the gendered nature of the migration process from beginning to end.

The information gathered using this methodology also provides entry points to issues of great interest for feminist migration scholarship, such as the precarious relationship between transnationalism and the advance of gender equity. Geraldine Pratt and Brenda Yeoh (2003) have argued against the sometimes triumphalistic conclusion, on the part of certain feminist scholars, that these two go necessarily together. Their call for caution certainly applies to this study. Working with Senegalese wives who have reunited with their husbands in Spain, Iria Vázquez Silva (2010) has found that these migrants’ domestic obligations towards their husband’s family (particularly towards their mothers in law) permeate their entire experience of migration. In fact, it is this obligation which made her participants’ lives truly transnational: whenever their mothers in law needed them, wives would return to Senegal; whenever their husbands requested them, they would travel to Spain. Gains in gender equity were nowhere to be found in all their back and forth movements, even though women’s social status in Senegal benefited from migration (Vázquez Silva 2010).

4.7.4 Greater opportunities towards reciprocity and participation

Reciprocity, a key concept in feminist research (Kobayashi 1994; Mohanty 2002), involves developing a relationship with participants so that the power dynamics between
“researcher” and “researched” are problematized. While in many cases the prickly issue of reciprocity may be addressed (if only imperfectly) by offering respondents remuneration for their participation in the study, in feminist research the negotiation is more complex and personal. For example, Kath Browne (2003) described that in her project, respondents (who were also her friends) saw their participation in the study “as ‘doing Kath a favour.’ Consequently they felt they could ask me for a favour in return. These took a number of different forms, from sharing a drink in the pub, to doing numerous odd jobs” (Browne 2003, 139). Mona Domosh (2003, 110) argues that, more generally, reciprocity implies acknowledging the agency of participants and states that:

> [w]e need to scrutinize the personal knowledges of our subjects just as we do our own: Under what conditions are these truths constructed? For what reasons? Who benefits? (…) By allowing to our interviewees the same subjectivity that we allow ourselves, we create a more fully reciprocal research relationship.

At an individual level, interactions with participants are transformed by this approach to the field. But, more broadly, multi-sited ethnography allows ample room for reciprocal relations and, potentially, for participation. While doing my fieldwork, I found participants appreciative of the trouble I was going to in order to understand migrants’ lives both in Senegal and in Spain: they saw it as an acknowledgement of their personhood beyond their identity as migrants. This was even more so because participants had the impression that Spaniards were not very interested in Senegal (or in Africa, for that matter) beyond the bad news that appeared in the media. As Sokhna, a Senegalese woman, put it, “Africa remains Africa [in the mind of European journalists]. Africa is not information – it only makes the news if there is hunger or war, otherwise there is no interest whatsoever.”

Reciprocity can also take place through the negotiation of formal and informal research spaces (Browne 2003). I was often asked to share information and carry goods across the border and share lunches with families. While for some of these requests extreme caution is advised, acting as a link between migrants and their families can take many shapes, most of
which involve little risk. For example, while I was often asked to take unlocked cellphones to Senegal and traditional clothing and letters back to Spain, most commonly participants requested that I took pictures of migrant families in Spain to show to their relatives in Senegal, and vice versa (see for example Figure 4.2). Basic guidance on family reunification resources was also badly sought after.

![Figure 4.2: One of the many Senegalese families who depend almost entirely on remittances from their relatives in Europe. Photo by author (2009), from the project “Women Through The Border.”](image)

The reciprocal relations that emerged from these exchanges outside more formal research spaces opened avenues for participation, another tenet of feminist practice, which was in this case limited by the temporal constraints of the research project. Participation (and other approaches such as action-research, collaboration or cooperation) results from the acknowledgement that “social research is an explicitly political intervention that not only represents, but constitutes, reality” (Cameron and Gibson 2005, 316). This being the case, the researcher may choose to engage in the political struggles of the population she is working with. In my case, soon after the fieldwork began it became obvious that participants deeply resented the negative impact that a biased media representation of Africa and Africans had on migrants’ chances as workers and, more generally, as human beings. Because of these representations, interviewees believed neighbours and potential employers saw them as people who “came from the jungle” and had never seen a car or been to school,
men and women who must have lived in a sort of timeless and placeless limbo beyond “civilization” prior to migration. These discourses robbed participants of a very important part of their identity.

Following some discussion on these issues, a number of the respondents and I got involved in organizing “Women Through the Border,” a series of activities aimed at educating a Spanish audience on Senegalese history, society and culture; raise awareness about the status of women in Senegal; and provide an accurate account of the migration of women from Senegal to Spain. The activities evolved around a photo exhibit featuring thirty-eight pictures of Senegal (see the promotional poster for the event, Figure 4.3). The photographs and captions covered aspects of Senegalese life such as religious and ethnic diversity, polygyny, literacy issues, the pervasiveness of new information technologies, the work of women on the fields as well as in office buildings, the roles of men and women in the fishing industry, the different channels used for migration, and migrants’ integration into Spanish society. Hundreds of people visited the photo exhibit, including ten groups of between 20 and 35 school children under the age of 14 that I guided through the different images, videos, and objects on display. Both the concert and the storytelling sessions that we organized sold out. Following the success of “Women Through The Border,” participants
proposed that we organize a similar project with the goal of shattering the image of Europe as the promised land in Senegal. This second project has yet to materialize.

In my opinion, reciprocity and political involvement are ideal goals to which we should aspire as researchers, but that we may never (or only imperfectly) attain. My own assessment of how much reciprocity and meaningful participation was achieved through this project is uncertain. To begin with, participants could not be integrated into the research design from the beginning, and thus the research questions were defined largely by me (although some of the specific questions addressed by this research were not settled until after I had conducted a number of interviews). It took some time for relations that could be called reciprocal to emerge, and this required complex negotiations of our relationship both in formal and informal settings. Once these were established, however, participation through the project “Women Through the Border” seemed only natural. The project was a success of which participants felt very proud. But, once again, structural constraints reduced the level to which they could claim ownership of the project: some of the most actively involved migrants were (and are, to this day) undocumented, and their names and input in the project remain anonymous upon their request.

4.7.5 The migrant as a strategic agent

As noted before, discussions on reflexivity and positionality have focused on the perspective of the researcher, neglecting participants’ own position and engagement with the research process. This is a particular source of concern in the study of South-North migration, because there is already a tendency to write off migrants’ desires and aspirations: all that gives migrants accountability for their own actions tends to disappear (Agustín 2003). Responsibility for this can be laid at the feet of media discourses and an excessive attention to the country of destination on the part of researchers (Sánchez Leyva et al. 2010). It is also due to the institutional constraints imposed on academic research (Blake
The result is that participants’ agency is hidden behind their portrayal as racialized and marginalized migrants.

But, just like researchers, migrants are strategic agents who manipulate their identities and narrate their stories with a goal in mind, such as to present themselves in a positive light or to receive some assistance (van Liempt 2007). Neither completely powerless nor in full control of their circumstances, both researcher and participant negotiate a common space that accommodates, on the one hand, the researcher’s need to get the story, and, on the other, the participant’s resolution to make the most of the situation.

Paulette’s story offers a clear example of how migrants make choices when they reconstruct their stories. Respondents in this study managed personal information in different ways and towards different means, manipulating it to obtain support, save face, or protect their loved ones. In another example, while doing interviews in Morocco I met Pape, a man in his late forties. He wanted a picture of him in his room to be shown in Spain as part of the “Women Through the Border” exhibit. He did not know anyone living in Spain. But he was clear that the picture should under no circumstances be shown in Senegal: “my family thinks I live like a king here, and I don’t want them to know that I live in a house without windows and make my living begging on the street.” When he returned to Senegal, he said, it would be in a large car with the most expensive clothing he could afford.57

The strategic use of information is not always intended at manipulating other people, as was the case for both Paulette and Pape. Most often, it is meant to protect them. Participants sought to save their loved ones the unnecessary suffering that knowing the conditions they lived in as migrants could cause them. This was the case of Coumba, a middle-aged woman who asked me to conceal certain parts of her story from her daughter in Dakar:

57 In the end, Pape’s photo was not included as part of “Women Through the Border.”
I often think of suicide. I can’t sleep at night, and so I lay down, my eyes wide open, asking myself why I must keep on going. Going to the fields every morning, to find, day after day, that my boss doesn’t need me, because I’m a woman and men work faster. (...) So why should I keep on going? Then I must remind myself that a good Muslim woman cannot commit suicide, and that I am no one to bend God’s will. And I also remember that it’s because of the little money that I make that my five children can go to a good school in Dakar, and that they’ll succeed where I couldn’t. That’s why I keep their picture on the wall by the bed, to have their eyes looking at me while I think ... well, of putting an end to so much suffering. (...) You are not to tell this to [my daughter] though, please don’t tell her (Coumba, life history, research site 2, February 2009).

Despite the hardships they endure, none of these migrants see themselves as victims of a destiny they have not chosen. The label “criminal” also fails to capture their experiences. These migrants have made choices (out of a limited number of options) to take ownership over their lives and improve them – or simply to cope with the difficulties they encountered. To better understand what these options are and how they shape migration, it is necessary to see migrants as what they are: people with experiences prior to and beyond migration, with desires, aspirations, choices, and fears – in short, with agency of their own.

4.8 Secondary sources: the Yearbook and the Municipal Registries

Besides the information gathered through multi-sited ethnographic work, two official sources of statistical information have been widely used in this study, both produced by the Spanish government. The first (the Padrón Municipal de Habitantes or Municipal Registry of Inhabitants) existed well before immigration became a significant phenomenon in Spain, while the second (the Anuario de Inmigración / Extranjería or Yearbook of Immigration) was a result of the new reality of Spain as a receiving country for migrants. Neither of these sources provides a perfect profile of the foreign population throughout the last two decades. However, with all their imperfections, the exploitation of the data they provide allows for an approximation of its size, origin, age, gender, and geographical distribution.
The *Yearbook of Immigration* is a work in progress, having evolved rapidly in the last 15 years. It is based on the information provided by the different agencies that manage migration in the country. Keeping pace with the ever-shifting landscape of migration-related institutions, this publication has been managed by four different Ministries and changed names twice since its inception. The *Yearbook* offers a good snapshot of the legal foreign population through its administrative classification: international students, foreign workers, short- and long-term residents, and asylum seekers. This information is elaborated thematically in periodic bulletins, currently published by the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, which have also been used in this work. However, neither the *Yearbook* nor the bulletins account for unauthorized migrants, a serious flaw given the high rate of undocumented migrants among the non-EU population (see Vives Gonzalez 2007).

This flaw has led researchers to use data from the *Yearbooks* in combination with information provided by municipalities. Municipal registries (also known as the *Padrón*) have their origins in 19th century registries, although they did not exist in their present form until 1985 (García Pérez 2007). Inscription is mandatory for all inhabitants, and the information is collected by municipal governments and elaborated upon and corrected by the National Statistics Institute (*Instituto Nacional de Estadística* or INE). Besides a few narrowly defined exceptions, both municipal governments and the INE are forbidden to share disaggregated data with other departments or state security forces.

City governments have a vested interest in having an accurate (or slightly inflated) registry of citizens, because the number of representatives in higher levels of government and the amount of funds transferred from the central state depend on it. Citizens and regular migrants also reap benefits from their inscription in the Municipal Registry: proof of registration is required for access to a myriad of services. In particular, services available to undocumented migrants (including emergency healthcare and education) depend on their being registered as inhabitants of the city. More importantly, the certificate of residence is
key to apply for regularization, both during extraordinary amnesties and through the use of exceptional channels observed in the legislation (*arraigo*58).

Since it includes information regarding legal as well as unauthorized migrants, the *Padrón* offers a more complete snapshot of the foreign population than the Yearbook. However, this database has some limitations. For example, the registration and updating of the information every two years depends on the migrant herself, who may not be aware of or able to fulfill this requirement (it has been said that the language barrier is particularly onerous for some migrant groups, who do not understand their responsibilities towards the municipal registry). It has also been suggested by national and European policy-makers that the database be made accessible to the police to allow the expulsion of those residing in the country illegally. Although every time this possibility has been raised the outcry of human rights organizations and the rejection of the country’s legal institutions have immediately followed, there is evidence that some undocumented migrants have refrained from registering in the database out of fear. Finally, some city governments, breaching several pieces of legislation, have actively refused to register undocumented migrants, thus preventing them from accessing certain municipally-run social services and potentially making it more difficult for them to obtain a regular status (Clota, 2010, El País, 2010). Two issues of particular concern for researchers interested in the Senegalese-born population are their very high mobility and their extensive use of unauthorized documents (visas bought at origin, travel passports belonging to somebody else, etc.). In the end, neither the *Padrón* nor the *Yearbook* are flawless, although when used in combination they provide a rough profile of the Senegalese immigrant population living in Spain at a given point in time.

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58 The figure of *arraigo* (literally the act of “taking roots”) provides an extraordinary channel for the regularization of clandestine immigrants. There are three kinds of *arraigo* recognized by the immigration law (social, work-related, and familial). Undocumented immigrants who can prove to have social, family, or work-related “roots” in Spain after a period of time (dependent upon the nationality of the immigrant) are allowed to claim a regularization of their status.
4.9 Discussion

In this chapter, I have discussed the methodological approach used to answer the research questions proposed for this study. This project is firmly rooted in feminist epistemology, which very broadly speaking claims that no knowledge is absolute or carries the Truth, and instead is partial and situated. Also, I support feminists’ advocacy for research geared towards social justice and political engagement.

Primary and secondary sources have been used in this study. Secondary sources (government statistics) provide useful information, but also incorporate serious flaws. Immigration Yearbooks refer only to foreigners living in the country with proper authorization, giving no insights into undocumented migrants. Municipal registries (Padrón) reflect the number and basic profile of both documented and undocumented foreigners, but they are not fully reliable due to problems with registrations and updates – both of which depend on the migrant, who may be unable or unwilling to make her presence known to the city hall. A combination of the information provided by these two sources gives us an approximation to the profile and geographical distribution of the Senegalese population in Spain.

While I have used secondary sources to design my research methodology and substantiate some of my claims, the information gathered during 12 months of multi-sited ethnographic work is the backbone of this study. During this time I engaged in participant observation, collected life histories with 17 Senegalese women who lived in Spain in 2009 and interviewed migrants as well as other agents instrumental in shaping and enabling their experience: government workers, NGO and INGO representatives, and researchers. Despite the challenges the adoption of this methodology poses (mainly lack of representativity, a high cost, language barriers, and personal risks) I believe very strongly that when steeped in feminist methodology, multi-sited ethnography is a robust methodological approach that allows for a better understanding of the migration experience. This approach offers incredible potential for a more egalitarian relationship between researcher and participants,
sheds light on how “here” and “there” are mutually constitutive spaces, opens avenues for political engagement, and sheds light onto migrant’s agency in ways that other methodological approaches are ill equipped to do. The remainder of this dissertation will draw heavily from the information and impressions collected through this ethnography, even when not explicitly acknowledged.
5 Building the wall: anti-immigration strategies, 2005-2010

5.1 Introduction

_We don’t know (...) what will be the reaction of the white and Christian Europeans faced with this influx of starving and ignorant Africans. (...) We don’t know if Europe will remain an advanced and united continent or if it will be destroyed, as happened with the barbarian invasions [from 400 to 800 AD]_ (Muammar al-Gaddafi, quoted in BBC, 2010).

The depictions of black African migrants that dominated the European imagination between 2005 and 2010 were those of young, poor, uneducated and Muslim men without proper legal status; and of African women involved in the Southern European sex trade. Thus represented, these migrants became a threat to much of what the EU aspired to represent. While false and damaging, governments in countries of origin and transit often relied on these images as leverage when negotiating trade alliances and financial aid with the EU. Gaddafi (former head of the Libyan state, quoted above) offered a fine example of this: in the Fall of 2010, when he was still a key ally of the EU, he demanded at the Africa-EU summit that the Union transfer to Libya 5 billion Euros a year in exchange for policing Libyan territory and controlling the migration of black Africans who were, supposedly, headed towards Europe. While the onset of the 2011 Libyan Civil War brought these negotiations to an end, less publicized agreements have been reached elsewhere.

Gaddafi was instrumentalizing what authors have called “the myth of invasion,” a discourse that:

a) exaggerates the novelty and size of migration from West Africa to the EU;

b) assumes that all Sub Saharan migrants in North Africa are in transit towards Europe;
c) represents them, collectively, as attempting to cross the land and sea borders of the EU illegally;
d) relies on a rhetoric of invasion, whereby Sub Saharan migrants constitute a threat to at least six pillars of EU collective self-perception: Christianity, whiteness, wealth, education, democracy, and progress.

De Haas (2007, 2008) has written on the myth of invasion extensively. He argues that migration from Africa to Europe is by no means a new phenomenon: what is new (and what may have triggered the astounding institutional reactions that will be analyzed in the following pages) is the increasing number of Sub Saharan (i.e., black) migrants arriving to Southern Europe since the early 1990s. De Haas (2008) also provides evidence that only a small percentage of those migrants crossing the Sahara were headed towards Europe (the rest stayed in North Africa as economic migrants), that the vast majority of West Africans entered EU territory legally (usually by plane), and that this was a modest phenomenon when compared to migration from other parts of the world towards the EU. Despite this evidence, Spanish and EU officials continued to build their policy upon the assumption that a veritable invasion from the South was taking place.

The erection of the southern border was not motivated solely by fear, racism, or the dominant ideology of “domopolitics” (Walters 2004b). Many actors capitalized on the management of migration flows. For example, Spain (a country in the periphery of Europe) became, through its role as a border guard, a key agent in the success of the EU project; millions of Euros were transferred from Brussels to Madrid to prevent undocumented migrants from entering Schengen. The “threat” posed by migrants pushed forward a common agenda in migration control, and, notably, the creation of an agency in charge of coordinating joint operations to secure the borders of the Union. In other words, this crisis advanced the interests of the EU as a single political actor in the global landscape of migration control. The “threat” posed by migrants also provided a legitimate reason for the transnationalization of Spain’s efforts to control migration; it allowed the state to overcome
some of its territorial limitations, reaching “across borders and oceans to manage migration long before people arrive[d] at its ports of entry” (Mountz 2010: 48).

Other actors benefitted from this crisis as well. Non-EU member states became allies: those willing to collaborate received both money and preferential trade agreements in exchange. The military and security industrial complex provided equipment to patrol, monitor, and manage the movement of people across international borders. Emerging EU agencies such as FRONTEX also benefitted from this fear, gaining legitimacy and seeing their mandate enlarge despite member states’ reluctance to give away more of their sovereign power. Inter-governmental organizations (IGOs) like the International Organization for Migration (IOM) or the International Labour Organization (ILO) expanded their area of influence thanks to the EU’s interest in this part of the world, becoming key players in the design and implementation of temporary managed migration programs in West Africa. Finally, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as the Red Cross / Red Crescent acted as service providers on behalf of – and were financially supported by – receiving EU states.

These interested parties benefited from a perceived “African threat” built up over the years thanks to the contributions of disingenuous policy makers (such as Gaddafi, and others slightly more subtle in their public pronouncements) willing to reap a profit from using migration for electoral purposes. The media also chose to focus on the tragic, the abnormal, and the morbid. Finally, researchers were not free of blame in the exaggeration of this phenomenon. To cite just one example, the authors of a report co-published by the IOM and the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) claimed that between 2006 and 2009 there was a “significant increase of departures to Europe, notably the Canary Islands. Migrants are typically irregular migrants arriving by boat” (IOM and ICMPD 2009, p. 4). This claim is false: between 70 and 80% of Senegalese migrants who reached EU territory during that period entered Spanish territory through a European airport using valid travel documents, mainly tourist visas (Collyer 2007, de Haas 2008). Claims like these contributed to the emergence of the myth of invasion, which in turn became the ideological
foundation for the creation of a militarized and securitized border between West Africa and the EU between 2005 and 2010.

This chapter focuses on national, supra-national, and multi-national responses to the illegal border crossings of Senegalese citizens headed towards Spain between 2005 and 2010. The discussion begins with a general introduction to the strategies adopted by the Spanish government and the EU to stop this migration: a combination of preventive measures, implemented in Senegal; and defensive measures, which contributed to creating a border for the control of international migration where there used to be none. The following sections elaborate a series of such measures: development aid (section 3), managed migration programs (section 4), and the creation of the land and sea borders (section 5). I conclude that the result of these strategies has been a reterritorialization of the border.

5.2 The emergence of a border

Graph 5.1: Spain’s multifaceted strategy to stop unwanted migration from Senegal.

Graph 5.1 (above) introduces the main ideas that will be discussed in this chapter. My argument is that between 2005 and 2010, Spain, with the symbolic and material support of
the EU and in conjunction with other actors, engaged in a multifaceted approach to stop the migration of West African citizens to its territory. This approach involved both preventive and defensive measures. The preventive measures (left bubble) were based on the idea that by improving living conditions at home, potential migrants would have fewer incentives to leave Senegal and the pressure on the border would decrease. This is a controversial hypothesis: some authors have claimed that relative economic development, when coupled with high inequalities at the local and global scale, may promote instead of hinder international migration (de Haas 2005). Nonetheless, Spanish and EU policymakers drafted ambitious development aid programs, launched temporary migration schemes, and encouraged the Senegalese government to offer preferential conditions to private Spanish companies with an eye on the region. NGOs like the Red Cross / Red Crescent and IGOs such as the ILO and the IOM assisted the Spanish government in implementing these measures on the ground.

Preventive and defensive measures were deeply interdependent, as we will see, but the latter (Figure 5.1, right bubble) were much more generously funded (they also continued to be funded after 2011, while preventive initiatives withered from lack of financing). Defensive measures focused on sealing the border. They included the militarization of the sea and land borders, the externalization of border control, and readmission agreements with countries of transit and origin. In summary, the objective was to create a “buffer zone” along West and North Africa to prevent Senegalese migrants from reaching Spanish soil. Experience tells us that land and sea borders cannot be sealed against migration: as has been seen on innumerable occasions, new defences only lead to new strategies on the part of migrants and smugglers (see, for example, the case of boat migration to the coasts of British Columbia, in Canada, or the Mexico – US border). Nonetheless, these measures were eagerly adopted by national and EU institutions, notably the Spanish Ministries of Interior and Foreign Affairs and the EU Commission. New agencies like FRONTEX were created, at least partially, in response to the “threat” of migration; while others such as the Spanish Guardia Civil underwent intense transformations to better deal with it. Defensive measures also involved a
myriad of private and publicly-funded organizations, including the military and security industry and NGOs such as the Red Cross.

As a result, by 2010 the EU border had expanded significantly from the line drawn on the map (the “modern” border) to become a large region (a “post-modern” border) where black people’s presence and movements were surveilled, limited, and often punished in unprecedented ways. In this sense, a respondent stated that while in 2005 “we could say that the border with the South [i.e., Africa] was in [the Straights of] Gibraltar, today we can place the borders of the EU in Mali and Mauritania” (CIMADE, interview, January 2010).

Other measures were crucial in this multi-faceted strategy to stop migration from Senegal to Spain, but they will not be elaborated in this chapter. They include carrier sanctions, the disregard of international laws regarding the protection of refugees and asylum seekers, the emergence of shared databases, and others (Crépeau, 2011).

5.3 Preventive strategies (I): development aid

I first became interested in the relationship between development aid and migration control after a visit to Saint Louis, a city close to the Mauritanian border in northern Senegal. I found the logo of the Spanish development agency, the AECID (Agencia Española de Cooperación al Desarrollo) virtually every time I turned a corner. The downtown area, declared a World Heritage site by UNESCO in 2000, had several historical buildings being restored with Spanish public funds. A conference on “illegal immigration” (sic) was taking place, also funded by the AECID. Red Cross vehicles were deployed in the area to transport volunteers and workers of the Rosso Camp for the processing and return of illegal land and sea migrants to their cities of origin (if they were Senegalese) or to the border closer to their country of citizenship (if they were not); these vehicles also bore the AECID logo. Finally, in a conversation with a group of young men I learned that Spanish development aid had opened a school to train Senegalese youth in building-related trades: those who performed best would be taken to Spain as workers, they said. I decided to investigate.
The Director of the AECID Bureau in Dakar denied, vehemently, any relationship that may have existed between the Agency’s actions in the country and the control of migration to Spain. When asked if she was certain that there was no relation between the two, she answered in an exasperated tone:

It is not my opinion, it is a matter of fact: Spain’s development strategy in Senegal was defined prior to the outset of migration, there’s no relation between the two. Everything was defined in the 2004-2008 Plan África, and in the new document, the 2009-2012 [Plan África] priority areas have barely changed (AECID 1, interview, February 2010; my translation).

This respondent had been Director of the Dakar office since 2007, which may account for her belief that the first Plan África was drafted in 2004; the document was in fact published in 2006 (Plan África 2006-2008, MAEC 2006). In this document, Senegal was defined as a “país de interés prioritario” (top priority country) in the continent, together with Equatorial Guinea, Angola, Mozambique Namibia, Mali, and Mauritania. Regarding Spain’s motives, the authors wrote:

the main goal [of Spanish development efforts in these countries] is to fight against poverty and achieve established development goals, [efforts] which in some cases come hand in hand with a peculiar sensibility on the part of Spanish society due to historic and cultural links. (...) [These countries] have become privileged recipients of Spanish development aid as well as key partners in the areas of commerce and fishing. Besides these reasons, in the cases of Senegal, Mali and Mauritania, there are other factors linked to the need to regulate migratory flows (MAEC 2006, p. 44; my translation, emphasis added).

Contrary to the respondent’s assertions, then, the first Plan África in fact put an extraordinary emphasis on migration whenever Senegal was mentioned, to the point that it

59 Before then, the MAEC (Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, within which the AECID is located) had published the Plan Director 2005-2008 (MAEC 2005). Senegal was mentioned only once in the document, although it was to place it as a “priority country” for Spanish development efforts. No specific actions or projects were elaborated upon in the Plan Director.
seemed the control of illegal boat migration was the driving force of Spanish intervention in the country, followed by a promotion of Spanish private economic interests (particularly the fishing industry). Defining migration control as a “priority issue” (MAEC 2006, p. 118), the Plan includes an entire section titled “Fomento de la cooperación para ordenar los flujos migratorios” (Increasing cooperation to manage migration flows, section III, pages 70 to 76). This section highlights the need to promote bilateral agreements with countries of origin and transit of undocumented migrants. To foster this cooperation, funds were earmarked within the framework of the 2006 Ministerial Euro-African Conference on Migration and Development to promote the “Europeanization of migration policies” in Africa. More specifically, these funds aimed to advance Spain’s diplomatic and political presence in countries of origin and transit; increase the “Fondos de Fronteras, Retorno e Integración de los Inmigrantes” (Funds for border control, return, and integration of migrants); and facilitate the readmission of undocumented African citizens to their countries of origin. This first Plan África further underlined the centrality of migration control as part of the AECID’s mandate by financially supporting the opening of a Bureau of Defence (“Agregaduría de Defensa”) in Dakar. Migration control in Senegal was therefore a key focus of a document that also targeted the country for an increase in political cooperation, the promotion of investment and commercial exchanges, the advancement of Spanish language and culture, and participation in the post-conflict economic recovery of the Casamance region.

A later version of the Plan África (Plan África 2009-2012, MAEC 2009) presented a more holistic vision of Spanish cooperation in Senegal. New development goals included judiciary collaboration to fight against corruption among the political class and promote democracy. The Plan mentioned the cancellation of 65.5 million Euros of Senegal’s external debt to Spain, increased investment in the country, and the creation of new programs to foster scientific and scholarly exchanges between the two countries. However, migration continued to be a priority area:

“Europeanization” is discussed below.
Spain and Senegal’s intense cooperation in the area of migration will continue through (...) the fight against illegal immigration [inmigración ilegal], in particular through the FRONTEX system and the SEAHORSE network;\(^1\) the promotion of legal migration through the establishment of procedures for the hiring of workers at origin, specifically in the sectors of agriculture and fishing; and the creation of new initiatives in the area of migration and development [use of remittances and co-development] (MAEC 2009, p.96, my translation).

Evidence shows these claims were followed through. For example, the document cites four ongoing projects as successes in Spain’s actions in Senegal. The first one involved the funding of trade schools in Saint Louis. These were the schools I had heard about in my first visit: in them, young people (all men, with a couple of exceptions) received training in trades related to construction and restoration, from masonry to electricity. The targets of these programs, according to the coordinator, were young men from the city and its surroundings, usually fishermen, considered prime candidates for illegal migration by sea. Despite students’ insistence otherwise, there were no plans to recruit these men to work in Spain: the goal was to provide them with the tools to find employment and stay in Saint Louis, where they could contribute to preservation of the city’s derelict architectural heritage.

The second project, also in the same region, was a farm where migrants deported from Spain were trained and, hopefully, integrated into the labour market as agricultural workers. This project took place in the framework of project REVA (Retour Vers l’Agriculture), whereby the Senegalese government aimed to modernize the primary sector and offer employment opportunities to young people. The third project quoted in the document was FORPEX (program for the professional training, selection, and hiring of maritime workers at origin), which took place in Dakar: it targeted young fishermen who were trained in modern (as opposed to artisanal) fishing techniques, and eventually became part of a body of workers that could be (but rarely were) employed by Spanish private companies with

\(^1\) The SEAHORSE project is a network for the exchange of information on the departure of migrants from African coasts via satellite.
permits to fish in Senegalese waters. Finally, a fourth project involved the creation of a school for vulnerable minors; besides the name, there was no information to be found about it in the Plan África and the AECID workers that I interviewed had never heard about it.

With the exception of the director of the AECID delegation in Dakar then, and consistent with the direction established by the 2006-2008 and the 2009-2012 África Plans, all other stakeholders both in Senegal and in Spain saw development aid as an integral part of the government’s attempt to stop illegal migration. These respondents (government officials and representatives of IGOs and NGOs) also saw both versions of the Plan África in the broader context of the EU, particularly in relation to the 9th and 10th EDF priorities (EC 2005), also known as the Cotonou Agreement and the Revised Cotonou Agreement. These linked EU development aid in ACP (African, Caribbean, and Pacific) countries to Member States’ demands in the area of migration (EC 2005, article 13).

5.3.1 Criticisms of Spain’s development actions in Senegal

A first criticism that I heard during my interviews was that the Plan África, although ambitious, did not take into account the institutional, economic, and social context of Senegal. In other words, the projects proposed were poorly designed. Furthermore, budgeting was faulty and funding was not always made available, which resulted in shortages in some areas, waste in others, and much money going to corrupt politicians’ pockets. According to the then director of the IOM offices in Dakar, the main problem was ignorance.

Spain has no idea at all of what Africa is about, I was very surprised ... The Africa Plan is fantastic, but (...) it costs too much, so they were unable to carry it out. (...) On the field the funds were simply never made available, so most of it never actually happened, because they didn’t know anything about Africa. In the end [there was] a lot of good commitment and little results when it came to their plans. Institutionally, it became impossible (IOM, interview, April 2009).
The Plan’s lack of understanding was particularly apparent in the heavily gendered assumptions that it made about Senegalese society. Despite claims (on paper and during the interviews) that empowering women was one of the overarching goals of the agency’s interventions in Senegal, almost without exception specific programs targeted men who fit the profile of a potential undocumented sea migrant. AECID’s interventions in the countryside and coastal areas defined men as heads of the family and thus primary recipients of aid by default, thus ignoring ample evidence that women in this country play key productive roles in agriculture as well as in the fishing sector. The result was that Spain’s development plans in Senegal forced women into the background, further encouraging their economic dependency upon husbands and sons. This is most likely due not to ill will, but to a lack of knowledge about Senegalese society on the part of AECID workers. For example, the person in charge of the gender and development axis at the Dakar office declared that she knew little and did not care much about gender in Senegal (AECID 3, interview, February 2010). This gender-blindness may also be an inheritance of colonial and post-colonial intervention practices that imposed strong assumptions on the role of women in Senegalese rural and peri-urban communities (Moreno Maestro 2008). However, and considering all available evidence, it seems more reasonable to think that Spanish development efforts in Senegal were primarily focused on migration control. Gender did not matter: women were simply victims of collateral damage in Spanish anti-immigration development initiatives in Senegal.

This was precisely the problem with Spanish development plans in Senegal: their primary goal was the promotion of Spain’s national interests in the areas of migration control and national industries; improving the population’s living conditions was a secondary objective. This made it possible to use public development funds to build detention facilities in Mauritania, to cover the costs of a new Defence Bureau in Dakar, or to finance the negotiations that led Senegal to pass and enforce a law on human smuggling (LOI n

62 The FAO, for example, estimates that about 50% of the agricultural force in Sub Saharan African are women (FAO 2011a and 2011b). Senegalese women play key roles in the fishing industry through their processing and selling of fish.
Spain was not unique in approaching development from this self-interested perspective. Article 13 of both the 2000 and the 2005 Cotonou Agreements made development aid conditional on ACP countries’ cooperation in the area of migration control. More specifically, the document established that:

> each of the ACP States shall accept the return of and readmission of any of its nationals who are illegally present on the territory of a Member State of the European Union, at that Member State’s request and without further formalities (EC 2000 and 2005, article 13.d.i)

Indeed, the forced return of undocumented migrants believed to be Senegalese was a rather smooth administrative procedure between 2007, leading one of the Spanish government officials I interviewed to declare Senegal “a model country” in the control of migration towards the EU.

### 5.4 Preventive strategies (II): managed migration schemes

Hundreds of Senegalese migrated to Spain as temporary workers between 2006 and 2008. Together with family reunification and the nominee program, this now defunct scheme was the only possibility for Senegalese nationals to migrate legally during this period. In this section I will discuss how these temporary migration schemes worked on the ground. The role that networks played in shaping participants’ journeys through this channel will be analyzed in greater detail in Chapter 6.

The recruitment of temporary workers took place under the auspices of the Spanish government, which encouraged private companies to hire Senegalese citizens. Policymakers at the MTIN (Ministry of Labour and Immigration) hoped this would motivate the Senegalese government to take back some of its (male) nationals who were undocumented migrants in Spain. This program (initially called *contigente*) was launched in 2006 under

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63 The nominee program allows a company to hire a specific foreigner to work in Spain, provided there are no Spaniards available to fill that position.
interesting circumstances. The following quotes from two senior government officials are useful to understand the context within which these initiatives emerged.

The first group to arrive from Senegal, it was a particular offer that [the MTIN] managed in 2006, just before the end of the year. They were not many, maybe 50 or 60, they were the first ones ever to come from Senegal. At that time, [the government] tried really hard to speed up the visa procedure, because among other things they were negotiating the forced return of some Sub Saharan migrants who were in the Canary Islands. The collective hiring was part of the negotiations. (...) Right before the Christmas break we suddenly received a phone call saying it had to happen. So we sent the applications to the police, and in an hour they had processed them all! Well, maybe it was not an hour, but for sure in the course of a morning. We hired a private courier just to deal with that ... because they had to be hired before the end of the year and we were going on holidays that afternoon! (senior civil servant 2, MTIN, interview, February 2010).

[The first collective recruitment of Senegalese workers in 2006] was a direct reaction to the problem of undocumented sea migration from Senegal. Caldera [Minister of Immigration in 2006] (...) decided to ask companies to hire people from Senegal. He said that it was necessary to encourage legal migration to curb illegal migration, because there was a huge problem with the boats, with people drowning on the way to the Canary Islands, and then of course with forced returns (senior civil servant 3, MTIN, interview, February 2010).

The job offers private companies put forward were for both seasonal and more permanent positions in various sectors. For men, these offers came from companies in construction, fishing, agriculture, and services (as workers in warehouses and supermarkets). Women were channelled primarily towards agriculture, in particular in greenhouses and strawberry fields. They were hired through a very specific procedure.

National legislation established that once a year a tripartite commission including members of the government, employers, and labour unions decided on the number, national origin, and professional qualifications of workers needed to fill certain positions. The offers were defined by sector of activity and the Spanish province where these workers would be hired.
These numbers were an approximation that varied depending on the workers needed at the time of employment. For strawberry pickers, this information was given to the Senegalese government via the Dakar office of the Spanish Labour Bureau (once it was established in 2007; before it went straight to Senegalese authorities). The Senegalese government ran the selection process as it saw fit, with the Spanish government absent from all but the very last round of interviews.

Typically, the Senegalese Ministry of Youth, Leisure and Sports\textsuperscript{64} coordinated the process, which was carried out in various Senegalese regions under lax controls on the part of state-level authorities (CEDEPS, interviews 1, 2 and 3, May-June 2009). Successful candidates then travelled to Dakar to do some paper work and, shortly after, were flown to Spain to work. Spanish companies were required to provide employees with basic training (which not all of them did), cover the costs of transportation to the workplace (often with significant subsidies from the Spanish government) and provide migrants with adequate room, board, and decent working conditions for the duration of their contracts (this requirement was met with varying degrees of success). From the moment migrants boarded their planes they were the responsibility of Spanish authorities and local labour unions.

Policymakers at the MTIN decided that married women with children were preferred for agricultural seasonal work, particularly when it came to strawberry picking. This decision resulted from two main heavily gendered assumptions: first, that women would be more careful than men when handling strawberries; and second, that they would be more likely to return. According to a senior employee at the MTIN,

\begin{quote}
for women who leave their children in Senegal [to engage in seasonal work in Spain], this is a new form of migration that they discover is very good for them, because they can make money without leaving their children behind for long periods of time (senior civil servant 2, MTIN, interview, February 2010; my translation).
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{64} The Ministry responsible changed names several times during the duration of the strawberry pickers’ program.
The decision to privilege women in the selection process was also shaped by previous experiences of a similar program with Morocco. But somewhere along the way this reasoning that women were more likely to return failed, for between 85 and 90% of the Senegalese women recruited as strawberry pickers between 2006 and 2008 stayed in Spain upon the expiration of their permits, becoming undocumented migrants (MTIN, interviews 1, 2, and 3; ILO, interview, January 2010). Respondents who had observed the process closely (Spanish public employees and those working for the IOM and the ILO) blamed corruption in the selection process for this failure.\(^6^5\) A public servant who had helped develop the Moroccan temporary worker program and was, by 2007, in charge of designing and implementing a similar plan in Senegal believed that this was typical of the early stages of such programs in Africa. But the Senegalese manager of a Spanish labour union’s bureau in Dakar thought things were out of control. Recalling a conversation with a group of women who were working as strawberry pickers in Spain, he said:

They told me they had paid a million CFA francs [about $2,000 CAD] to go, others had paid half a million [about $1,000 CAD], to the people in charge of the selection process. Imagine: one of them was 9 months pregnant when she left: she gave birth at the Madrid airport!\(^6^6\) (laughs). You don’t believe me? Ask [contact]! (labour union, Dakar, May 2009; my translation)

Since in many cases these women’s goal was not really to work in agriculture but to enter the EU, some never made it to the fields: they disappeared at the airport. In most cases women ran away after some weeks of work; that is the case of Ana, discussed in detail in Chapter 6. The two participants who had been part of the *contingente*, interviewed both in

\(^6^5\) I would argue that there were at least two more factors contributing to this failure. The first one was Spanish bureaucrats’ underestimation of the pull of international migration for Senegalese women: these government workers made the mistake of thinking that, because most land and sea migrants were men, women were less attracted by the money and social prestige that international migration entailed. The second factor was officials’ ignorance of mothering practices in Senegal, which allowed biological mothers to leave their offspring under the care of other women in their household without being stigmatized or feeling guilty for it (see discussion in Chapter 8).

\(^6^6\) One of the requirements to be eligible for this program was not to be pregnant. The fact that this woman had a full-term baby as she got off the plane meant that she had bribed everyone along the way, from the doctor who signed her health certificate to the people running the selection process.
Spain (where they were by then undocumented migrants) and in Senegal, described very hard working conditions and abuse on part of the employers, including sexual abuse. These two participants, as well as other women who had migrated as temporary workers with whom I had informal conversations, did not know what the contract they signed said before their departure, either because they did not have access to the document or because it was given to them only in Spanish (this was confirmed by an respondent in the ILO; however Spanish and Senegalese government officials denied it). Once in Spain, labour unions were not always successful mediators between workers and employers, due in large part to the language gap. Government and labour union representatives blamed these shortcomings on the newness of the program.

The case of Dalanda illustrated many of the problems in the execution of the temporary migration program. She was a young woman from Casamance, selected as part for the 2008 contingente to work as a strawberry picker in the province of Huelva. She was very straightforward about her situation:

D: I am single and have no children, but I’m the head of my household because my parents are not around. I’m the breadwinner in this family (...). Before leaving for Spain I worked braiding hair, as a referee in soccer tournaments and did other odd jobs. I didn’t have any experience working in agriculture. (...) We didn’t receive much information. For example, I thought I would be picking apples. We were also told we would be making 3 million CFA francs [about $6,300 CAD]. We had no information about working hours, concrete earnings ... nothing, before we left. This is my contract [she produces a document in Spanish]. We received it after working there for a week, before that we didn’t get any papers with information about our work there.

I: But this is in Spanish ... were you ever given a translation of this document?

D: No. I still don’t understand what it says. I know some of that is taxes we paid to the government.

I: Did you know other women who went to Spain to work as strawberry pickers?

D: Yes, they didn’t have any experience working in agriculture either. Most of them stayed there [in Spain]. Others went to Portugal, Italy, France. Someone from the
Senegalese government came to explain to us that it was dangerous to stay without documents [a residence/ work permit].

I: Do you speak Spanish?

D: No.

I: And was there an interpreter with you?

D: No, there wasn’t.

I: So what happened if you had any trouble with your employer?

D: You had to find your own way. Sometimes the unions came, but nobody spoke French and we didn’t speak Spanish, so we couldn’t talk to them (Dalanda, interview, May 2009).

How did women like Dalanda end up in Spain, if they did not meet the requirements specified by the Spanish government? Invariably, the answer was through their connections. The networks that made this possible will be analyzed in detail Chapter 6. Suffice to say here that temporary migration schemes did not yield the results expected by the Spanish government: they contributed to creating a legal channel for the migration of well-connected Senegalese citizens, but they also fed the (at the time) growing undocumented foreign population in the country. For Senegalese women who wanted to migrate, temporary migration became one of the very few options available. The door would close again in 2009, when the number of offers for temporary workers plummeted due to the global economic crisis. Demand for Senegalese agricultural workers disappeared altogether.

5.4.1 Other criticisms

The program that took Senegalese migrant women to Spain to work in agriculture was part of a larger commitment to legal temporary migration that was seriously flawed in ways that were the Spanish government’s responsibility. For example, there were no protection measures for workers once in Spain, and long-term plans for the investment of migrants’
earnings once they were back in Senegal (supposedly one of the key aspects to improve living standards and prevent future unwanted migrations) were non-existent. These shortcomings were inherent to the program’s design: they had nothing to do with Senegalese institutional capacities.

The argument that Senegalese civil servants were corrupt, although valid, took the load off Spanish policymakers, who often tried to bend the rules for the sake of advancing bilateral cooperation in the area of migration control. A case at hand was the speedy processing of visas for temporary workers, mentioned above by two workers in the MTIN. There is also evidence that these negotiations led to the deportation to Senegal of migrants who were not nationals of that country, although there are no official documents to prove it. More surprising was the attempt of Spanish policymakers to circumvent the laws of the Schengen space. According to a respondents from the IOM, a key partner in the design and implementation of the temporary visa programs for agricultural workers, this is what happened:

The Spanish government believed [that managed migration would be an answer to irregular migration]. But they didn’t necessarily start the right way, because at the time Senegal was in pre-election period, so it was hard for the [Senegalese] government to accept the forced return of irregular migrants. The youth had elected the government [in the previous elections], so the legal channels they were willing to negotiate were only for those who had been forcibly returned. They [Spanish policymakers] agreed, until they realized that it was actually impossible, because once they [migrants] are returned, they’re not allowed to enter the Schengen territory for another 5 years. In other words, they reserved the place for legal migration to those men who had entered [Spain] illegally. Because this was impossible, though, [the Spanish government] passed this entitlement to a person of the returned migrant’s choice. There was such nonsense in the process! [There were] migrants selling their spots, plus the whole thing was not carefully organized, so there were a lot of strange situations like migrants who disappeared or were not informed and others who didn’t have the professional qualifications for the position (IOM, interview, April 2009)
The ILO was also involved in the process. A respondent from this organization was also taken aback by this plan, and agreed that it was a result of returned migrants’ powerful lobbying in the electoral campaign:

They [forcibly returned migrants] were about 13,000 people, they had an amazing organizational capacity. This is why at the beginning, with the first contracts, 66 percent or in other words two thirds of those who were pre-selected to go to Spain as temporary workers came from the lists of returned migrants. This of course makes no sense, because a returned migrant [repatriado] is forbidden to enter the Schengen space for 5 years [following his repatriation]. What they did then, they allowed the returned migrant to nominate someone within his family to be part of the lists of pre-selected candidates [for the temporary migration program]. The remaining 33 percent of the candidates were proposed by [two Senegalese government agencies]. The problem is that this system makes no sense. No sense at all (ILO, interview, February 2010; my translation).

In fact, it is shocking that the Spanish government even tried to implement this program against the advice of both the ILO and the IOM (who were involved in the process as consultants) and the legislation regulating the entrance of non-EU citizens into the Schengen space. Could it be that policymakers knew it would never happen, but proposed it as a way to trick the Senegalese government into accepting that first group of forcibly returned migrants? Or was this program an honest attempt to meet the demands of both Spanish and Senegalese voters at that specific point in time, when migration was a central issue for the citizenries of both countries? When I asked two senior officials at the MTIN (the ministry in charge) they could not (or would not) not answer.

A more fundamental problem loomed over the success of the temporary worker program. As in the case of development aid, it is not clear that improved living conditions decreases pressures to migrate. Although policymakers in different migrant-receiving countries have embraced temporary and in particular circular migration as a response to irregular migration, the causal relationship between the two is not clear. According to some stakeholders intimately familiar with the rationale and the workings of temporary migration programs, “governments believe that by opening the legal channels there will be a decrease
in irregular migration. That is a mistake: is has never worked and I don’t believe it will for the EU” (IOM, interview, April 2009).

5.5 Defensive strategies (I): the creation of a border between Senegal and Spain

In the previous sections I have presented some of the main strategies aimed at keeping potential migrants in Senegal. Although important, this was the minor component – in terms of both the resources and the attention they received – of Spain’s strategy to target the illegal and unwanted arrivals of Senegalese citizens between 2005 and 2010. Most of the efforts went into securing the border and the transit countries that these migrants had to cross in order to enter Spanish territory. In the following pages I discuss the main actors involved in this strategy and the processes of securitization that took place along the land and sea borders, which resulted in the creation of a buffer zone for the control of unwanted migration from West Africa to the EU.

5.5.1 Actors involved in the militarization of the border

The mobilization of state security forces and military equipment along the Southern European border required the involvement of a variety of actors. Some of them existed prior to the creation of the border itself (e.g., the Spanish Guardia Civil) while others followed it (the European Patrol Networks); some were supra-national (FRONTEX) and some depended fully on state structures (the Spanish Ministry of Interior). Some of these actors were not even European.

In Spain, two actors were of particular importance in the surveillance and control of the border: the Cuerpo Nacional de Policía (National Police) and the Guardia Civil. Both depend on the Ministry of Interior, however while the Guardia Civil is a military force the National Police is a civilian security force. Each of these two bodies had different (and to a large degree, complementary) responsibilities regarding migration control at the border.
In 2010, the National Commissioner for Immigration Affairs and Documentation ("Comisaría General de Extranjería y Fronteras") existed within the structure of the National Police. Its responsibilities included the control of smuggling, trafficking, and document fraud ("Unidad Central contra las Redes de Inmigración y Falsedades Documentales"); border control at designated entry points ("Unidad Central de Fronteras"); expulsions and removals ("Unidad Central de Expulsiones y Repatriaciones"); and relations with EU and non-EU state security forces in the area of migration ("Unidad de Relaciones Comunitarias y Bilaterales"). Most migrants first came into contact with the Police when crossing the border at one of the designated ports of entry at airports, sea ports, or land checkpoints. After that, foreigners interacted often with the Police: lacking an agency akin to Citizenship and Immigration Canada, the Spanish Police force was responsible for processing asylum, residence, and citizenship applications and the issuing of travel and immigration documents (visas, residence permits, and so on). Finally, following their mandate to ensure citizen’s safety, the Police were also in charge of checking foreigners’ legal status in urban areas.67

While the National Police played an important role in ensuring the integrity of the legislation within the territorial limits of the state, the Guardia Civil was the main player when it came to the control of the border. This force had a vast mandate that often required

67 Although there was plenty of evidence suggesting that racial profiling is used during routine checks in public spaces, prior to 2010 there was much debate about whether or not this practice should be made illegal. In a 2001 Court case (Rosalind Williams v. Spain), the Tribunal Constitucional concluded that “certain physical or ethnic characteristics may be taken into consideration (...) as reasonable indications that the person who shows them is not a national” (cited in Romero Bachiller 2007:18). This case was also taken to the UN Human Rights Committee, who concluded that “physical or ethnic characteristics of the persons targeted should not be considered as indicative of their possibly illegal situation in the country. Nor should identity checks be carried out so that only people with certain physical characteristics or ethnic backgrounds are targeted. This would not only adversely affect the dignity of those affected, but also contribute to the spread of xenophobic attitudes among the general population; it would also be inconsistent with an effective policy to combat racial discrimination” (UN 2009). Despite this decision, it has been claimed that internal rules regulating the patrolling of the territory in search of persons breaching immigration continued to result in the racial profiling of the population (Romero Bachiller 2007; personal communication, June 25, 2010). Although several NGOs have denounced this situation and brought it to the attention of the Ombudsman on several occasions, there was no political will to address the issue. As Amnesty International noted in its 2010 report on human rights around the world, Spain remained “one of only four EU countries that do not have a national equality body producing statistics on complaints about racism. Spain is also one of just six EU member states that do not collect or publish official data on racist crimes” (AI 2010: 300).
collaboration with foreign security forces. In the area of migration control from Africa, a key responsibility of the *Guardia Civil* was the management of the SIVE (“Sistema Integrado de Vigilancia Exterior” or Integrated System of External Surveillance) The SIVE, which was created in 2002 to patrol the Straights of Gibraltar, experienced a massive expansion by 2010 – a growth triggered largely by the increase of illegal border crossings from Africa (see Map 5.2). This system served to detect, identify, locate, and intercept Clandestine Transnational Agents (CTAs, Andreas 2003) smuggled through the border, both persons and goods (mainly drugs). Radar, video cameras and infra-red cameras installed in fixed and mobile control units detected illegal vessels at sea. This information was then transmitted to the regional control centre of the *Guardia Civil* and used to deploy personnel and apprehend the material and people involved (see Figure 5.2).

Map 5.1: Expansion of the SIVE from 2002 to 2010.
However, as highlighted by General Lieutenant Francisco Gabella Maroto (2004), the SIVE was only one among many new responsibilities that the Guardia Civil assumed in the area of migration since the year 2000. The need to control the external border of the EU triggered sweeping changes in the internal organization of this institution, including the creation of a Coastal Border Unit (“Servicio de Costas y Fronteras”) and an unprecedented growth of the Marine Unit (“Servicio Marítimo”). Among the Guardia Civil’s responsibilities were the management of collaborative operations with countries of origin and transit of undocumented migrants (i.e., Operation Atlantis with Mauritania as well as other joint land and sea patrol efforts in Morocco, Mauritania, Senegal, Gambia and Cape Verde); the coordination of EU-led operations in the region (i.e., Operation SEAHORSE, which tracks ships via satellite, and the European border surveillance system EUROSUR); the organization of seminars on border control for Spanish, European, and non-European officers; and the publication of handbooks on border control practices. In other words, while:
it is the responsibility of the National Police to control the entry and exit of migrants in designated ports and, in general, [to manage the migration regime in the country], the Guardia Civil is in charge of controlling irregular migration in terms of surveillance of coastlines, borders, sea ports, airports, and territorial waters (Gabella Maroto 2004, p. 4; my translation).

When carrying out their mission at the border with West Africa, often the Guardia Civil acted in collaboration with FRONTEX. FRONTEX is the European agency for the management of operational cooperation at the external borders of the member states of the EU. Created in 2004, the origins of the agency can be traced back to the Dublin Accords (2000, 2001) regarding the sharing of responsibilities regarding asylum among EU Member States; the Seville Summit (2002), which regulated the common management of migration flows in the Union; and the framework of European security policy established within the framework of The Hague Program (2004).

By 2010 the FRONTEX mandate included the coordination of “operational cooperation between Member States in the field of management of external borders;” the provision of assistance to Member States in the training of national border guards; the elaboration of risk analysis reports; the follow up of “research relevant for the control and surveillance of external borders;” support to “Member States in circumstances requiring increased technical and operational assistance at external borders,” and the provision of help “in organizing joint return operations” (EC 2004). To carry out these tasks in West Africa, FRONTEX has been deeply involved in the militarization of the sea border around the Canary Islands.

5.5.2 Other non-state actors: the Red Cross

Other actors involved in shaping this segment of the EU border were NGOs and other humanitarian organizations. Through their criticisms and their key role as watchdogs of state institutions in the region, organizations like Doctors Without Borders, the CIMADE, Amnesty International, and the COFLEC (Collective of women against clandestine migration) put state actions under public scrutiny. These NGOs’ main criticisms will be
elaborated upon in a later section. Here, I want to highlight the Red Cross / Red Crescent’s involvement (itself not an NGO sensu stricto) in the processes of detention and deportation of migrants to Senegal.

Between 2005 and 2010 (and to this day) boat migrants detected when trying to enter EU territory via the Canary Islands were deflected to other African countries whenever possible. More often than not, boats were handed to Mauritanian authorities, both because this was the closest coastline from where boats were first intercepted and because of the well-established collaboration between Mauritania and Spain in the area of migration. If the boats were already in Spanish waters or deportation to Mauritania was not possible, the migrants were escorted to the Canary Islands. After the Guardia Civil, migrants first contact was with Red Cross volunteers. They received migrants at the harbour, gave them blankets, food, clothes, and accompanied them to a detention facility run by the Spanish government. Whenever detention centres (“Centro de Internamiento de Extranjeros” or CIEs) were over full capacity – which happened frequently during this period – migrants were flown to Madrid, where they could be either deported or released because no agreements had been reached for their deportation and the maximum period for detention had expired.

Figure 5.2: Migrants crossing the river Senegal at the border with Mauritania. The picture was taken from the Red Cross processing centre in Rosso, Senegal. Image courtesy of the Senegalese Red Cross / Half Crescent.
If they were deported to Mauritania, they were then held by the country’s state security forces and eventually taken to the border with Senegal, together with other land migrants and in general those people Mauritanian state authorities wanted to get rid of (RC 3 & 4, interview, March 2009; AI, interview, February 2009). Once at the border, the police would put them on a ferry (see Figure 5.3) and send them to the other shore of the river, where the Senegalese police took them to a walled lot where Senegalese Red Cross volunteers processed them. Migrants were never in this processing facility (the “Rosso Camp,” pictured in Figure 5.4) for more than 24 hours (RC 1, interview, February 2010). The Camp, opened in 2006, was funded by the Spanish AECID, managed by the Spanish and Senegalese Red Cross, supervised by Spanish and Senegalese state security forces, and used by the governments of three countries: Senegal, Spain, and Mauritania. To what extent then was the Red Cross / Red Crescent not an independent organization, but one working to meet the demands of its employer, the state? The head of the Senegalese Red Crescent agreed they had little room to negotiate when it came to their role regarding forcibly returned migrants in the country (RC 1, interview, March 2009). His Spanish counterpart, on the
other hand, admitted that the organization’s position was slightly paradoxical, but insisted they did not see themselves as surrogate border guards. According to him, the involvement of the Red Cross ensured that migrants were not abused by West African authorities; that they received clean clothes, some food, pocket money, had access to basic health services; and that migrants could call home while they were at the Rosso Camp, which was basically a barren piece of land with some showers and tents surrounded by a 4 meter brick wall (RC 2, interview, April 2009).

5.5.3 Making the sea border, one operation at a time

The control of the EU’s sea border was a flagship project for the Union and in particular for FRONTEX. Spain (like Italy or Greece) was considered a gateway into the EU for undocumented migrants due to the borders they share with African countries – borders said to embody the largest differences in terms of wealth, demographics, and political rights anywhere in the world (King and Zontini 2000).

In the case of Spain, between 2005 and 2010 interventions on the Mediterranean and Atlantic borders were modelled upon those used to curb previous waves of migration from the Maghreb region. The sea border has been critical since the mid 1980s, when the legal figure of the immigrant was first created in Spanish legislation (LOE 7/1985) and border control became an issue in Spanish politics as a result of the country’s integration into the EU. At that time, sea migrants came mainly from Morocco and Algeria using pateras to cross the few kilometres that separate Africa from the Iberian Peninsula. The early to mid 1990s saw the peak of the “patera fever,” which particularly affected the southernmost county of Cadiz.

68 A *patera* is a vessel of any kind used for the purposes of smuggling people or drugs by sea into Southern Spain through the Straits of Gibraltar, including inflatable boats (zodias), wooden or fibreglass fishing boats, and even pedal boats. Unlike the boats used to reach the Canary Islands (known as *pirogues* or *cayucos*) a *patera* is shallow and not meant to spend long periods of time at sea.
Patera migration resulted in increased surveillance of both sea and coastal areas, a reinforcement of the perimeters of Ceuta and Melilla, and a gradual deployment of high technology to deter, detect, and intercept undocumented migrants (for example, the SIVE was a product of this phenomenon). While the first efforts to seal the border involved only or mostly Spain, after the turn of the 21st century the Straits of Gibraltar became a testing ground for EU cooperation in the area of maritime border control, as seen in Operation Ulysses, the first multi-national EU border control operation following the 2002 Seville Summit (Andreas 2003). FRONTEX first got involved in the area through its operation Indalo (a continuation of previous efforts carried out by the Spanish government). According to official sources this operation has, thanks to the cooperation of the seven countries involved,69 “reached truly spectacular rates in the apprehension of boats [carrying] illegal migrants” (Olea 2009: 9).


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69 Spain, Portugal, Italy, France, Germany, Belgium and Morocco.

70 Until 2006, data for the Straight of Gibraltar does not include migrants detained in the territories of Ceuta and Melilla.
In 2005, following a dramatic increase in the number of arrivals from Western Africa (see Graph 5.1) control of illegal border crossings at sea extended to the Canary Islands, a destination particularly popular among Senegalese boat migrants because the journey was shorter, more direct, and less heavily surveilled than other routes. This resulted in the launching of a series of FRONTEX-led joint operations called HERA in 2006. HERA’s targets were large, high capacity traditional wooden fishing boats (called cayucos in Spanish and pirogues in French). The HERA operations were highly successful at legitimizing the involvement of FRONTEX in the surveillance of the external borders of the EU – which were, at the same time, under the sovereignty of member states such as Spain.

HERA was the largest and longest-standing sea operation led by FRONTEX in 2010 (it has since then become a permanent operation). It was cited by both the agency and the Spanish government to explain the plummeting number of migrants arriving to the Canary Islands (from 31,618 in 2006 to 9,181 in 2008 and 196 in 2010, according to MTIN 2008a, 2010b; see graph 5.1). Analysts also pointed to the economic crisis or the lack of employment opportunities in Spain as the main reasons for the sudden decrease in the number of departures from West Africa to the Canary Islands (FRONTEX 2009a, IOM 2010). Meanwhile, the number of migrants who have died or managed to avoid these controls remains unknown (Collyer 2007).

5.5.4 Externalization and the creation of a buffer zone for the control of land migration

The militarization of the sea border relied on cooperation with countries in West and North Africa, mainly Senegal, Mauritania, and Morocco. Likewise, cooperation was crucial to control land migration: Spain and the EU sought the support of governments with sovereign power in the spaces that migrants travelled through in order to reach the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla. Partnership with these governments was also crucial for the deportation of migrants found to be undocumented in Spain, and those intercepted when trying to reach
Spanish territory without permission to do so. The result was a partial and largely formal process of europeanization of laws and procedures in the area of migration control in these countries. Europeanization is defined as:

processes of construction, diffusion and institutionalization of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, ‘ways of doing things,’ and shared beliefs and norms which are first defined and consolidated in the EU policy process and then incorporated in the logic of domestic discourse, political structures and public policies (Featherstone and Radaelli 2003, quoted in Jones 2006: 417).

Europeanization was a priority for Spanish development initiatives in West Africa during these years. But neither Europeanization nor the larger process of cooperation within which it was embedded were uniform or seamless, particularly since migration was (and will always be) an ever-changing, dynamic phenomenon.

The main crisis in the protection of the land border involving Senegalese (and other West African and Asian) undocumented migrants took place in the Fall of 2005, at the site where the fences that separate Morocco and Spain (and thus Africa and Europe) are located. As tension increased in the forest on the Moroccan side of the fence where migrants had been camping for months, a series of mass attempts to climb over the double razor-wire fences with makeshift ladders took place, involving up to 500 to 600 migrants at a time (El Mundo, 2005).

Since the existing razor-wire did not seem to be a strong enough deterrent for migrants, on several occasions Spanish and Moroccan authority forces opened fire (live ammunition as well as rubber bullets) on the men as they approached to climb the fences. As a result, at least five people died in October 2005, although to this day it is not clear whose forces shot the bullets that killed them. Other were severely injured or died due to razor-wire related wounds (El Mundo, 2005). Spanish geographer Ferrer Gallardo (2007, 2008, 2011) has analyzed the evolution of Spanish-Moroccan cooperation along this border in great detail. According to Gallardo, before migrants started storming the fences around Ceuta and
Melilla in 2005, 18.3% of their perimeter was protected with a double fence topped with razor wire. At that time there were roughly 2,000 Spanish officers deployed at the fence, about two thirds policemen and the remainder under the authority of the Guardia Civil. They were assisted by video cameras, microphones, and infra-red cameras. Surveillance on the Moroccan side was much more feeble (Ferrer Gallardo 2008). Following the 2005 events, the Spanish government signed a contract with private security company Proytesa to raise a new 20 million Euro anti-migrant fence. The structure (also known as “tridimensional sirga” or “3D cord”, pictured in Figure 5.5) was to be placed between the two existing fences. The 3D cord was designed to alert the Guardia Civil (who in turn alerted Moroccan authorities) of people approaching the fence and make the crossing impossible. Besides, blinding lights and high-pressure water jets were to be aimed at the Moroccan side of the fence to make jumping over the fence physically impossible (Ferrer Gallardo 2008). To date, this high-tech fence has only been placed in the Melilla perimeter. During my visit to the Ceuta fence I saw nothing similar to this, although the sheer number of security forces deployed on both the Spanish and the Moroccan side of the border was staggering.

The 2005 events also started some cooperative cross-border arrangements that were still used in 2010. The first practice was mass deportations from Spain to Morocco. Those who succeeded in crossing the land border in 2005 were more often than not returned en masse to Moroccan authorities through doors on the fence without examining their individual cases, in clear discordance with the principle of non-refoulement; there were asylum seekers and status refugees among these migrants (AI 2005, Collyer 2007). The second practice was mass deportations to the Moroccan border: Moroccan authorities began sending Sub Saharan migrants caught when trying to cross the border or during police raids to the Algerian and the Mauritanian borders by bus (BBC, 2005; Tremlett, 2005). Migrants receiving this treatment included children, pregnant women, and elderly persons alike.

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71 According to the IOM, this is a “[p]rinciple in international refugee law that prohibits States from returning refugees in any manner whatsoever to countries or territories in which their lives or freedom may be threatened” (IOM 2011, 68).
Without water, food, incommunicado, and stuck between two state forces willing to fire on them if they attempted to enter either territory, they took a perilous journey through the desert; thousands died this way (Doctors without Borders, 2005 and 2010; del Grande 2008). In some rare cases where international attention put the Moroccan government under the spotlight, migrants were flown to their countries of origin (BBC, 2005). Despite this, the EU and FRONTEX continue to argue that more cooperation with Morocco is needed in order to stop illegal migration from Africa, particularly in the area of readmission agreements (FRONTEX 2012).

Figure 5.4: The “3D cord” in the Melilla fence. Photograph by José Palazón, reproduced with permission from the author.

5.5.5 Beyond the Spanish-Moroccan land border: surveillance of transit spaces and readmission agreements

The Moroccan government took other measures to assist the EU in patrolling its external borders. Among these actions, there was an increased surveillance of the country’s internal territory, which resulted in a heightened vulnerability of black African migrants and asylum seekers (AI 2008, Migreurop 2010). Other West African countries of origin and destination
were also involved in the creation of a buffer zone for the control of unwanted migration supposedly headed towards Europe. In the case of Senegalese migrants, controls in Senegalese and Mauritanian territory placed major obstacles to their journey by land.

Bringing these governments on board was a huge challenge for Spanish policymakers, who only began working in the region in 2005. Among the obstacles to be overcome they found a dysfunctional institutional context and lack of adequate skills, infrastructure, and logistical support. Spanish officials tried to address some of these absences through the extremely ambitious, yet largely underfunded, development program for the region (*Plan África* 2004-2008 and 2009-2012, discussed above). But it seems that when engaging in negotiations with regional governments, these officials failed to grasp the subtleties of local politics and the basic principles governing international migration in the region. This of course made negotiations extremely difficult.

Despite these problems, Spain managed to reach *ad hoc* agreements with countries of origin and transit. Cooperation with Senegal and Mauritania was lively ever since the onset of the migration crisis. In a phone interview in late 2007, a high-positioned official in the MTIN assessed this collaboration in very positive terms: “Senegal has been ideal, very accommodating of our demands to have them assists us with border control and also very open to having us over there” (senior official 1, MTIN Madrid, December 2007). For example, Senegal passed and enforced a law criminalizing human trafficking and smuggling (*LOI n 2005-06 du mai 2005*). Participants (both migrants and smugglers) often cited this as the reason why small local entrepreneurs stopped smuggling migrants into the Canary Islands; after the legislation was passed, boat migration became a lucrative business for international criminal networks.

The surveillance of Senegal and Mauritania’s national spaces was financed by Spanish and European funds. These funds were used to train and hire personnel, purchase surveillance
equipment, and build detention facilities, as well as other initiatives. As one interviewee put it, in the case of Mauritania:

The 10th EU EDF destined 8m Euros to Mauritania in 3 years to enable the state to put in place a new migration policy that will be more restrictive regarding the entry and stay of migrants. (...) When you go to Nouadhibou, you constantly see the Guardia Civil everywhere on the road. The Spanish government has assisted in the reconstruction of a school in Nouadhibou to make it into a detention centre that is not legal.72 Spanish cooperation money finances the Spanish Red Cross, which in turn finances the Mauritanian Red Crescent to intervene in detention centers ... So, really, since 2006 Spain has realized that they need to work with governments in the South so that they themselves manage the departure of migrants (CIMADE, interview, January 2010; my translation).

As in Mauritania, Spain gained presence in Senegal through this cooperation in the area of migration control (including surveillance of the border, national territory, and the management of deportation from the EU). By the time I arrived in Senegal in 2009, Guardia Civil vessels were at home in the Dakar harbour, and the one interview I managed to conduct with a member of the Senegalese police in Saint Louis was done mostly in Spanish: the respondent had learned the language during training sessions run by the Guardia Civil. By 2010 cooperation between these two governments remained challenging yet lively.

Besides the surveillance of their national territory, countries of origin and transit in West Africa have signed agreements to accept undocumented migrants detained at the border or in Spanish territory. Between 2004 and 2007 alone, Spain signed such agreements with ten African governments (Morocco, Algeria, Mauritania, Senegal, Guinea Bissau, Equatorial Guinea, Mali, Cape Verde, Ghana, and Gambia). Other member states and the EU signed agreements with other countries such as Libya, Tunisia, and Algeria. Deported migrants might be citizens of the countries to which they are taken, although at times they were not; that was the case of Omar (discussed in Chapters 4 and 6), a Senegalese man who was deported to Mauritania in 2005.

72 See also Migreurop 2010.
This “movement” (at once one of dis-placing, reinforcing, and extending the border) to spaces further away from the actual limit of Spanish and territorial sovereignty is part of a process of externalization of border control practices in the EU (Bialasiewicz 2012, Collyer 2007, van Houtum 2010). Although finding allies among these governments may be useful and even necessary, passing on border control responsibilities to unaccountable governments in Northern and Western Africa calls into question Spain and EU’s commitment to international human rights – in particular in the area of asylum. Abuses on the part of these “surrogate” border guards have been denounced by several organizations such as Amnesty International (AI 2008), the Spanish Commission for Refugees (CEAR 2008, 2009), the French CIMADE (2007, 2010), the international media, as well as by independent researchers (del Grande 2008, Collyer 2007). Interviews with experts and Senegalese migrants living in Tangier, Morocco, and Ceuta, Spain, have further confirmed the fear and violence that this group experiences during their land journey.

5.6 Assessing the success of defensive strategies at the border

All women participants in this study and most of the men entered Europe by plane, as did the vast majority of recent Senegalese arrivals to Spain prior to 2010. However, virtually all the resources deployed by both the EU and the Spanish government between 2005 and 2010 have addressed undocumented migration by sea and land. NGOs were extremely critical of defensive strategies implemented at the borders of the EU between 2005 and 2010. An interviewee working for the CIMADE (a French NGO which works with migrants) in Senegal summarized some of these criticisms:

[Militarization] is not a solution (...) FRONTEX ... it’s European money that returns to the Europeans, because we finance our own armies, our soldiers, etc. (...) It’s also a response to the images that we’ve seen in 2006, all these immigrants arriving to the beaches of the Canary Islands, to respond to French and Spanish phobia, who are afraid of being invaded. But the thing we know for sure about the impact of FRONTEX on migration is that departures have moved South. Before they left from the Straits of Gibraltar, there were 9 kms to cross. Then it moved to the Canary
Islands, this is 1700 [kms] if one leaves from Nouadhibou. Later it was Casamance, 3-6 days by *pirogue*, later it was Guinea Bissau, then Guinea Conakry, and routes just got longer and riskier, and there are more and more deaths each time. That is Europe’s responsibility, the responsibility of European states (CIMADE, interview, January 2010; my translation).

FRONTEX has born the brunt of these criticisms, although as we have seen the agency was one among many actors. The agency’s lack of transparency (and thus, accountability) was a concern for human rights organizations working in the region. These organizations argued that their border control practices placed obstacles for migrants and asylum seekers to exercise their rights, increasing their vulnerability (AI, interview, May 2009; see also CEAR 2008 and 2009, CIMADE 2007). It was also argued that the system was too expensive, costing millions of euros that could have been used to better the situation of potential migrants and their communities of origin in Senegal (COFLEC, interview 1, June 2009). Finally, for others, the cost (not economic, but in human lives) was obscene: EU migration policy, and in particular the intervention of FRONTEX, had transformed the Atlantic and the Mediterranean into the most deadly borders of Europe (see Appendix B). I will come back to this criticism below.

5.7 The COFLEC

The preventive and defensive strategies discussed in previous pages had a definite impact on the lives on many Senegalese, migrants and otherwise. Yayi Bayam Diouf, a strong-minded woman in her forties, waved farewell to her only son as he got into a *pirogue* in Thiaroye-sur-mer, a small fishing town outside of Dakar, at the very same beaches where he played as a young boy. As she gave the last piece of advice to her son, some friends and fellow fishermen waited impatiently to take off, in a mood that was at once festive and wary of what was to come. These and other boats leaving from fishing communities in coastal areas took away young men eager to meet their responsibilities as sons, husbands, and brothers. More often than not, they came from polygamous families: they were the eldest sons of their father’s second or third wife, risking their lives to offer their mothers a decent
livelihood and the social prestige they lacked. Like Mme. Diouf’s son, many perished in the voyage. Like his body, many were never recovered.

Shortly after this tragedy, Mme. Diouf started the COFLEC (“Collectif des Femmes pour la Lutte Contre L’Émigration Clandestine au Sénégal” or Collective of Women Against Clandestine Migration). Other mothers from the town of Thiaroye-sur-mer who had lost one or more children to the same fate joined the collective and started organizing different activities aimed, primarily, at preventing other youth from leaving by boat and providing themselves with some limited income (see Figure 5.6). While doing this they came face to face with FRONTEX, foreign development aid, the Spanish government, and several EU institutions.

The case of the COFLEC is interesting because it brings together the impact of both Spain’s preventive and defensive measures discussed in this chapter, and shows some of their main shortcomings. This organization was a keen participant in the creation and dissemination of campaigns against illegal migration paid for by the Spanish government to deter people like Mme. Diouf’s son from leaving Thiaroye, a hot spot for the departure of sea migrants. By 2009, the organization’s goals had moved from the beaches to the ever-growing range of economic activities it was involved in, thanks to both Spanish and EU development aid. The COFLEC members started processing sea products to sell in the market and soon expanded to packaging cereals, dying fabrics, making dolls, and elaborating traditional costumes. Each new workshop they opened was launched with European money; they employed more and more people from the community. Their customers were primarily European expats and tourists. Little by little, they achieved their goal of creating employment opportunities for the youth and the women of Thiaroye. Paradoxically, though, those opportunities depended on European development aid. The mirage of a Europe with money to splurge on marginal Senegalese neighbourhoods continued.
The women of the COFLEC also experienced the less gentle side of European efforts to stop boat migration. The sea, which had nurtured their families through their work and that of their men relatives, had become a graveyard for their sons and their hopes for a better life. They held the militarization of the sea border responsible for their loss. Their sons’ deaths marked them socially, economically, and psychologically. Some were ostracized by their communities (which considered them responsible for the migrants’ fate), and all were impoverished by the loss a working male family member. But the emotional toll was perhaps the most significant, and the most difficult to measure: a number of these women were unable to eat fish anymore, fearing they would be ingesting part of their deceased sons or husbands. When asked about her thoughts on FRONTEX, Mme. Diouf was clear: militarization would not stop anyone from leaving; it would only increase the death toll.
among the poor who could not bribe Senegalese officials and buy a visa (COFLEC 1, interview, May 2009).

5.8 Discussion

In this chapter I have examined the construction of the segment of the external EU border that exists between Spain and West Africa. My goal has been to apply the theory provided by critical geopolitics regarding the reterritorialization of contemporary borders in the context of the EU. In the case that I have discussed, the border is reterritorialized through its geographical expansion and the involvement of national, supranational, and non-state actors. The detailed discussion on how the Guardia Civil and the Spanish police have modified their internal structures to respond to the challenge of border control; the cooperation between Spanish and Senegalese security forces; the creation of FRONTEX and EU intervention in international and non-EU waters through a number of operations (mainly HERA, INDALO, and SEAHORSE) all support the argument presented by critical geographers working in the EU that the border is taking a new shape – but one that remains fundamentally anchored in space.

This border exhibits a new form of territoriality, one in which the state is no longer the only (and, at times, not even the main) entity around which the space is politically mobilized. As a consequence, traditional conceptions of sovereignty need to be reworked to account for the role of non-state actors, in this case the EU. In addition, the plasticity of the border highlights its processual nature: again, we are not talking about a geographical location (i.e., the place where the power of the state ceases to be legitimate) but of an instrument of control in a state of permanent becoming.

Borders remain ideological constructs deployed to exercise power over human mobility and access to space and resources. But the new border relies less on specific geographical locations. Just to be clear, this does not mean that it becomes deterritorialized. Instead, as the discussion in previous pages shows, the border becomes more diffuse. It is
reterritorialized far away from the place where the traditional border should be: in countries of origin and transit and in areas that, at first, seem to have little to do with migration management, like international development programs. These borders are “networked” (Rumford 2006) because, in their attempt to manage human mobility, they connect spaces that are both traditional and novel in the control of the border.

By focusing on a specific segment of the EU border and bringing together the perspective of the state and of the migrant, however, I can propose some nuances to these general claims about the reterritorialization of the border in the context of the EU. First, what I have called here “preventive measures” needs to be integrated into our studies of the border. So far, scholars have focused on the “defensive measures:” the militarization and the creation of a buffer zone for the control of migration. These are very important aspects of contemporary EU border governance that deserve to be examined. But the implementation of development aid programs, managed migration schemes, and promotion of private investment with the goal of increasing the living standards of the population and precluding their migration is also part of an overall strategy to prevent unwanted mobility. In other words, they should be considered part of the process of reterritorialization of the EU border.

Second, by bringing together the perspective of a variety of actors I have shown that “the state” and “the EU” are more fragmented actors than they seem in the literature on EU borders. The case of the managed migration schemes discussed in section 4 proves that anti-immigration policies are fraught with conflicting interests, made with incomplete information, and built upon individual policymakers’ assumptions about the people involved. This shattering of the illusion of the monolithic state has been done, perhaps more effectively, by others (Mountz 2004 and 2010). Nonetheless it is worth coming back to it, and showing how it might affect the ways in which specific borders are built.

Third, this analysis of the border questions the appropriateness of FRONTEX actions at the borders of the EU and challenges their legitimacy. As I have repeatedly argued, sea migrants
were a very small fraction of the total Sub Saharan migrants who arrived in Spain between 2000 and 2010; furthermore, black African migrants were numerically negligible within the total foreign population in the country. The pouring of resources into the militarization of the sea and land borders was a disproportionate response. The enormous gap between the size of the “problem” (unwanted migration) and the response suggests that, as Mountz has argued, in the current context of border and migration management states are themselves creating moments of crisis. This would allow them to implement exceptional measures (like the militarization of the border) to keep unwanted migrants “away from sovereign territory” (112), where they could appeal to the existing legislation for protection or access to public services.

Finally, this chapter has also served to bring Walters’ concept of “domopolitics” out of the context in which is was originally conceived, the UK (Walters 2004b). This idea imposes a specific relationship between citizenship, security, and territory: the territorial state is equated with the home (domus), which must be protected against the a threatening Other. “Domopolitics,” translated to the Spanish context, can be applied to theorize the rationale underlying the anti-immigration measures discussed in this chapter. In this translation, the historical construction of Spanish collective identity in opposition, first and foremost, to Islam and Africa, and the country’s recently sanctioned Europeanness (via entry into the EU) are of crucial importance. I will come back to these ideas in the next two chapters, where I study the obstacles that participants found both at the border of the EU and in Spanish territory.
6 Networks vs. the border

There was a time when it was much easier to get a visa to go to Portugal. (...) Some [Senegalese migrants] went as students, some to work at the expo [the 1998 Lisbon World Exposition], there were many ways in. You know that Europe has [now] shut its doors close and they’ve only left us only one option, the *cayucos*, but we refuse: we want to come legally, we are currently coming legally, and we will continue to come legally (Pierre, interview, January 2009; my translation).

6.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter I have presented some of the obstacles that the Spanish government and the EU put in place to prevent the unwanted migration of West African citizens to Spain between 2000 and 2010. I have discussed measures aimed at preventing this migration (development aid and temporary migration programs) and at stopping it before migrants reached the border of Spain / the EU (militarization, readmission agreements, and the creation of a buffer zone for the control of migration). These strategies depended on cooperation with states in countries of migrant origin and transit. The price to pay for their implementation was high, and yet, despite the resources deployed at and beyond the border, migration from Senegal to Spain continued – even increased – during this period. Three key factors contributed to this perhaps unexpected outcome.

First, most of these migrants entered Spanish territory either directly by plane or by land from another EU country: the militarization of external land and sea borders did not present any obstacle for the vast majority of these migrants (de Haas 2008). Although administrative procedures became tougher for migrants of all origins outside the EU and airport controls increased, this made little difference for those who could afford the cost of buying a tourist visa, had relatives settled in Europe, or were selected to participate in temporary work programs. In addition, migrants who had arrived in another EU country as tourists, visitors, or asylum seekers could travel to Spain by land; this was the case of several participants, as
we will see in the following pages. In all cases efforts to reinforce the border against (presumably illegal) migrants overlooked important legal pathways used by many Senegalese immigrants.

Second, until 2009 the motivation to migrate to Southern Europe was still extremely high. As has been discussed in previous chapters, this region emerged as a desirable destination in the late 1990s. Life there was thought to be easy, work plentiful, and the chances of regularizing one’s legal status higher than in more traditional destination countries such as France. As a result, the number of potential migrants grew. This meant that even though the percentage of those who succeeded in crossing the border may have been lower overall, the absolute number of Senegalese who attempted it was much higher than ever before.

Third, and most importantly for the purposes of this chapter, migrants overcame the obstacles placed by the state through a savvy and efficient use of their transnational social networks. Policymakers may militarize the border, but they cannot stop the members of a network from helping each other. Relatives and friends both in Senegal and in Europe, small smuggling entrepreneurs, large criminal networks, and corrupt politicians paved the way around, over, and underneath the border of the EU. These networks enabled participants’ migration, strengthening their agency against the structural constraints placed by European and Spanish policymakers.

This Chapter is devoted to deepening our understanding of how Senegalese migrants’ networks allowed for a continuation and expansion of migration flows to Spain, despite increasing obstacles for border crossers. Taking the theoretical approach introduced in Chapter 3, my aim is to initiate a cartography of migrant social spaces and networks both as they were built through migration and as they became its key facilitators. My argument is that the relationship between transnationalism and the movement of people across national boundaries is one of intimate interdependency. Moreover, I found that key factors to understand the role that transnational networks played in the migration of Senegalese
citizens to Spain were gender, ethnic and religious background, and socio-economic status. These three factors determined the routes available to participants (land, sea, or air), the legal pathways they had access to (as wives, temporary workers, tourists, etc.), the kinds of networks they were part of, and the resources they could mobilize within those networks. Here and in Chapter 7 I ask which resources are exchanged in the relational spaces that linked together individuals and families on both sides of the border(s), as well as the nature and the strength of the ties that brought them together. In these two chapters I also explore the ways in which national identity, accepted rules of behaviour within family and kinship groups, gendered expectations, and religion shape Senegalese transnational spaces.

During my fieldwork I found there was a tight connection between the route participants used, the kinds of transnational networks they relied on, and the resources these networks provided. Accordingly, the chapter is organized in three main sections: I begin with air migrants, who were the vast majority of both my participants and of the larger group of Senegalese who migrated to Spain between 2005 and 2010. Because of the importance of this channel, half the chapter is devoted to it. In this section I make gender the articulating point of an analysis of the networks that participants used when they travelled to the EU as tourists, relatives, temporary workers, or students. The experiences of a group of members of an extended family who entered Spain via Portugal and of Solinda, a woman who migrated as a wife through the family reunification procedure, are discussed at length. Also in this section I revisit the reasons why men sometimes hesitated to bring their wives through the family reunification procedure. The other two sections discuss the networks used by sea and land migrants; in these pages I emphasize the experience of men, mainly because none of my core women respondents in Spain had followed either of these two routes. The information presented in this chapter comes mainly from life histories and interviews, although I have also drawn from secondary sources in certain sections. Finally, at some points throughout the text I have chosen to use the first person to talk about these transnational social spaces and networks, when in the course of my fieldwork I unintentionally became incorporated within them myself.
6.2 Airport migrants: bureaucracy as the border

There was a line that went around the block of the Spanish Consulate (a white building in the Plateau neighbourhood of Dakar) when I went there to register my presence in Senegal. As I walked past it, day after day, morning or afternoon, hundreds of Senegalese waited under the scorching sun to apply for a visa to enter Spain. Similar lines curled around other European consulates in Dakar.

All 17 core participants and most of the men I interviewed in Spain had at one time been one of those people: they had migrated to the EU by plane. Sometimes these migrants arrived directly to Spain, while in other cases they moved there by land from another European country (France, Portugal, Italy, Germany, or Switzerland). These men and women had entered as visitors / tourists, temporary workers, students, or through family reunification procedures. Between 2005 and 2010, Spanish policymakers knew legal entries were the main source feeding the growth of both the legal and the undocumented Senegalese-born population in the country, but they did not want to, or were not able to, stop these migrants. For example, family reunification is a right to which legal migrants are entitled provided they meet certain criteria. Freedom of movement within the EU meant that some of those migrants, once in EU territory, might travel to Spain by land without encountering controls at internal national borders. Also, prior to the crisis of 2008-2010, the booming Spanish economy depended on the cheap labour these migrants provided to continue. Thus the state’s capacity to stop these migrants was limited by economic and political constraints.

Air migrants found the border at the airport, where illegal crossing was almost impossible. However, there were many ways to obtain the required travel documents. Participants used other close relatives’ passports to enter the EU under a false identity, obtained legitimate travel permits using faulty or false supporting documents, or obtained travel visas by bribing corrupt Senegalese civil workers. In the words of the director of Amnesty International in
Senegal, “here money can buy you absolutely anything from the government” (AI, interview, April 2009).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Obstacles found</th>
<th>Networks</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Women</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tourists (SP / EU)</td>
<td>Administrative Financial Approval</td>
<td>Approval / legitimacy</td>
<td>Senegal Spain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very strong &amp; durable (parents, spouse)</td>
<td>Information / assistance</td>
<td>[other EU]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strong &amp; semi-durable (extended family, friends)</td>
<td>Documents</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Weak / absent &amp; ephemeral (entrepreneurs, corrupt politicians)</td>
<td>Money</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students (SP / EU)</td>
<td>Administrative Financial</td>
<td>Very strong &amp; durable (parents, siblings)</td>
<td>Senegal Spain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strong &amp; semi-durable (spouses, parents)</td>
<td>Information / assistance</td>
<td>[other EU]</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Weak / absent &amp; ephemeral (entrepreneurs)</td>
<td>Documents</td>
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<td>Money</td>
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<td>Wives (SP)</td>
<td>Administrative Financial</td>
<td>Very strong &amp; durable (spouses)</td>
<td>Senegal Spain</td>
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<td>Strong &amp; semi-durable (extended family)</td>
<td>Information / assistance</td>
<td>[other EU]</td>
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<td>Weak / absent &amp; ephemeral (entrepreneurs)</td>
<td>Documents</td>
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<tr>
<td>Temporary workers (SP)</td>
<td>Administrative Financial</td>
<td>Money</td>
<td>Senegal</td>
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<td>Very strong &amp; durable (parents)</td>
<td>Visa</td>
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<td>Strong &amp; semi-durable (extended family)</td>
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| Category                  | Obstacles found                                                                 | Networks                                      | Location               |
|---------------------------|                                                                                 |                                               |                        |
| **Men**                   |                                                                                 |                                               |                        |
| Tourists (SP / EU)        | Administrative Financial                                                        | Strong & semi-durable (relatives, friends)    | Senegal Spain          |
|                           | Weak / absent & ephemeral (acquaintances, entrepreneurs, corrupt politicians)    | Information / assistance                       | [other EU]             |
| Students (SP / EU)        | Administrative Financial                                                        | Strong & semi-durable (extended family)       | Senegal Spain          |
|                           | Strong & semi-durable (extended family)                                        | Information / assistance                       | [other EU]             |
| Husbands (SP)             | Administrative Financial                                                        | Very strong & durable (spouses)               | Senegal Spain          |
|                           | Strong & semi-durable (extended family)                                        | Information / assistance                       | [other EU]             |

Table 6.1: Categories of air migrants at entry, obstacles they found and the kind, location, and resources provided by the networks they relied upon.

I am particularly interested in which members of participants’ networks facilitated air migration, their geographic location, the resources they provided, and the type, strength, and durability of their connection with respondents. Table 6.1 summarizes some of the main findings that will be elaborated on. The discussion is organized mainly according to participants’ legal category at entry, as either tourists or students to Spain or another EU country, members or the family who migrated through the family reunification procedure (as wives or husbands) or temporary workers (this latter category is only discussed for women). I look at the obstacles that these migrants found and the kinds of networks that helped them overcome these barriers.
6.2.1 Air migrants (I): the tourists who never left

During the period of my study most Senegalese originally migrated to Spain or to the EU as tourists.\textsuperscript{73} Despite the difficulties and the cost involved in the application process, this type of visa was more accessible than family reunification or a temporary worker permit and safer than irregular migration by land or sea. When migrants went to visit close relatives in Europe, the process to apply for a tourist visa was relatively straightforward. It involved gathering a series of documents (passport, a letter of invitation where the relative acted as a guarantor that the visitor would not stay illegally in the country, a declaration of income / economic activities in Senegal, and proof that she was in fact related to the person she was going to visit) and waiting in line for their turn at the embassy or consulate.

The cost of the formal procedure in these cases was minimal, and those involved in the transaction were usually the visitor, the visited, those providing the means for migration (usually also family members), and the consulate. In some cases, the visa was directly bought from a private entrepreneur who had contacts within the foreign consulate for an amount that oscillated between 500,000 (about $1,000 CAD) and one million CFA francs (about $2,000 CAD). Paulette’s husband (see Chapter 4) claimed he had paid almost three million CFA francs (around $6,400 CAD) for his wife’s visa to Italy and her plane ticket. This figure is consistent with findings that in 2005 European visas could be obtained corruptly in Dakar for between two and two and a half million CFA francs ($2,000- 5,300 CAD, approximately) (UNODC 2011). Some of my respondents had paid fees this high to middle men who had then vanished with the money.

\textsuperscript{73} Evidence gathered during fieldwork, official statistics, and other published studies suggest this was the case for the broader Senegalese migrant population in Spain between 2005 and 2011. A comparison between figures on interceptions along land and sea borders (Ministerio del Interior 2007-2011), Senegalese citizens who resided in Spain legally (MTIN 2008-2010), and the total number of Senegalese registered as inhabitants in Spain with and without proper permits (INE 2005-2011) shows a high discrepancy between legal and undocumented immigrants of this origin (see Graph 1.2 in Chapter 1). This discrepancy cannot be solely attributed to illegal crossings of the border. Other research has also shown that a large majority of West Africans residing in Europe during these years were overstayers (UNODC 2011).
Respondents who went to Europe to visit a close relative working there had this person act as a guarantor in their application for a tourist visa. This relative would typically be a son, a daughter, or a father. Although it is tempting to assume migration was a plan that pre-dated the visit, several participants did not intend to become migrants until once they were going through the application process or were already in Europe. In all cases, secondary migrant women (those who had migrated via another EU country) had only considered moving to Spain after their arrival, when they heard of the job opportunities and the relative ease of obtaining legal status there. Likewise, half the men interviewed had moved to Spain from elsewhere within the Schengen space, following the advice of their co-nationals.

This was the case of Diabira, a young woman in her late twenties at the time of the interview that I encountered in my first research site. Diabira was the third of four siblings in a poor Christian family settled in one of the many suburbs of Dakar. Generally unemployed, she made some money as a semi-professional basketball player. Diabira often traveled with her team to play in West African tournaments. One day, she learned they would be going to Switzerland to participate in an international championship.

My dream was to go to Europe and become a famous sportswoman. When I arrived in Switzerland I really loved it there, it was so incredibly beautiful! So I decided to stay, but the experience was brutal, because people are so different, so distant there, you know? I was in Berne but people refused to talk to me, even though I speak French. (...) I applied for asylum. They took me to a sort of shelter for asylum seekers and I ... I was so desperate to talk to someone, I started making friends with a group of Nigerians. They lied to me and once I found myself in a room full of men trying to rip off my clothes. I jumped through the window. (...) I was in Switzerland for two years. At the centre [for refugee claimants] I met my current husband. He said that Spain was much better for migrants, because here it was easy to get a residence permit and you could stay for however long you wanted. That was not the case in Switzerland. (...) So I thought, ok, let’s go to Spain and see if I manage to get a permit. (Diabira, interview, December 2009; my translation).

Diabira entered Europe as a tourist, and then followed her (Muslim) husband to Spain. For this trip, his networks and connections (the transnational social space that provided him with
the information he used to make the decision to move to Spain, and that allowed him to carry this decision forward) became hers. Only later on, when she settled, would Diabira venture into a church and start building a multi-racial and transnational social space of her own, one deeply rooted in her belonging to the Senegalese Catholic community in Spain.\textsuperscript{74}

Although Diabira’s case provides an example of migration within the EU, it was exceptional in several ways: among other things, it was rare for married women to move from other European countries with their spouses (more commonly, they reunited with their husbands through family reunification and migrated directly from Senegal). Among respondents, women who engaged in secondary migration tended to be Muslim middle-aged migrants with children to support back in Senegal. Divorced or married but not very invested in their marriages (at least, not romantically) they were determined to move to wherever economic opportunities arose, provided there were close family members to vouch for their safety and decent behaviour \textit{vis-à-vis} the rest of their transnational community. For example, Neyba (research site 1) was a mother of four, a street vendor in Dakar widowed and re-married as a second wife to a poor fisherman who, according to tradition, was not required to provide for the children of her first marriage. Neyba traveled to France to visit her newborn granddaughter in 2004, and while in Paris she heard of the many opportunities awaiting Senegalese migrants in Italy. She found a neighbour’s cousin who lived in Messina (Italy) and moved there to live with her. But shortly thereafter her friends told her that Spain was actually a much better choice; she then travelled to Malaga, where her niece lived, and after a year and a half moved with some friends to my first research site.

I found several other cases of intra-EU secondary migrant women in that city. The case of Awa was interesting. This respondent was a housewife and mother of three in Dakar. She arrived in Paris with a tourist visa and spent a few days at an expensive hotel, visiting the city’s tourist sights with her husband (a jeweller wealthy even by North American standards). Theirs was a peaceful marriage until he informed Awa of his determination to

\textsuperscript{74} How this space became crucial in her migration experience will be discussed in Chapter 7.
take a second wife (preferably white). This announcement led her to migrate to try to become economically independent. When Awa’s husband went back to his business in Senegal, she took a train to Spain, where one of her husband’s aunts lived with her children. She stayed in my first research site until her tourist visa expired and then, unable to fulfill her ambitions in Spain, her husband bought her a French passport. Awa moved to Paris as a French citizen and was shortly after employed by the French government. Another example was provided by Batouly, who got on a plane to Rome as a tourist thanks to her contacts in a foreign embassy in Dakar, where she worked as a secretary. Once in Rome Batouly took a bus to Southern Spain and moved in with her younger brother.

Many of these women had entered through France for a simple reason: there were more Senegalese living in that country than anywhere else in Europe, and bureaucratic procedures were simpler (after all, Senegal was a French colony, and the history of population exchanges between the two countries is very rich; see Chapter 2). Italy, with a quickly growing Senegalese population, was also a common source of secondary migrants in Spain. France, Italy, and Portugal were also popular sources of secondary migration among men. Interestingly enough, no respondent had entered the country with a tourist visa issued by the Spanish government.

Women in my sample tended to rely on very close members of their transnational networks for their migration (first- and second-degree relatives, and because of intra-family marriage these were always also close kin within their husbands’ family). Men, on the other hand, had more hazardous journeys that involved a wider range of people. Migrant men made decisions on the go based on weak or secondary connections, left places without a clear destination, spent nights sleeping outdoors and asked strangers for assistance at bus or train stations – something unthinkable for the women that I interviewed, who reflected carefully on who they could rely upon.75

75 In one case, a participant had asked a stranger (also Senegalese) she met at a bus station for shelter. Her situation was of extreme necessity at the time.
Some members of men’s transnational networks requested money in return for their role in participants’ migration: they were small entrepreneurs who became part of the migration industry to make ends meet. For example, Modou’s visa had been provided by an uncle’s friend, a marabout (religious leader) who had used his contacts in the French embassy in exchange for a generous donation (research site 1). Stronger connections usually led to cheaper or free cooperation between facilitators and migrants. Thus Mansour (third research site), employed by a Spanish development aid organization in Senegal, did not have to pay: he flew to Spain with a visa he received for a project his organization was involved with, and never returned; and Yongan traveled to France as a tourist thanks to the (free) mediation of his employer (second research site).

Overall, men’s journeys were more dangerous, and the networks they employed to facilitate them less cohesive than their female counterparts. Protected by the men and the families in their lives, women were less likely to incur risks; at the same time, they were given less options to pursue their ambitions abroad. The connection between gender, migration route, and the strength of the transnational ties used to enable migration into Europe was a common pattern across the three research sites, as we will see in the next sections.

6.2.2 Air migrants (II): kinship-based chain migration

Of all the experiences of migrants entering the EU with a tourist visa and then moving to Spain, there was one that stood out: that of a group of relatives who entered via Portugal. They were Catholics from a small ethnic group, all of them related. How had these people from a tiny village in the war-torn region of Casamance arrived at a small town in Southern Spain? Theirs was an interesting story. Their families had crossed the border with Guinea Bissau, fleeing the war in their home country in the 1960s, and settled in a village just a few kilometres into Senegal. These migrants (the first of whom were men) had dual citizenship, Bissau-Guinean and Senegalese. Their male-led, staged, and kinship-based migration began when a few of them migrated to a nearby town in Casamance in the 1990s; from there to the regional capital, Ziguinchor; and from there to Dakar. Once in Dakar, they found out that
with their Bissau-Guinean passport they could actually travel to Portugal as visitors without applying for a visa, and so, collectively, they put together enough money for a couple of plane tickets. Antoine, one of these two pioneer migrants, had unexpected travel difficulties (he was denied entry into Portugal), but overcame them creatively: he bought a visa for Indonesia. He chose this country both because obtaining a tourist visa was easy (and cheap) and because he would have a stopover in Lisbon. Antoine was issued a transit visa and stayed in Portugal.

Those who traveled (considered the most resourceful, in part because they had previous experience as migrants in Central Europe) found a job in Lisbon and with their meagre earnings contributed to bringing a handful of relatives over. Again, they found the city did not meet their expectations: they grew tired of being the target of racist discrimination and working for a fraction of the salary their Portuguese co-workers earned. Pierre, one of these men and a former artisan, described his experience at length in our first interview:

There was a time when it was really easy to get a visa to go to Portugal, and then you could go just about anywhere else in the EU. (...) Two of my brothers had already been living there [as students]; they went back to Senegal, but when I received my student visa to go to Portugal I was not planning on returning [to Senegal any time soon]. I stayed in Portugal from 1999 to 2000 or 2001, when I moved to Spain following what the conservatives called the efecto llamada.76 (...) During those two years [in Lisbon] I worked in construction: there was nothing else available for us blacks! I had never worked in construction before. It was cold, it was hard, my back ached, I earned a misery every month ... and I couldn’t even go back [to Senegal] because I didn’t have my papers. But I stayed because I couldn’t go back home empty-handed. And when I arrived [in Spain] and a few days later I had met people I could call friends – white people I could call friends – I realized what a racist country Portugal is. I had been living, working, and going to church in Portugal for two years, and to this day I can’t say I’ve ever had a Portuguese friend. (...) I think it is because it was the last European power to let go of their colonies. All these black people live in the country: they remember what terrible things Portugal did to their people, and they

76 According to some analysts, amnesties contributed to attracting migrants to Spain. This is what has been labelled the efecto llamada (“calling factor”). Many of my respondents admitted that both relatively regular amnesties and the availability of work under the table for undocumented migrants until 2009 had influenced their decision to move to Spain.
remind the Portuguese of their long-gone days of glory and failure (Pierre, interview, January 2009; my translation).

Besides history, material and geographic factors contributed to the marginalization of black communities in Lisbon: another interviewee recalled the disgust he felt when walking around his neighbourhood, where “children were criminals before they could even walk: they sold drugs, used drugs, stole, attacked people on the street ... I loathed living in that filthy, stinky neighbourhood, but as a poor black [person] it was hard to find a room to rent elsewhere.” And yet, Portugal was, for some of these men, a safe bet while other options were still uncertain: Antoine, who “was dying” to leave, spent two years split between Algarve (Portugal) and Andalusia (Spain). To renew his Portuguese residence permit he had to work a number of months per year in Portugal; and after he succeeded in obtaining a residence permit during the 2001 amnesty, he was also required to work full time for at least six months a year in Spain to qualify for its renewal.

As a consequence, and despite the relative stability of their situation in Portugal, the combination of lack of good employment opportunities, difficulties to achieve legal status, isolation, racism, and marginalization fed these men’s aspirations to move on. In order to test the rumours they heard that there were plenty of opportunities awaiting migrants in Spain, they sent a couple of the men over. These two people took a bus to Madrid and then split in two different directions, heading to places where they knew people who could host them for a couple of months. It was late 2004: the 2005 amnesty had already been announced. These two men thus learned about the process and bought the documents that would allow them and their relatives still in Portugal to apply for the amnesty. They bought these documents from other non-Senegalese migrants, who worked in conjunction with Spanish business owners and corrupt members of the Spanish police. The documents were of two main types, in both cases forged: correspondence addressed to them, stamped and cancelled by the Spanish national post agency (proof of residency in the country), and job contracts. Participants had paid between 500 and 1,000 euros per contract (around $800 – 1,600 CAD), an amount that had gone both to the fictitious employer (a real Spanish
business person) and to the several middlemen that separated this employer from the migrant. Overall, in my sample the number of respondents who had obtained contracts in exchange for money or as a personal favour in order to qualify for a renewal was quite high, suggesting that this was common practice. Maybe because the government was aware of the fraud involved in these applications or because the documents facilitated by the entrepreneurs were particularly faulty (since these migrants had just arrived in the country to do the paperwork, they had little knowledge of what they should look like) most of the migrants in this family had their applications rejected by the police. They then proceeded to hire a lawyer and contest the decision, sometimes with a successful outcome (more about this in Chapter 7).

Migrants were linked to document providers through weak ties. Although these entrepreneurs played a role in the arrival of this group of migrants to Spain, kinship networks was far more relevant for their success achieving legal status in the country. For example, the first respondent in my third research site had filled out about 20 different applications that he then deposited in person in three different police stations, posing each time as one of his relatives who had, by then, returned to Portugal to continue working while they waited to hear from the Spanish government (some of them took day trips between Spain and Portugal to do the paperwork). At this point, an interesting process started. Some, like Pierre, had to spend some time in Southern Spain waiting for the resolution to their application, and in the meantime realized they felt “at home.” Others, who had succeeded in getting a permit through the amnesty, moved to Spain and started working, this time legally. Finally, there was a group of people who received authorization to work and live in Spain but had no interest in doing so. Migrants in the latter category sold or lent their documents to some of my respondents who, for a while, lived with fake identities.
One of these migrants who bought their papers was Yongan, a man in his forties with a background in labour union activism and teaching. Unlike some of his relatives, Yongan first traveled to France before he moved to Lisbon to join his cousins:

One of my employers knew I wanted to migrate and understood my reasons, so he found a publishing house in Paris and helped me get a tourist visa. (...) In 2003 I moved to Portugal because my cousins promised they had a job waiting for me in Lisbon. I went there and worked with fake papers. But I found it too risky, because the police can stop you any time and then you’re done. So I came [to Spain] and my brother, who was in [town nearby second research site] found me a job working in a greenhouse. During two years I worked there. I was the head of the Sub Saharan workers, we were 20 or so (...). I had the papers, but I was using a fake identity: they were the papers of a cousin who still lives in Lisbon, he has residence permit in Spain and in Portugal. I bought them [from him]. I worked like that until 2004, when I got my real papers in Spain. (Yongan, interview, February 2009; my translation).

Interestingly enough, Yongan felt safe using a fake identity in Spain but not in Portugal. This could be due to the fact that, very soon after he arrived in Spain, he reached a position of relative authority within the very large immigrant working population in the town where he lived. He became a mediator between them and local politicians and, eventually, became employed with his real identity by a labour union.

Regardless of their previous trajectory, little by little the circumstances of the migrants who were part of this extended family group improved and they all managed to achieve legal status. Gradually, they supported the arrival of other relatives from Senegal – cousins and nephews as well as wives and children – and some moved to other Spanish cities. By the end of my fieldwork, however, the economic situation in the country was catastrophic. When I left a few members of this family had already moved to other European and non-European countries to explore possible options for future migration. Theirs is an almost-too-perfect example of how tight transnational communities work to negotiate (even manipulate) international borders and legislation to allow for the advancement of the group. In this case, virtually all the resources necessary for migration were contained within
transnational networks articulated around a loose definition of kinship based in shared ethnicity.

6.2.3 Air migrants (III): family reunification

Family reunification was a channel more often used by women than by men, both in my sample and in the broader Senegalese-born population in Spain (Sow 2004, Vázquez Silva unpublished). Prior to having their applications for family reunification submitted to the Spanish government, a migrant is required to have lived in the country legally for at least one year and have permission to remain for a minimum of one more year.77 Besides, they must prove they live in a suitable dwelling and have enough economic resources to maintain the relatives applying for reunification.78 On at least two occasions the wife who was brought over to Spain was a second or third spouse; the migration took place after intense – often bitter – family negotiations.

As was explained in Chapter 2, the first marriage in Senegal is often a choice made by the family and accepted by the couple. Second and successive marriages are more often a personal choice, particularly for the man. Migrant men, often expected to have a greater and more reliable income than non-migrants, are highly attractive marriage candidates. During my fieldwork I interviewed and heard of migrant men who had returned to get married or who were even married in absentia by their parents at the local mosque. Second or third marriages that happened under these circumstances were harshly judged by most women

77 Usually, foreign workers in Spain first receive a one-year residence permit. Provided they can demonstrate that they have been working full-time for 6 months during that period (or that the reasons for not having done so are their employer’s responsibility) they may apply for a two-year residence permit. Once this permit expires, and only if they have worked full-time during 12 of those 24 months, they are allowed to stay in the country for another two years. After five years of uninterrupted and legal residence in the country, they may apply for a five-year residence permit. Senegalese citizens are eligible for naturalization after ten years of uninterrupted and legal residence in Spain – unless they are married to a Spaniard or have refugee status, in which case the required residence period is of one or five years, respectively. Thus, if they manage to maintain their legal status in Spain and provided they are neither married to a Spaniard or refugees, Senegalese citizens must go through at least four renewals of their residence permit before applying for Spanish citizenship (one, two, two, and five years each).

78 Only legally married spouses, biological and adopted children, and dependent parents of one of the two spouses are eligible.
respondents: first wives had no say in the matter, yet the newcomer had the right to ask for part of the migrant’s remittances as well as the possibility of being the one migrating as a wife. Aïssatou, a (first) wife who migrated to Spain through family reunification in 2002, addressed the issue when talking about her friend’s spouse:

[My friend] stayed here with us, at our place, but we had to ask him to leave. His wife came – you know, he has two wives. And as usual the second wife, the last one to arrive, thinks she has more power than the first wife because she managed to convince her husband to marry her and do [the] family reunification [procedure]. He fixed her the papers [residence permit] and she came here thinking she was running the show, a behaviour typical of the second wife (Aïssatou, interview, March 2009; my translation).

Second wives knew they were seen as queue-jumpers by other women, but did not see their behaviour as reprehensible. Yes, their main goal, like many others’, was to migrate: while some people bribed public officials to get a visa and some took a boat, they had married a migrant. It was just another way in. Mounash, a woman in her mid-thirties, was one of these second wives. She explained why she had decided to marry her husband:

I wanted to leave Senegal because we didn’t have enough to eat. [We were] my mum, my siblings ... all in all 15 people [lived] at home and nobody bringing in any money. It was tough. (...) When he [current husband] went back to Senegal on vacation we met and he fell for me. I said: ok, if you love me, take me to Spain. If you want to marry, I’ll go with you; if not, I’ll go anyways. My goal was to go to Spain, and in the end he married me. He said he wanted me to come as his wife (Mounash, research site 1, February 2009; my translation)

When I asked Mounash what her husband’s first wife thought of that, she said that even if she had wanted to migrate it would not have been possible: the other woman had five children to take care of. So she did not see herself as short-circuiting the first wife’s migration plans. Each wife had her own place, one as a stay-home mother and the other as the wife who went to Spain to keep their husband company.

79 Since polygamy is illegal in Spain, only one wife could apply for family reunification.
Mounash’s trajectory was also interesting for another reason: she had bought a visa to travel to the EU with the money her fiancé had given her as proof of engagement. Once he agreed to marry her within the tight schedule she had imposed (“he said we could marry in a year, but I said: it’s either three months or nothing. I won’t wait for a year”) and Mounash saw that she could get a visa to go to Spain as his wife, she turned to her friends to see if anyone wanted to buy her “extra” visa:

I had already stopped doing commerce between Gambia and [city of origin in Senegal]. I was just waiting for my husband to send me my visa. (...) I already had a [tourist] visa for Europe but it was going to expire in five days, then I sold it to a friend, that way she could use it before it expired. She gave me some money for it and I called my husband, who was still my boyfriend back then, and asked him to host my friend (Mounash, interview, February 2009; my translation).

Mounash must have had little information about the visa procedure because she thought that as a wife she would obtain a visa immediately. It took her fiancé three months to arrange their marriage at the mosque. He was not present during the ceremony: an uncle signed the documents on his behalf, and the money that her now husband sent for the celebration was
used to pay Mounash’s mother’s pending bills with local grocers, water, and electricity companies.

Mounash’s case also exemplified some of the fears Senegalese migrant men expressed when the issue of family reunification came up in our interviews (discussed in the next section). By the time her husband submitted Mounash’s application for family reunification, he had been living with her friend for six months; they were having an affair. Finally, a year after their marriage, Mounash received her residence permit and joined her husband in Spain. She moved in with him, his lover, and three other Senegalese migrant men. When she learned about her husband’s affair they started having daily fights But Mounash had no money, no resources, and was, shortly after arriving, pregnant. Other people in their community pushed Mounash’s husband to leave his lover, and her to forgive his infidelity. But she grew tired of him: first, she tried to sell her jewellery to return to Senegal. Then, when caught at it and reprimanded by other Senegalese migrants for trying to leave Spain behind her husband’s back, Mounash said the much-feared words: “if you don’t kick her out and give me some money, I’ll report you to the police for domestic abuse.” Mounash’s rival had to find a place to stay the very next day.

6.2.4 Why men hesitated to bring their wives over

Among the men I interviewed in Spain, family reunification was, generally speaking, considered a foolish thing to do. The Senegalese migrants I met had left Senegal chiefly for economic reasons. Having a wife in Senegal meant that the migrant had to send her (and the rest of his family) money every month – a manageable demand. Having one’s wife in Spain implied that income would have to cover both the expenses of a household in Spain and the needs of his family in Senegal. Migrants’ families often opposed family reunification out of fear that the flow of money would diminish or stop altogether (particularly if the couple’s children joined them in Spain). Finally, having one wife in Senegal and another in Spain was the very worst option for respondents, because they thought that the two wives would be forever quarrelling about how much money he gave them while the rest of the his family
pushed him to increase his remittances. Financially, then, family reunification made little sense.

Younger male participants from all ethnic, religious, and socio-economic backgrounds were also wary of reunification for reasons that went well beyond finances: they feared their wives would “become white” or “start behaving like whites”. According to Professor Sarr, “‘becoming Spanish’ or Western is an opportunity for the woman to gain a new status and escape the relationship of domination that she has with the man. And, obviously, the man sees this as in tension with his own status” (Interview, January 2010; my translation).

What exactly did migrant men mean when they said their wives could “become white”? Mainly, they were referring to them challenging the traditional gender roles that ruled their relationship prior to migration, and where submission of the woman to the man’s authority was paramount. Participants on both sides of the gender divide were, almost without exception, openly critical of gender relations in Spain, where they believed women had most of the power and men were emasculated. This often came up during the interviews, particularly at the end, when I asked if there was anything they found important about their migration that I had forgotten to refer to. Mayecor, a 27 year old man who had migrated by boat in 2006 and was undocumented at the time of our interview, did not hesitate for a second: “Yes, there’s something I’ve meant to ask you: what the fuck is wrong with Spanish men?!” Mayecor was a street vendor in my first research site. Not sure what he meant, I asked him to elaborate. He explained that he could not understand that often, when selling my merchandise at the market, a man wants to buy something from me. He reaches into his pocket to get his wallet, and then his wife says: “no, you’re not buying that, I don’t like it.” And sure enough, he doesn’t buy it!! But isn’t that his money he’s spending? And who is his wife to tell him what to buy and what not to buy? Why is it that women have more rights than men in Spain? What’s wrong with these people? (Mayecor, interview, February 2009; my translation).
Women often echoed this puzzlement and disdain for Spanish men’s apparent weakness. For example, Sokhna, a journalist who had migrated to Madrid with a scholarship from the Spanish government, brought up the issue of women’s rights during our interview. According to her, Western feminism made no sense in the Senegalese context:

S: I want to say this loud and clear: we have different concerns, we don’t have the same problems. What we’re trying to achieve now, you’ve done many years ago. (...) Our concern is money, is not to be [economically] dependent on the man, and maybe one day we’ll talk about gender equity. I personally disagree with gender equity everywhere except at work. But at home, to be honest, if my husband and I have to be equal, I rather stay single. I rather be alone. In other words, I need a strong man, a real man.

I: Do you mean Spanish men are not real men?

S: [Silence] [Laughs] That’s none of my business. [Laughs] All I know is that I want a strong Senegalese man by my side. That’s all I want (Sokhna, interview, February 2010; my translation).

Other respondents voiced similar strong opinions when talking about gender relations in Spain, particularly in public. Interviewees feared that, were their wives to behave that way, their authority as men would be threatened within their households, their community of migrants, and their broader transnational community (which included relatives back in Senegal who were constantly updated on all matters domestic via cell phone). They would lose face as well as power: they would be made fun of by their co-nationals, have less say over how to administer their income, and be forced to put up with their wives telling them what to do. And so their yearning for intimate company was overruled by their conviction that, sooner or later, their wives would demand things they could not (or were not willing to) give them. This included material things like clothing, cell phones, or jewellery, as well as more independence. Albert, a young, single man from my third research site, reflected that his generation was learning from previous migrants’ mistakes:
I would never bring my wife over. One sees so many marriages break when men bring their wives! (...) For example, you bring your wife here, and she meets other women and goes to other houses, and she sees things there that she wants to have as well, but I don’t have money to buy them. Then, we’re going to fight. Or she’s going to get a job to buy them herself. (...) I’ve also seen women who have way too many friends, they want to be out and about all the time, not at home, and that’s not good: once a woman is married, she shouldn’t go out by herself that much. (...) Because there is a change: when the woman comes, maybe she has never worn pants at home, but now she wants to wear them. Or she never worked in Senegal, but here she wants to work and have her own money. And maybe she finds a job where she earns more than her husband, and then what do you do? You can’t tell her what to do and what not to do if she’s the one paying most of the rent and the food you eat (Albert, interview, March 2009; my translation).

As the quotes from Albert and Sokhna show, financial concerns were central for both men and women: women’s earnings were seen as empowering by the latter and, as a result, emasculating by the former. The threat posed by women’s financial independence sometimes bordered the paranoid. For example, several men voiced their concern that Senegalese women were preferred by Spanish employers and clients. Particularly in the first research site, where both men and women worked as street sellers, men thought that Spaniards tended to buy more from women. Three respondents also believed that the police were less likely to fine women found undocumented and / or selling in the streets without a permit. Anecdotal evidence did not support these claims: all women reported having had their merchandise taken away by the authorities, and some had pending fines – one even had the renewal of her residence permit pending on her paying a 4,000 Euro (approximately $5,600 CAD) fine for selling forged merchandise and doing commerce without a municipal permit. As for women in rural Andalusia, they believed they were in fact harshly discriminated against in the main local immigrant labour niche, agriculture: employers preferred men, who were thought to be stronger and have more endurance than women.

Financial considerations and fear of a new gender balance due to the woman’s newfound desire for independence thus made many cringe at the idea of family reunification. But participants were, first and foremost, concerned about how Spanish legislation may cap their
authority if they brought their wives over – particularly when it came to legislation on domestic violence. Again, Mayecor summarized other respondents’ thoughts on the matter:

I can’t wrap my head around some things. I remember one day I was leaving a discotheque and I saw a man with his girlfriend. She was yelling at him, and then she slapped him! In the middle of the street! The man didn’t do anything to stop her. Why can a woman hit a man, but if a man hits a woman he goes to prison? Why is it that in this country the only ones who go to prison for these kind of things are men? Why do women have so much power here? In my country, things are not that way: the woman does what the man tells her to do. Period. (Mayecor, interview, February 2009; my translation)

How Spanish authorities dealt with the issue of inter-partner violence was not only puzzling: it was also a potential risk to migrants’ legal status. Mayecor’s fears (“if you have problems with your wife, it’s likely you’ll end up in prison”) were not completely unfounded. In the early 2000s the violent deaths of several women (both Spaniards and foreigners) murdered by their partners and former partners had triggered a national campaign to fight domestic abuse, leading the Spanish government to pass new legislation on the matter (Ley Orgánica 1/2004). However, the law had many blind spots: in its eagerness, it neglected victims of female-led violence, same-sex couples, and created room for abuses on the part of women who wanted to blackmail or exert revenge on their partners.

It is this law Mounash was referring to when she gave her cheating husband an ultimatum (“if you don’t kick [your lover] out [of our apartment], I’ll report you to the police”). Another respondent, a man in his late forties, managed to keep his residency papers and his freedom by the skin of his teeth after his wife got tired of his beatings and went to the police. Domestic violence is, in fact, one of the few agreed upon reasons to deport a foreigner with a residence permit. Sadly, this respondent’s wife (whom I did not interview) lost all support in the community of Senegalese women upon reporting the events to Spanish authorities. According to another respondent who knew them both:
she put up with a lot, but going to the police ... that’s not acceptable. We tried everything: relatives [in Senegal] tried talking him into stopping the beatings, and her into giving him another chance. They even managed to have a marabout mediating the issue. But in the end she decided to go to the police. I hope she has many Spanish friends, because no Senegalese is going to give her a hand now (Batouly, interview, February 2009; my translation).

In summary, the financial burden of having a wife (and potentially children) in Spain, the tensions that might bring within the family, fears of loss of status upon changing power balances within the couple, and in particular anxieties regarding women’s legal rights in Spain led most male respondents to see family reunification as undesirable. “The best option,” a young man said “is to leave your wife at home. That way your family will be happy and you will be in peace. She will always be missing you, and each time you go home on vacation it will be as if you were getting married again.”

### 6.2.5 Encounters with the bureaucracy

Despite reservations on the part of migrants and their families, many Senegalese men decided to bring their wives over, either because they felt lonely or because they wanted help at home or with their business. Once migrant women obtained their families’ and husbands’ support (often gathered through intensive negotiations across national boundaries, making good use of cell phones and mobile mediators such as marabouts), bureaucratic hurdles began.

Family reunification proved to be a long, time- and energy-consuming undertaking that required familiarity with legal processes as well as money. In Spain, the migrant must provide the material means for the procedure and expose his living conditions (salary and dwelling) to the scrutiny of public agencies. In Senegal, the formal procedure itself was quite inexpensive, but required documents that had to be paid for (often in the form of bribes to Senegalese public servants), sworn translations of official documents, and trips to downtown Dakar where most if not all official processes and applications must be made. Also, lines at the Spanish Embassy in Dakar were often several blocks long: for mothers,
this meant they had to find someone to take care of their children and domestic chores and later on reciprocate the favour. For women working outside the home, time spent waiting in line was lost income.

Since the application forms were not always in a language that these women could read or write, women wishing to reunite their husbands in Spain often needed help to do fill them out – this help also was not free, although payment could take many forms (a present, the expectation that the woman would send money once in Spain, etc). And once everything was in order and the Spanish government accepted the application, it took anywhere from six months to two years until a residence permit was issued.

These hurdles acted as a *de facto* selection process. First of all, access to Spain was gendered, land and sea routes being virtually closed for women. Then, not all categories of legal migration were available to them. And finally, to succeed, potential migrants had to have social capital to support their application (determined by their socio-economic status and often their ethno-religious background), money to pay fees and bribes, and time to go through the procedure. This made migration to Europe and Spain significantly harder for women than it was for men. Among respondents, the women who succeeded were those familiar with the workings of the bureaucracy and with enough social and economic capital to support them throughout the administrative process. Aïssatou was a good example of this: a former civil servant in Senegal, she married her husband when he first returned to Spain after he managed to regularize his situation there (he had first entered through France with a tourist visa). When I asked if it had been difficult or expensive to obtain a permit to join her husband in 2004, she said:

No, it was not that hard. I knew the system because I was already working for the government, I didn’t have to pay [bribes] and I didn’t have to wait long. I knew the people doing the paperwork very well. I would just leave my office to talk to them, get them a coffee, and ask them to get me this or that paper. Then I only had to submit the documents and wait (Aïssatou, interview, February 2009; my translation).
Other women had to rely on broader supports to obtain their visa. Financial help and guidance for the administrative procedure came mainly from male close relatives (husbands, fathers, and brothers). Female relatives were also instrumental in taking care of housework and childcare while women were in downtown Dakar, gathering the documents to prove that they met the legal requirements to migrate to Spain as a spouse. Both male and female relatives played a crucial role in supporting, and thus making possible, women’s departure, engaging in transnational negotiations to facilitate it. Weaker links, on the other hand, were a useful resource when obtaining supporting documents (passport, medical check-up, birth and marriage certificates) and advice; marabouts provided mystic protection and metaphysical counsel. These weaker links were often paid to provide these services, becoming part of a burgeoning migration industry in Senegal. The case of Solinda and her children may serve as an example.

6.2.6 Solinda

Solinda was Sakho’s second wife. They got married when Sakho divorced his previous wife and their first child was already seven years old. Sakho, a teacher, had migrated to Spain in the early 2000s. Solinda joined her husband five years later, shortly after he regularized his status in the country. At that point they had four children, two of their own and two informally adopted upon the death of Sakho’s older brother. Unable to read or write in any language (Solinda never attended school) her husband’s former colleagues dealt with much of the paperwork and the bribing during the application process. When she described who did what for her during the process, it seemed as if a whole community of people (who shared with Sakho their geographic origin in Senegal, his ethnic background, or a former employer) had come together for them: a former union worker filled in the application forms; a cousin got the marriage certificate; a friend went to the Spanish consulate with her

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80 Marabouts were assumed to have privileged access to the spiritual world. In return for varying sums of money (or, sometimes, favours or payment in kind), marabouts consulted the spirits to learn the most favourable times for departure. Finally, marabouts also provided migrants with gri-gris or talismans that migrants carried around their neck or their waist during their trip for protection against harm, and prayed for their safety. None of the Muslim migrants interviewed had left without buying this kind of mystical protection from a marabout.
on several occasions; and someone else bought her medical certificate. Including the relatives and neighbours who took over house chores while she was in downtown Dakar, up to twenty people made it possible for Solinda and her four children to apply for family reunification. Basically, she received documents and waited in line to hand them in.

The result was unexpected: Spanish authorities replied that he could not support them all with his meagre income and that only his wife and two of his children would be able to join him. At first, Solinda refused to leave her children behind. Sakho convinced her that it would be easy to find a job in Spain and bring the rest of the children over. She left Senegal, reluctantly, leaving two children behind: one of her own (12 year old Sabrô) and one adopted (14). They bribed a government worker and managed to get a birth certificate where their oldest adopted daughter (17) was said to be Sakho and Solinda’s biological daughter, and brought her and their youngest biological child (8) to Spain. The other two children stayed in Guédiawaye, where Solinda’s mother gave them lodging. Sakho’s non-migrant children had their basic needs met: housing was free, their food was paid for with his remittances, and their school fees were waived because one of his former co-workers was by then a school principal.

Things in Spain did not go as planned, though: no matter how hard she tried, Solinda could not find a job. A former seamstress, she offered her services to other immigrants, charging one euro for hemming a pair of pants (barely enough to pay for the electricity it took to run the sewing machine a member of the local church had given her as a present). When I interviewed Sakho in 2009 he suggested their family was requesting too much money to provide for their two daughters in Dakar. Their budget was very tight.

During the second stage of my fieldwork in Senegal, my phone rang: it was Sakho. Their youngest daughter was very sick and needed medical treatment in Spain. I then found myself part of the facilitating transnational network that I was studying. Sakho sent me the five denied applications for family reunification he had submitted for the child, Sabrô, and
asked me to go to the Spanish Consulate in Dakar to start an application for a visa for urgent medical reasons. I was asked to return with a set of documents, one of which was a doctor’s report on Sabrô’s disease. But Solinda’s mother (the child’s caretaker) did not have the time, the money, or the interest to pursue that certificate. Other members of Sakho’s and my own transnational networks tried to mediate: a friend of his tried to buy the doctor’s report and a Red Cross worker that I knew found a doctor to do it legally, but in both cases Solinda’s mother failed to show up. A week later Sakho flew to Dakar. He had borrowed money from about fifteen different households and individuals in Spain, Portugal, and Germany to pay for a last-minute one-way plane ticket and other expenses.

The plan, as he explained to me at a bar frequented by union workers in Dakar, was quite simple: he would use his connections to meet four Senegalese border guards working at the airport, and bribe them. He would pay them to turn a blind eye when he boarded the plane to Madrid with both Sabrô and his older daughter, using his other two daughters’ Spanish residence permits. He expected Spanish border guards would not be able to tell the difference between the girls. Simple, but not easy: Sakho spent the next week negotiating the conditions of the exchange with the four men in unlikely places, mostly in an unlit parking lot near the Léopold Segar Senghor airport in the middle of the night. Finally, the border guards accepted to let him take only Sabrô. The price was four million CFA francs (over $8,000 CAD) to be split between the four border officials. Sakho made some more phone calls to gather the money to bribe the guards and pay for another last-minute ticket. They left shortly afterwards. The next time I heard from Sakho, he was in prison for smuggling Sabrô into Spain under a fake identity. In the end they both managed to stay in the country, although by late 2010 the family was considering migrating elsewhere in the EU. Sabrô received the medical treatment she needed.
6.2.7 Subsidiary agencies: the case of women who brought their husbands through family reunification

Because the vast majority of Senegalese migrants in Spain were men, the beneficiaries of family reunification were usually women. Sometimes, though, migrant women brought their husbands over. This was less common and apparently a challenge to traditional assumptions about the dynamics of migration within this particular group. In my first research site I found Liwane, a university student from a middle class family who had first migrated to Germany to improve her language skills. Liwane left Dakar in 2004 with a visa for nine months and moved in with a German family participating in a student exchange program at her host university. Her sister, who had married a Swiss citizen and lived in Zurich, helped Liwane find this program and encouraged her to migrate for just a few months to improve her professional qualifications. However, it turned out that her host family was rather neglectful (they barely provided Liwane with enough food to survive) and were not interested in relating to her at all. Feeling isolated in an unfamiliar environment, she felt depressed and decided to return to Senegal:

But then my sister told me I should visit her before going back, and I spent one month with her in Switzerland (...). The day I was going to buy my plane ticket to return to Senegal I called my uncle, who lived in [first research site] to say good bye. He said “you’re going to visit your sister and not me? You must come to see me before you go back to Senegal.” So I took the plane and when to visit him. Almost immediately I felt at home, there were so many other Senegalese, and we would go to the church together and I found white people here were so approachable – so different from Germany! My uncle helped me find a job (...) and I could change my student visa for a work and residence permit shortly after. I was lucky never to be undocumented. (Liwane, interview, January 2009; my translation).

In 2007, after almost three years in Europe, Liwane returned to her hometown in Senegal to marry her boyfriend, a young man from a powerful local family (his father was the town mayor) that she had been dating for many years. At that point they had to make plans: “we had to decide whether I would return to Senegal or he would come to Europe with me for a while. I explained to him I wanted to give Spain a chance, and he said he didn’t mind
leaving his job and coming over with me.” The couple made every decision together, negotiated all the arrangements as equal partners, and never cared too much about what they saw as outdated traditional gender roles in their home country. When I asked Liwane why she thought their relationship was so different from the others I had found during my fieldwork, she attributed it to religion: “Christ said that men and women are equal. Both my husband and I are deeply religious, and what matters to us is not who makes the most money or who is the man or the woman, but that we respect each other.”

Nima, a respondent from the second research site, was also Catholic, but her relationship with other male members of her family (including her husband) was not necessarily built upon equality. Nima was a member of the ethnic group whose kinship networks enabled a number of migrants to establish themselves in Southern Spain after entering through Portugal (see discussion above). From a poor rural household in northern Senegal, Nima was surprised to discover she had a residence and work permit in Spain:

One day I went to the market to buy food for my family. The phone rang: it was my brother who lives in [second research site], he was calling to let me know that my papers were ready. I said “which papers?” And then he told me that he had submitted an application on my behalf during the 2000-2001 amnesty. He sent me my visa and shortly after I took a plane to Madrid, and from there traveled by bus to [second research site] (Nima, interview, August 2009; my translation).

Nima’s brother had, in fact, discussed the matter with her husband and other male relatives, and they had decided that she should migrate and try to find work in Spain. That way she could help support non-migrant members of their household and, potentially, help bring other relatives to Europe. Nima’s preferences were not a concern for her male relatives: it was assumed that she would do as she was told. The plan worked out: Nima entered Spain with a one-year residence permit, her brother found her a job picking lettuce and tomatoes in a greenhouse where the manager was also from their same ethnic group, and then she moved on to work in a packing plant. By 2003 she submitted an application to bring her
spouse and two children through the family reunification procedure. Nima had to wait until 2006 to see them. During that time she lived with her brother and sister in law.

The third respondent whose husband had migrated through family reunification was neither Catholic nor part of an egalitarian relationship. Mamina (third research site) was in her late twenties and had a 7 year-old son when we met. She arrived to Spain, by plane, in 1996. Mamina, her parents, and one of her sisters migrated from Libya, where her father had worked for many years. Despite the length of her stay in the country, when we met Mamina was not fluent in Spanish (she was illiterate and did not master French or Wolof either) and did not have a residence or work permit.

Mamina’s family was Muslim. She met her husband (one of her father’s cousins) at 16, when the family returned to Senegal for a vacation before migrating to Spain. She was married in absentia shortly afterwards. Some years later, when Mamina’s father succeeded in getting a residence permit for himself and, afterwards, for the rest of his family, they submitted her husband’s application for family reunification. Mamina did not participate in assembling or submitting any of the documents (her father and other male relatives took care of this) although she signed the forms. She lost her residence permit some years later after giving birth to a baby boy and having to give up her job (I will discuss this in Chapter 7). In 2009 Mamina was trying to regularize her situation in Spain: her husband, who had migrated to Spain as a spouse thanks to her, was the main guarantor in her application.

Liwane, Nima, and Mamina’s families had very different backgrounds and migration experiences, but these women were all exceptional in one thing: they had been instrumental for their husbands’ migration. In a group where about 85 percent of the population is male and there are so many social obstacles for the migration of women, this made their case uncommon. One could perhaps expect that their role as facilitators of chain migration would allow a partial emancipation from traditional gender roles – the way that, for example, being an administrator of international remittances increased the independence and social prestige
of migrants’ wives who stayed in Senegal (Sarr, interview, February 2010). When looked at more closely, this turned out not to always be the case.

The difference between male and female participants who had migrated to Spain as spouses was one of primary vs. subsidiary agency. The networks upon which spouses of both genders relied were the same (relatives and entrepreneurs in Senegal and in Spain); so where the methods used to enable their migration. But, with the notable exception of Liwane, the decisions were made on wives’ behalf: these women were married off, given the papers to migrate, and handed forms to sign in order to bring their spouses and children over. The absence of power to decide over their own lives is in many ways reminiscent of Grabska’s discussion of transnational Sudanese marriage practices (2010). In her study, Grabska concludes that transnationalism does not necessarily mean an end (or a step forward) from asymmetrical gender relations; in fact, it may in some cases reinforce patriarchal relations within the family and the household. I will come back to this in the conclusions. To move on to cases where the agency of migrant women was more forceful, I turn now to the case of temporary workers who migrated to Southern Spain as strawberry pickers.

6.2.8 Air migrants (IV): the short-lived temporary worker program for strawberry pickers

One of my respondents was Raby, a woman in her mid 40s from a town a few hundred kilometres east of Dakar. Hers was a family of mostly women, as large as it was poor; her father had over 30 children but was retired, and only three of his sons had regular employment. Raby’s husband vanished long before we met, leaving her in charge of four children between the ages of 1 and 7. When Raby’s father, whose life currently depends on an expensive medical treatment, heard the Spanish government was recruiting agricultural workers, he thought it would be good if she could make it into the group of selected women.
When I asked Raby’s father to explain why and how his daughter had migrated, he explained:

Raby is my eldest child. Her mother is alive and so is her father; that is me, [complete name, name of the father, name of the mother], born in [place of birth] on April 20, 1936. Since Raby was born to this day she’s made great efforts to help her parents out. She has four kids, a boy and three girls. Her husband abandoned her twenty years ago. He is in Dakar, he’s a policeman. He abandoned his children. So I had to take Raby and her children back into my household. Nobody else could help them out. But I can’t work: I retired a while ago because I was sick with diabetes. This house that you see here, I built it in 1962. To this day, we live here with some of my children and grandchildren. Raby, she’s done absolutely everything within her reach to help feed her family: [when she lived with us] she woke up early to go to the market, she worked hard without ever complaining. Because even when her children grew up, they could not find a job. You know how tough Africa is. So when we heard through a cousin that the Spanish government was offering work to women, we talked, Raby and I. And she said: “father, please make an effort to help me go. Please do anything you can” (Leyti, interview, May 2009; my translation).

Raby’s father set his networks into motion to get his daughter to Spain. First, he borrowed a large sum of money from his neighbours and the local marabout. He then put on his one remaining set of elegant clothes and went to see a former coworkers and friend who lived in another city, then a senior government official. To this person he explained the distraught economic situation his family was in and asked to put her daughter’s application “higher up in the pile.” To thank him, Raby’s father deposited an envelope with his life savings and the borrowed money on top of his friend’s desk. One month later, on March 8, 2008, Raby was in Spain. But things did not go well. Before the end of March Raby was running half-naked on the highway, escaping her employer, who had tried to sexually abuse her. In June, her father was facing fraud charges at the local police station for unpaid debts.

The case of Dalanda (introduced in Chapter 5) was in many ways similar. Dalanda had no children, although she was also responsible for providing for her family. She did not need to pay her way into Spain the same way Raby had: Dalanda’s uncle was part of the selection committee. Like Raby, she paid about 4,000 CFA francs (roughly $8 CAD) for her
application and a bit over that for a fake medical certificate – not that either of them had anything to hide, but they both lived a couple of hours away from the closest clinic. In other cases, I interviewed people (both men and women) who were involved in the selection process in different capacities, either as members of selection committees, as part of overseeing institutions, or as part of the team who organized information sessions for workers who were about to leave for Spain; they all had at least one direct relative (a son, a daughter or a nephew) working in Spain, but in occupations that paid more and provided better working conditions than agriculture. I also had informal conversations with women who had been selected to migrate as cleaners or re-stocking in large department stores. These women also had been selected thanks to the mediation of some family member.

The design of the temporary agricultural programs (in particular the selection process) nurtured the use of pre-existing social networks among this group of migrants in Senegal. The members of the networks most deeply involved in facilitating women’s migration were typically close relatives. Parents and close family members often provided money and contacts. A second layer of weaker links was also involved, comprised of civil servants and doctors willing to be bribed; these were not always previously known to women or their families. Unlike the case of migrants’ wives discussed above, the networks that facilitated the of temporary workers in agriculture were fully contained within Senegal’s boundaries.

6.2.9 Discussion: migration, intra-EU mobility and the role of networks

In the two first parts of this section I have discussed the case of Senegalese citizens who entered Spain via another EU country; most respondents had migrated this way. The most tactical case was that of a group of men with double citizenship (Senegalese and Bissau-Guinean) who migrated first to Portugal and then to Spain. Some of these men had entered the EU through France first: that was the case of Yongan (above) and of Eloge, who went to visit his father in Lyon with a tourist visa and then moved to Lisbon before arriving at my third research site. Other cases were less impressive but equally symptomatic of the high degree of secondary migration within this group. For example, Diadhiou flew to Paris in
2006 as an international student and then realized that he was not going to be able to cover the most basic of his living expenses without full-time employment. He then moved to Southern Spain, where a cousin assured him he could easily find a job and regularize his situation; by the time of our interview, he had not managed to do either. Malick also spent some time working in France (where he went as a tourist) before moving to Spain. Among the women there were similar cases: Liwane was a student in Germany before she moved to Spain. Diabira entered Europe with a visa to participate in a basketball tournament in Switzerland, spent some time as an asylum seeker and then, feeling stuck and isolated, moved to Spain with her current husband. Batouly, Pauletta, Aminata, and Rokhaya held tourist visas issued by the governments of Italy or France when they left Dakar. This prevalence of secondary mobility towards Spain (and, since the economic crisis struck the country, away from it) was made possible by the thickness of the transnational networks there migrants relied upon.

The strength of the links connecting migrants with the members of their transnational social networks who facilitated their migration, as well as the kinds of resources these networks provided, depended on migrants’ gender (see Tables 6.1). Thus, although relatives were crucial for all respondents, in all cases women tended to rely on close family members who facilitated their migration. Whereas men seemed to build their migration trajectory sometimes on the go, women’s decisions often had to be first sanctioned by their fathers, husbands, or brothers: only in extreme circumstances did they make a decision that their male relatives had not authorized explicitly. Among my participants the only exception to this rule were middle-aged women, either divorced or in loose marital relationships and with dependent children, who migrated as tourists in order to support their family. These women tended to draw from their daughters and professional connections in Senegal to obtain their tourist visas for the EU; their status as breadwinners for their families implied their husbands were either unable or unwilling to fulfill their roles as heads of households and exempted these women from their approval. Unlike them, wives who were brought over through family reunification and temporary workers (the object of the two previous
sections) saw their migration experiences shaped by the decisions that men in their direct environment made for them. Interestingly, this was especially the case of two of the three migrant women who had facilitated their husbands’ migration to Spain through the family reunification procedure, Nima and Mamina.

In this section I have focused mostly on the experience of women participants. That may explain why, unlike other researchers (Riccio 2004, Sinatti 2006), I have found the role of Senegalese transnational religious networks to be overshadowed by that of family and kinship. Participants’ main supports came from their relatives, especially in obtaining documents to cross the border, be it as a wife, a tourist, or a temporary worker. Two Senegalese migration scholars that I interviewed also suggested that the relatively less importance of religious networks in my findings may be due to most white researchers’ “obsession” (their words) with the role of Mouride networks. In other words, according to this hypothesis it would be a matter of other scholars exaggerating the importance of religious transnationalism. Regardless of whether it is because of my or other researchers’ bias, I have not found such networks to be very important for the migration of women respondents (however, these networks served other functions once migrants were in Spain; see Chapter 7). Something that came up during my fieldwork and that other researchers already highlighted was the pivotal role of communication technologies – and more specifically, the use of cell phones – in connecting migrants with different members of their extended network. Information moved swiftly among migrants thanks to this technology, encouraging them to choose one destination or another depending on the specific circumstances at the time and contributing to an extension of migrants’ transnational social space. How this space emerged and the relations that shaped it once participants settled in Spain will be discussed in the next chapter. But first, let us consider the different transnational networks deployed by migrants traveling on boat and by land.
6.3 Sea migrants

Air migrants had, in all cases, crossed the border legally, even when the documents that they used to do so were not always legitimate or lawful. Boat migrants represented the other end of the spectrum: they had no permit to travel – let alone settle down and work – in the EU. In fact, many of them did not even have a passport when they reached the coasts of Spain. Given the political affinity between Spain and Senegal in matters related to the control of undocumented migration, carrying one may have made their repatriation easier (boat migrants also threw their phones, Senegalese currency, and any other belonging that might give away their nationality overboard if there was a risk they could be intercepted by border authorities). Also unlike air migrants, the routes that boat migrants followed became increasingly monitored, policed, and militarized between 2005 and 2010. This led them and their smugglers to modify their strategies. As they did so, the people they relied on to cross the border changed.

During one of my visits to the COFLEC\textsuperscript{81} offices in Thiaroye-sur-mer I met Babacar, a fisherman in his mid-forties who, in the past, had smuggled people into the Canary Islands. Sitting in the courtyard where the organization’s members smoked mussels and fish to sell in the local market, I asked him to tell me about his time as a smuggler.

When we went fishing, sometimes we went quite far. So when all this fuss about migrating to Europe started we [he and other fishermen] thought we could make some money taking people from our village, relatives, neighbours, friends and friends of friends. It was our way of making some money on the side. Things are hard here in Senegal, it’s not easy to support one’s family. And we didn’t think of it as a crime, although we knew the trip was dangerous. We did it only a handful of times because of this. At one point eight of us decided to travel ourselves and go to Europe to make some good money, you know, like some of those we took to Spain had managed to do. But we were not lucky: we caught bad weather and had to come back (Babacar, interview, May 2009; my translation).

\textsuperscript{81} This organization was introduced in Chapter 5.
Puzzled by the casual tone he used to talk about his “expeditions” to the Canary Islands I became curious about the effect that state cooperation between Spain and Senegal many have had on such business ventures. How had this cooperation impacted his outlook on human smuggling? Had the organization of the trip become any harder because of it?

Well, organizing the trip was never easy, not even back then. There was always a lot of organizing to do and there were risks involved. We had to collect money for the trip, to pay for the boat, the engines, all that. It isn’t always easy here in Senegal to do that!! But with FRONTEX … Well, first of all, [in 2005] the government passed a law\(^\text{82}\) that meant we could go to prison for taking people across the border. A few people, some of them fishermen like me, went to prison for taking people to the Canary Islands. I didn’t want to go to prison. Many others didn’t. So they got people like me out of the way, but young men still wanted to migrate. They looked for people who would take them to Spain and stopped thinking about the price they had to pay or who was going to take them there (Babacar, interview, May 2009; my translation).

The COFLEC had a similarly critical official stand on Spanish – Senegalese cooperation in the control of the sea border. According to the director, this cooperation had made smuggling the hen that laid golden eggs for criminal networks. In informal conversations with some members (mothers who had lost between one and four children to sea migration) they told me they believed this irruption of criminal networks that were beyond their immediate social sphere was, at least partly, responsible for the increasing death toll of sea migrants. It seemed many migrants relied on smugglers who were not concerned about going to prison and who would send migrants on the trip by themselves or with a hired (not always capable) captain, a GPS and barely enough fuel to reach Spain. In a few cases, migrants were told they were in Europe when they arrived back to the African coast just a few kilometres from where they had boarded the \textit{cayuco}. With criminals in charge of smuggling scams, abuses and deaths skyrocketed at the same time that accountability disappeared. What is interesting, however, is that the price of the ticket remained stable at around 1,000 euros (fieldwork, UNODC 2011). The following sections summarize

\(^{82}\) \textit{LOI n 2005-06 du 10 mai 2005 relatif à la lutte contre la traite des personnes et pratiques assimilées et à la protection des victimes}, a law to fight human trafficking and protect its victims.
respondents’ experiences of boat migration before and after 2006, the year that the first FRONTEX-led HERA operation began.

6.3.1 Migrating by sea before 2006

Evidence collected in the field confirmed Babacar’s assessment on the evolution of sea migration in Senegal. Two participants, Djibril and Mayecor (22 and 27 at the time of our first interview) migrated in 2006. Like many other boat migrants that I encountered, they both had worked as fishermen before leaving Senegal.

Mayecor was a Serer from Kaolak, a city north of the border with Gambia. When he decided to migrate he asked his brother and his sister (who lived in Spain) for advice. Both encouraged him to try to get a visa and travel as a tourist. But Mayecor, who already had some savings, was unwilling to “waste them” in bribing government officials to buy a tourist visa. He talked to his mother about it and asked for her help. It turned out a relative of hers owned two cayucos and was planning a trip a few weeks later.

My mother explained to him [the owner of the cayuco, her brother’s nephew] that I wanted to go and arranged for me to be on the boat. Each person paid a thousand euros, 750,000 CFA francs. I had my store and some savings. So he said, “give me 1,000 euros and I’ll take you.” We left on April 17, 2006. I arrived in Spain 8 days later. (...) We left by night. Only my mother and my brother knew I was leaving that night. I didn’t want to tell the rest of my family, because we had heard about all the people who died at sea. If they had known my intentions, they would have locked me at home (Mayecor, interview, January 2010; my translation).

Mayecor was put on cooking duty during the trip. That was a position of responsibility: not only would he be dealing with the butane canisters and the cooking, but he would be in charge of distributing food and water among the 64 passengers in a boat similar to the one shown in Figure 6.3. He remembered that as a result the rest of the people “thought I was the captain’s brother.” He also had to mediate in a number of fights. Although they were
lucky to have good weather, some of the passengers who were not used to the sea got sick and others lost their mind, often asking the captain to turn around and take them back to Senegal.

But the captain had balls and we kept going. We lost one GPS in a fight the first night [because some of the men wanted the captain to turn around and go back to Senegal] and the other run out of battery. Luckily the captain was a very experienced fisherman and he used the stars to take us here [to Spain]. (...) We were too many people in the boat and it was taking on water. So at one point we had to dump some of the butane and almost all the [drinking] water. Two people died on the trip; we left them at sea (Mayecor, interview, January 2010; my translation).

Mayecor’s trip was far from easy, but his point of departure was good: he had personal connections with the captain, who favoured him during the trip. In fact, according to Mayecor, all the passengers in the boat were connected through thick personal networks: they were neighbours, friends, and often relatives following Senegalese definitions of kinship. Had the boat captain and smuggler (himself a migrant) tried to scam migrants or risk their lives unnecessarily by, for example, not carrying enough food for everyone in the boat, he would have lost face in front of his community and family. Tight personal connections thus meant that the smugglers were closely watched and expected to go out of their way to provide for passengers’ safety – at least as much as circumstances allowed.
Djibril took the same trip a few weeks before Mayecor. He was the second son of his father’s second wife – one of 14 siblings in a large family household that I had the privilege to visit in early 2010. Djibril had been a fisherman in Senegal, where, together with his older brother and a maternal uncle, he had worked the coast from the border with Guinea Bissau to the border with Mauritania. He was Lebou (an ethnic group closely related to the Wolof), Mouride, and came from a small fishing village just outside of Saint Louis.

Djibril’s mother had divorced his father and moved out some years before we met. Although both parents were on good terms, the family was barely able to make ends meet with their fishermen’s income. Other young men in the village had left and were already sending remittances to their relatives, and so, when it became obvious things were not going to improve, Djibril’s mother encouraged her two older sons to leave in order to support the family. Pressured by his mother, Djibril contacted one of these former friends that had made it to Spain successfully.

My friend gave me an address in Saint Louis, close to my home. I went to ask about the trip, but the captain said there were no boats leaving: the next trip was to leave Dakar in a couple of weeks. (...) One day I was working and he called me to say that they were leaving the day after, so I took my clothes and rushed to Dakar with my brother and some neighbours. When we left it was very, very windy, and there were heavy seas. We continued to the border with Morocco and then realized that the fuel container was pierced: all the gas had leaked out of it and we had none left! We were too far from Spain and too far from Senegal. What were we going to do?! (...) We saw a [Moroccan] fishing boat and after much negotiating they sold us some fuel. So we returned to Dakar and when we arrived we went straight to see this man who had organized the trip. (...) He was scared. He paid for all of us to get back home by bus and gave us back our money – most of it, anyways. There was a dead man in our boat. I don’t know what happened to the body. But the man [who had organized the trip] was scared (Djibril, interview, December 2009; my translation).

Interestingly, Djibril took pictures during the first few hours of this first trip: he appears smiling with his brother and other friends, all of them wearing their nicest clothes. Djibril
also took a digital camera to document the trip that finally took him to Spain. After the close call of their first attempt, Djibril and his brother decided to organize the journey themselves, and so they talked to other young fishermen and collected the money to buy the necessary equipment for the trip. Their boat left a few months later. This time they were intercepted by FRONTEX when they were close to Spanish shore. The migrants were taken to detention in Madrid (the centres in the Canary Islands must have been full at the time) and were released a few days later. By 2010, both brothers had become legal residents and held semi-steady (albeit poorly paid) jobs. They arranged to get married in their first visit to Senegal in late 2010 and early 2011. Mayecor, in contrast, is still waiting to regularize his situation in the country.

What Mayecor and Djibril’s stories have in common is their personal connections with smugglers: Mayecor was the cayuco’s owner’s relative; Djibril was loosely connected to his first smuggler and then became one himself. The social space that made this migration possible was that of the household and the neighbourhood, both as physical spaces and as deterritorialized transnational social spaces (like the cases examined above, boat migrants relied heavily on migrants already settled in Europe). Both stories are highly personal: these are no criminal networks but small migrant entrepreneurs who take on smuggling to make some money and secure their own migration. In other pre-2006 cases, migrants with little resources managed to secure a spot in the cayuco by helping smugglers deal with specific aspects of the trip. For example, Omar (whom I met in Tangier) struck a deal with his neighbour and smuggler: if he could find ten migrants, he would travel for free. Of course there would have been migrants who relied on more organized smuggling networks prior to 2006, but these became more common after the sea border became more heavily surveilled that year.

6.3.2 Migrating by sea after 2006

Information referring to the strategies used by post-2006 sea migrants was hard to gather: recent arrivals tended to be reluctant to talk about the details of their trip. Silence, refusal to
answer, or elusive replies (such as “I got here just like everyone else did”) were common reactions during our interviews. My interpretation is that this is due to fear. Some of the participants had only recently arrived to Spain (one of them two weeks before our interview). They did not speak Spanish and were not yet familiar with their new environment. These interviewees talked to me because I had been introduced to them by a person they trusted, but they were very cautious with their answers. They may have also be wary of revealing some information that could be used against them by their smugglers, who were, at least in some cases, organized criminal networks.

Regardless of these obstacles, it seems reasonable to make a series of preliminary assertions drawing from this interviews and available secondary information. First, smuggling underwent a process of professionalization (see also UNODC 2011). None of these migrants had traveled for free in exchange for recruiting migrants or because the smugglers were their relatives. More importantly for the purposes of this study, they claimed not to know who organized the trip. Partly because newer routes were longer and riskier to avoid detection, and partly because human smuggling became a crime punishable with prison in Senegal, organized criminal networks stepped in to respond to the demand for trips to the Canary Islands.

The experience of Alioune illustrates this point. Alioune, a Lebou like Djibril, spent his time between the houses of his two wives, who lived in Yembeul (a suburb 1-2 hours from downtown Dakar) and the city of Thiés. He was desperate to leave Senegal. Unable to secure a visa, in early 2009 he decided to travel by sea. But he could not find anyone who would be willing to smuggle him across the border: by then, there was too much surveillance and the risk of being caught and sent to prison was too high. Then, in early 2009, he learned about somebody in Mauritania who could sell him a spot on a boat. Alioune went to Mauritania to pay half of the trip to the smugglers and agreed to meet them at a certain point near the border on a specific date. However, when he got there he only found a group of other would-be migrants shivering on a desert beach in the middle of the
night, waiting with the other half of the money to pay the smugglers. They stayed there for the night and the following day, until they decided to go to the building where they had arranged the trip weeks before: it was empty. Some neighbours said the smugglers had been detained by the police, but his wife Binta suspected they had simply run away with the money.

6.3.3 Mamadou

In my second research site (where boat migration seemed to be particularly prevalent) I found Mamadou, a young man in his early thirties who had arrived to Spain in 2005. Although the way he had crossed the border was uncommon, it is discussed here to highlight the many creative ways that Senegalese migrants used to circumvent state-sanctioned border controls.

Before he migrated, Mamadou worked as a mechanic for the national railroad company and at a textile industry. He made between 100,000 and 150,000 CFA francs a month (about $210 - 320 CAD) working six days a week, eight to ten hours a day. Several of his relatives lived in Europe. Their returns to Dakar as rich and successful men sparked his ambitions to migrate. His first idea was to get a tourist visa:

I tried to come with a visa, I went to so many embassies! France, Italy, Spain. But they didn’t let me come [as a tourist]. They asked me if I had money or businesses [in Senegal] but I didn’t. Then I spent a lot of money trying to buy the visa (...), almost one million CFA francs [over $2,000 CAD]. (...) I paid someone to get me the visa, but this person vanished with the money. A friend introduced me to him, I gave him the money and he always said: wait, wait, until one day I never saw him again. He took my life’s savings with him (Mamadou, interview, July 2009; my translation).

Scammed and still wanting to migrate, Mamadou decided to approach a man who worked in a Spanish boat. This is where his experience becomes unique.
When that failed I came by boat. I didn’t come in cayuco, I came by boat. Since I am a mechanic, sometimes I worked in the harbour fixing boat engines. Then I met someone there, a Spanish person (...) I am sorry, I can’t give you more information about him. I met this person there and told him my story. He asked me if I was certain I wanted to go to Spain, he said I had a good job in Senegal, and I said yes, I have a good job but my salary is not good, I am the eldest son and I can’t provide for my family with 150,000 a month. (...) He told me to go with them and work as a mechanic. We first went to France, we were there for only a couple of hours. Then we went to Morocco and then to Spain. I was in the boat for almost a month, I had a contract and a visa but I didn’t get paid because it was an exchange [Mamadou worked in exchange for being smuggled into Spain]. That was in October, 2004 (Mamadou, interview, July 2009; my translation).

Mamadou’s journey is a testimony to the many shapes migration (even boat migration) took during the fever of Senegalese migration to Spain. He had a contract and a special visa to work in a boat headed towards Europe, and with it he crossed the border legally. However, Mamadou’s agreement with his employer / smuggler was that he would work for a month, after which he was free to get off the ship and go wherever he wanted. In this case, Mamadou’s networks were irrelevant for his migration (although they had been central in previous attempts to obtain or buy a visa to enter Europe as a tourist).

6.3.4 Discussion: before, after, and the centrality of gender

The examples of Djibril, Mayecor, and Alioune illustrate the experience of pre- and post-2006 sea migration. The date is approximate and marks, more than a radical change in strategies, an inflection point in the way these trips were organized and the kind of networks migrants relied upon. Of course, conclusions regarding sea migrants are preliminary given the small size of this group in my sample. However, based on participants’ experiences and other secondary sources (Collyer 2007, de Haas 2008, del Grande 2008, UNODC 2011) we can argue that recently adopted border control practices have created a niche for a lucrative criminal business, making migrants more vulnerable. Participants’ experiences suggest that before 2006 migrants put their lives in their neighbours’ hands. Their parents and close relatives paid for their trip, and they made their decisions according to what they and other friends and relatives already in Spain told them. By 2009, new EU border control efforts
pushed migrants to follow much longer and riskier routes that took them further west into the Atlantic. They were more likely to rely on transnational organized criminal networks that they could in no way hold accountable.

Table 6.2: Obstacles found by migrant men travelling by sea and the kind, location, and resources provided by the transnational social networks they relied upon.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Obstacles found</th>
<th>Networks</th>
<th>Resources provided</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Links</td>
<td></td>
<td>Senegal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Money</td>
<td>Spain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Information / assistance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mystic protection</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>men</td>
<td>Administrative</td>
<td>Very strong and durable (parents, spouses, siblings)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Financial</td>
<td>Strong and semi-durable (friends, neighbours)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk</td>
<td></td>
<td>Weak / absent and ephemeral (smugglers, marabouts)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The kind of networks these men relied on to overcome the obstacles they found (the lack of government permission to cross the border, the need to pay smugglers, and the risk of travelling by boat) are summarized in Table 6.2. These networks brought together different types of links (very strong and durable, strong and semi-durable, and weak / absent and semi-durable) located both in Senegal and in Spain.

There is evidence that women traveled by boat to the Canary Islands. According to interviewees and to published reports (Sarr et al. 2009), however, these women tended to be citizens of other West African countries who used Senegal as a stepping stone in their way towards Europe. In previous chapters I discussed some of the gendered expectations that prevented women from getting involved in this kind of migration. Babacar, the smuggler mentioned above, provided a bit more information:

We never let women travel in our boat: you’re not supposed to, women in a boat mean trouble! You know how we believe in magic and talismans [gri-gris]. You don’t get on a boat without a talisman. But, women, if they’re not clean ... I don’t think you know what I mean. For example, before you pray you have to wash yourself in a very specific way. Right now I couldn’t pray even though I just had a shower. If I spent the night with my wife or even if I was alone but in the morning my underwear is not clean, then I have to wash myself before I pray. Women who are not virgins have to do
the same, and women who have their period are not clean. So, if you’re in a *cayuco*, people have to be clean for the talismans to work. If someone is dirty you’re in trouble. That is why we didn’t take women or children (Babacar, interview, May 2009; my translation).

This fear that women’s bodies might render talismans useless is something that I have not found in other researchers’ accounts. Some migrants pointed to the relationship between gender and safety at sea, but only Babacar went out of his way to make the nature of that relationship explicit.

Gender was also central to the resources that members of boat migrants’ social networks provided, particularly within the family. Although I found anecdotal information supporting this argument, the issue has been explored in depth by a group of Senegalese researchers (Sarr et al. 2009). These researchers conducted a survey of 320 family members in several key coastal areas of departure of boat migrants. They concluded that gender was key in determining the roles played by different family members both before and after the migration. Thus, although both parents had contributed financially to their son’s trip:

Generally speaking, the father negotiates with the smugglers [*convoyeur*], gathers official documents, sends money in case the migrant finds himself in trouble, gives him advice, [and] accompanies him to the point of departure [*point d’embarquement*]. Wives are more present helping pack migrants’ luggage and ensuring divine protection [*protection mystique*] for him. (...) Mothers also contributed to their child’s departure. If they are widows or placed in situations of rivalry with other co-spouses in polygamous marriages, they are quick to let go of their savings and [sell] their jewellery. Thus, they make huge sacrifices that we must judge not in comparison to men’s contributions [to migration], but to their own very limited possibilities (Sarr et al. 2009, p. 20-21; my translation).

Unfortunately, no similar research has been conducted so far to explore gender and the migration of Senegalese citizens to the EU by land. This, the most precarious route of all, is the focus of the final case study section below.
6.4 The journey by land: where the border is everywhere

A smaller number of Senegalese migrants have attempted to cross the land borders of Spain illegally since 2005. Participants in Tangier had followed what the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC 2011) call the “Mediterranean overland route,” linking Dakar (and other West African cities) with Morocco via Mauritania or Mali. Once there, migrants hope to enter Ceuta or Melilla or cross the Straits of Gibraltar. Authors of the UNODC report claim that this route has fallen in disrepute among both Asian and West African migrants. According to them, “the main reason is no doubt the Spanish policy of keeping irregular migrants in Ceuta and Melilla and not transferring them to mainland Spain, making the two cities a dead end for those wishing to reach the European continent” (UNODC 2011: 24). The Dakar-based research team also found that transnational criminal networks smuggling West Africans into Europe were only loosely organized when compared with those using the region as a transit space for Asian citizens headed towards the EU. The latter organized the trip from beginning to end and charged large sums of money, were clearly structured, and coordinated several smuggling nodes in countries of transit. The former did
not, generally speaking, have permanent structures. West African migrants traveling by land tended to hire different and unconnected smugglers for different parts of the trip (what in the report is called the “pay as you go” method) and had frequent and long stops at well-established transit cities, often taking months, if not years, until they were able to pay their way to northern Africa. There seemed to be no connection between the two criminal structures. In the case of Europe-bound West African migration, most of these smugglers were themselves migrants who worked “part-time” in the business as a way to make some money on the side (UNODC 2011).

During my fieldwork I found that Senegalese migrants who undertook the long journey by land tended to be the ones with the least economic and social resources. Some had already tried other methods and failed to reach Europe. With all that was at stake (loans assumed by migrants’ families, time invested, lost opportunities, and face, at the very least) those who were forcibly returned by state forces between 2006 and 2009 were likely to turn around and start their journey towards Europe as soon as they landed in Dakar. A second, more reckless attempt by land was a common occurrence among these migrants, as was suicide (Sarr, personal communication, June 2009). Participants in this group worked within a transnational social space that was, by necessity, geographically larger than that of air or sea migrants; and, by implication, more precarious. The men that I interviewed narrated how, during their trip by land, they had relied on numerous contacts in the many countries they traversed. The most experienced of these men was Omar, who undertook the trip to Europe three times, one by boat and two by land.

The first time Omar traveled from Dakar to Mauritania and then to Bamako, Mali, in 2004. He did this leg of the trip by himself before hiring different smugglers that would take him through Nigeria and Algeria before arriving to Morocco. In our first interview in the Fall of 2009, which I did not record, he said the hardest thing was to find the money to pay smugglers to take him to the next city. It was not a problem of willingness: Omar said he was already used to “mistreating his body,” so working on the fields, in construction,
carrying heavy weight, begging, peddling, or helping dispose of other people’s waste did not seem too much of a problem for him. It was more a question of finding these jobs in places he was not familiar with, in languages he did not always understand, and surrounded by people he did not know. Eventually he would land odd jobs through the contacts he made on the road. He also learnt, through word of mouth, about rides and ways to avoid state security forces and other dangers along the way. He would stay in cheap accommodations for migrants (mostly dungy basement rooms) with other West Africans who would share information with him, and although sometimes he ran into trouble (he did not always have enough to eat and in a couple of occasions was stripped of all his money, either by police or by smugglers who then dumped him in the desert) he considered himself lucky. He did not remember the names of the contacts who made his migration possible. At the most, he would remember their nationality. The whole trip took him four months.

The second time Omar undertook the land journey he started in Nouadibouh, Mauritania, after he had been deported in 2007 for trying to reach the Canary Islands by boat. This trip was much quicker because, according to him, he was already familiar with the route. Also this time he made some money becoming a “guide” for other migrants – in fact, working as a part-time smuggler. Omar made contacts along the way and planned his next movement mostly through the use of cell-phones. He and other migrants from different West African countries shared valuable information and travelled together during short periods of time (the exception to this was his friend Ahmed, who travelled with him the whole way).

These contacts were ephemeral: once they had fulfilled their function, they disappeared. His contacts in Tangier, where he had been living for several years, seemed more stable. They were all Senegalese of different ages. He lived with six other men, four of whom were Senegalese and the other two West Africans of other nationalities. As we moved through the city together in 2007 and 2009 it became clear that he belonged to a tight group of Senegalese migrant men who had created their own space within a hostile context that they described as racist, dangerous, and very prejudiced against black migrants. Omar relied on
these networks of co-nationals to circumvent (or survive) the abuses they suffered on the part of their landlords, occasional employers, state authorities, and neighbours who felt entitled to take advantage of them both verbally and physically. This network provided him with emotional support and also with valuable information about possible ways to make money that did not always involve legitimate work. He and his friends also used a system to alert each other of the presence of the police when peddling on the street or begging. Thanks to this web of migrants and to the contacts he had in the Red Cross, the Catholic NGO Caritas, and other human rights organizations, Omar felt safer in Tangier than the felt when he was traversing the continent towards Morocco.

Other detailed accounts of migrants’ journeys overland have been published elsewhere, particularly in the media. In 2004, BBC journalist Joseph Winter documented a trip in many ways similar to Omar’s. Winter retraced the journey of “Billy,” a Guinean-born migrant who left Dakar (where he had worked as a nurse for 17 years) and traveled to Europe by land. He chose this route because it was cheaper and he did not have money to buy a visa. Billy started his trip in 1999. He paid $1,300 to his smuggler, who instructed him to go to Bamako and contact another smuggler. Once there, however, the person who was to take him to the next city said he had not been paid. Billy spent some time in Bamako, where he met other West African migrants who shared vital information about the road ahead with him. Finally, he found a smuggler who took him to Algeria, but they were stopped by the police and given 24 hours to leave the country. And here is where the key role of “fungible” weak links among land migrant became most evident: stranded, one of the other migrants who was being smuggled into Algeria produced some money he had hidden from the smuggler. He gave $5 to each migrant. With that money, they bought “trinkets to sell so that we could raise enough money to continue our journey” (BBC, 2004). Once they had gathered some funds, this groups of migrants found another smuggler and continued their journey to Morocco. In Casablanca, Billy worked as a construction worker. Despite

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83 I was introduced to Billy’s case by Dr. Gregory Feldman.
working hard, he had to phone home and ask his wife to sell his television and borrow some 
money from his family in order to pay for the next leg of the trip.

When I went to pick up the $700 they sent me, I met two Senegalese men who were 
also collecting money to pay for their trip to Europe. They had a Moroccan guide, 
who agreed to take me as well, for $600. In Casablanca, the three of us boarded a 
bus for Tangier, where we found a hotel full of migrants, all trying to reach Europe 
(BBC, 2004).

Billy then spent some time in the forest by the fence where Omar also lived for a while. 
Also like Omar, he failed to cross the land border and eventually took an inflatable boat that 
he and other migrants used to go around the fence and reach Ceuta. Eventually, Billy would 
reach his final destination: Italy.

The contacts that both Omar and Billy described relying on during their migration by land 
were often people they barely knew although they trusted them with their lives. These 
connections (that in previous pages I have described as “ephemeral” or “fungible”) would 
barely qualify as weak ties in Granovetter’s sense. Of these instrumental acquaintances from 
which they received information on routes, job opportunities, and sometimes food or shelter, 
they knew only a pseudonym and a cell phone number; as if the road was on fire behind 
them, even these contacts disappeared as migrants moved forward. In a way, most members 
of land migrants’ transnational networks were entrepreneurs acting in the shadow economy, 
some of whom became semi-professional smugglers as a way to pay their own way and who 
provided for travellers’ immediate needs in exchange for money or other privileges. Also in 
contrast to migrants using other routes, NGO workers were crucial members of these 
migrants’ transnational social space: these workers had resources beyond migrant networks 
and could, in moments of desperation, take their voices to where they might be heard and 
their rights be fought for. NGOs were also a vital resource in a more literal way: according
to Omar, they could provide food, access to healthcare and occasionally shelter if things went really wrong.

6.4.1 Gender, networks, and land migration

Although very few land migrants are Senegalese women, those working in the field have witnessed a slow process of feminization of these flows. The 2011 UNODC report cited anecdotal evidence that the percentage of West African women in the Moroccan city of Oujda (a central node in northbound migration) had risen from one percent in 2007 to 17 percent in 2009. An NGO worker who had spent the previous eight years working with West African land migrants also believed that the number of women migrants was on the rise:

[Land] migration is undergoing a process of feminization, because it’s exactly like for men: [women] want to seize freedom, meet their needs, be self-sufficient, they want to improve their lives and they look for it abroad, because they believe they can’t find it at home. But women are very vulnerable: the journey is very dangerous, be it because of the police control, or because one ends up in unknown places. (...) [S]he can end up with a friend or a husband who is not really their friend or their husband who can protect them, but who can also abuse them. She can find a job – and [while] it’s true that she can have little jobs, there is also prostitution in the picture – and well, for women there are also children, because there are many women who travel with their children (...) and they face all possible forms of discrimination and violence (CIMADE, interview, January 2010).

The multiple forms of violence that black West African migrants experience on their way towards Europe have been explored by a number of researchers (Collyer 2007, del Grande 2008, MSF 2010). These include physical and psychological violence, exploitation by employers and smugglers, abuses on the part of other migrants and state security forces in transit countries, and even death. Women migrants are also the object of sexual violence and, at times, they have been forced into prostitution (MSF 2010). There is also evidence that these women resort to illegal abortions, often with drugs facilitated by the same criminal networks they depend upon and little or no clinical advice (Women’s Link
Little is known about the children they so often bear, birth, and raise on the way.

That is the story of many migrant women, but it does not reflect the experiences of those I found during my fieldwork. Aware of the risks that might lay ahead of black migrant women like them, these respondents refused to place their fate on other migrants. Sagar and Ouly made sure, when traveling by land, to minimize danger by buying bus trips as direct as possible between Dakar and Tangier. They traveled quickly and alone or in the company of one man who was well known to their families and was responsible for their safety. They also had a clear destination: an employer’s home, a sister’s home, or the home of a family deemed safe. Their stays were never longer than necessary: whenever Sagar ran out of merchandise she returned to Senegal; and Ouly, unable to regularize her situation in Morocco, went back to her family within a few months.

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<tr>
<th>Obstacles found</th>
<th>Networks</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weak / absent and ephemeral, potentially exploitative (smugglers, other migrants)</td>
<td>Information / assistance (jobs, lodging, routes, dangers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exceptionally: Very strong and durable (parents, spouses)</td>
<td>Relative safety</td>
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<td>Emotional support</td>
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<td>Location</td>
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<tr>
<th>Networks</th>
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<tr>
<td>Money</td>
<td>Information / assistance (jobs, lodging)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>Information / assistance (jobs, lodging)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reputation</td>
<td>Information / assistance (jobs, lodging)</td>
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<td>Location</td>
<td>Transit / destination</td>
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<td>Weak / absent and ephemeral, potentially exploitative (smugglers, other migrants)</td>
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<td>(parents, spouses)</td>
<td>Relative safety</td>
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<td>Emotional support</td>
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Table 6.3: Obstacles found by men and women land migrants and the kind, location, and resources provided by the networks they relied upon.

* Information collected from secondary sources.
It is worth emphasizing though that these women’s experiences may not be typical. First, while attracted to the idea of migration to Spain, these women were in fact working within already well-greased spaces of migration for West African migrants in the Maghreb. They were not actively trying to go to Spain: they had reached Tangier to work, like many other Senegalese citizens had before them, and their ears were only partially tuned to opportunities to continue their trip across the border. If they thought what they were being offered was too risky, they did not pursue it. Second, they actually had the means to travel safely without relying on other fellow co-nationals not part of their most intimate social network (Granovetter’s strong ties).

My findings about the obstacles that participants found when migrating to Spain by land are summarized in Table 6.3. This table is based on information collected in Senegal, Morocco, and from secondary sources. I have presented the circumstances of the women that I interviewed in Tangier; because their situation did not seem representative of the larger group of women land migrants according to the literature, and only as a point of reference, I have added information gathered from secondary sources (MSF 2010, Women’s Link Worldwide 2010). Taking this into account, the obstacles that land men and women migrants found were rather similar (although women faced the added risk of sexual violence and the potential need to care for their offspring). Also both relied on weak / absent and ephemeral networks established in countries of transit. Only in exceptional occasions could they ask for assistance from their relatives (very strong and durable links) in Senegal, for example when they required identification documents or money to continue their trip. The women that I found in Tangier, on the other hand, had mostly members of their close transnational social network to help them overcome the administrative obstacles they found.

6.5 Discussion: nit, nit ay garabam84

Despite government efforts to stop it, the migration of Senegalese citizens to Spain between 2005 and 2010 not only continued: it grew significantly. In this chapter I have argued that

84 Wolof proverb: “only man is man’s remedy.”
migrants’ efficient use of their transnational social networks made this possible. My goal has been to study the form, composition, nodes, links, and resources exchanged in these networks and contribute to the theorization of migrant transnational social practices. Since these are issues at the core of Chapter 7 (where I study the role of the network once the migrant arrived in Spain) here I will analyze the empirical findings regarding transnationalism and the crossing of the EU border. The theoretical implications of these findings to the literature on migrant transnationalism will be discussed in later chapters.

The research I conducted pointed to gender as a articulating factor of transnational networks (see also the special issue of Gender, Place and Culture 2010, issue 17, vol. 4). Gender was more important than socio-economic status, religious affiliation, or ethnicity in determining the channels open to migration and the networks and resources available to them. As summarized in Graph 6.1 and in Tables 6.1, 6.2, and 6.3, the relationship between the networks available to the migrant, the route used, and the migrant’s gender was one of mutual interdependence. A migrant’s gender limited both his or her choice of route and the types of networks available before, during, and after her or his journey. Women were primarily channelled into legal migration by air: all women participants interviewed in Spain migrated this way. This group was largely excluded from land and sea migration, which were considered too risky for them. In the case of boat migration, women were also seen as a liability to other passengers. The few female participants interviewed in Morocco who had travelled by land either had not managed to reach the EU, or had abandoned their hopes of doing so in favour of other business opportunities opened up by migration within Africa. Men, on the other hand, were encouraged by their own families to use whatever route would help them get to Europe.

A migrant’s gender also determined the economic resources and social capital they could mobilize in their migration. For women, these were largely limited to the household or, at the most, the extended family. Women with access to both social and economic capital followed more secure routes (e.g., migrated with a student visa). Family reunification was a
key entry channel for women with strong connections in Spain but who did not always have large sums of money. Gaining entry to Spain as a tourist brought together women with very diverse backgrounds and objectives, but migrants who took this path usually had reliable contacts in Europe and a fair amount of money to buy the tourist visa in Dakar. The situation for male air migrants was similar, with the important difference that men could reach out to extended family, friends, and acquaintances to fulfill their objectives.

Graph 6.1: Summary of findings or the relationship between gender, networks, and routes in participants’ migration experiences.

Intra-EU secondary migration was a high occurrence for both men and women, particularly among those who entered as tourists. However, while women who engaged in intra-EU mobility relied on much stronger connections to migrate within the continent (generally, their husband’s family), men were by contrast more willing to take greater risks by moving to Spain following weak connections, or no connections at all.
This willingness among men to follow weak / absent and ephemeral ties was even more apparent for migrants travelling by land and sea. Those traveling by land were the ones with the least resources and weakest connections. They raised money for their trip as they went. Those taking the boat to the Canary Islands fell somewhere in between. They had reliable connections both in Senegal and in Spain and enough money to pay for the trip in full before their departure – but not enough economic or social capital to enter the EU by air.

Migrants following either route (air, sea, or land) had networks that could be of two kinds. The first kind pre-existed the reinforcement of the Spanish-EU border: it was a sort of spontaneous social network built upon kinship ties, residence, place of origin, ethnic or religious background, etc. The connections between the migrant and the members of this network could be very strong (e.g., parents), strong (friends or extended family), weak (e.g., friends of friends), or absent (e.g., the doctor who signed a fictitious health certificate). Professional and semi-professional smugglers were part of a second kind of network, one that sprouted out of the many business opportunities that migration offered. West African migrants headed towards Europe by sea relied on a loosely and usually fragmented web of entrepreneurs – the line between migrants and their smugglers was at times blurry and criss-crossed by personal and family links. Land migrants employed a number of individual smugglers to cover different legs of their trip North. In both cases, the reinforcement of the border led to the professionalization of the smuggling industry, a phenomenon in no way exclusive to this particular flow (UNODC 2011, Mountz 2010).

Close members of migrants’ networks played a key role for both men and women, in particular parents. However, the dependency on these connections was much stronger among women migrants. Not only did they provide money and access to other members of an extended (secondary) network of facilitators such as corrupt politicians, but parents, brothers, and sisters also sanctioned women’s migration aspirations. Approval for men’s migration, on the other hand, was a given.
The geographic breadth of these networks was closely related to the route that migrants followed: air migrants had strong connections in Senegal and (with the exception of temporary workers) in Spain or elsewhere in Europe. Those travelling to the Canary Islands usually had relatively reliable ties in Spain. Once more, the worst situation was that of land migrants, who made use of networks that spread throughout several countries of transit but were so weak they offered as much assistance as risks to the migrant (for example, smugglers might help a land migrant cross a border, but they might also rob him or dump him in the dessert).

The strength of the ties and their location determined the kind of resources they provided and also the price to pay for them. Thus, a husband (strong connection) in Spain made the trip easier, safer, and cheaper by providing a legitimate reason as well as the information, money, and documents necessary for his wife to travel. For other kinds of air migrants such as tourists and temporary workers close relatives (mainly parents and children) were crucial in providing the material means that made their migration possible; here, bribes for government officials were a key expense. The weaker the link, the more migrants had to pay for equivalent services: a key example was the price of the ticket for boat migrants, which could vary between nothing for close relatives to the standard 1,000 euro rate for the rest.

If gender influenced the route a migrant followed and determined the type of networks they could rely on, the relationship between these last two elements was two-directional: the route was chosen because of the networks that were available to the migrant, and these networks were built as the migrant’s preparations to follow that route advanced – in many ways, routes and connections were constitutive of each other.

This intense and multi-directional relationship between gender, migration routes, and transnational social networks enabling migration has been at the core of my discussion in this chapter. If in the previous pages the focus has been on how migrants’ transnational
connections allowed them to cross a fiercely protected border, in the following chapters the emphasis will shift not only geographically but also thematically: this time I will examine migrant experiences once in Spain, and discuss the use of networks as a key resource to overcome the (sometimes unexpected) obstacles that confronted participants at the end of their journeys, where they often found that still more challenges waited for them once across the border.
7 Trouble beyond the border

7.1 Introduction

In the previous chapters I have focused on the militarized borders of Spain and the EU and discussed why and how they were built, the obstacles they placed on the movement of Senegalese citizens towards Spain, and the processes through which these migrants deployed their transnational social networks to overcome them. All the potential migrants that I met in Senegal and Morocco saw the EU border as the chief impediment to the realization of their goals: in their minds, their troubles would be over once they set foot on European soil. But the experience of those who had already done so proved that the difficulties continued beyond the checkpoint at the airport, the wire fence, or a beach in the Canary Islands. The promised land they imagined Europe to be was a dream that crashed against Spain’s harsh economic reality and the deep prejudices of the local population towards black Africans. Barriers also arose from tightening conditions imposed on non-EU citizens to settle in the country, access legal status, and renew their residence and work permits.

In this chapter I move beyond the border and study some of the main obstacles that migrants found after they settled in Spain. I focus specifically on participants’ employment experiences, always paying particular attention to how gender relations impacted their trajectories within the local labour market. The chapter is organized in six main sections. Section 2 explores how women negotiated their entrance into the Spanish labour market despite the resistance of other Senegalese migrants, their potential employers in Spain, and state laws that discriminated against female migrants. Section 3 discusses how participants (both men and women) tried to manage their interactions with other marginalized populations in Spain, and their involvement in lucrative illegal and a-legal activities that thrived around them (notably, drug trafficking and prostitution). In Section 4 I take a step back and discuss, very briefly, the statistical data available. The data are necessarily
incomplete, since in 2009 (the year when I collected my interviews) it is estimated that about 35% of the Senegalese population in Spain were undocumented. Likewise, illegal and fictitious employment were both widespread practice within this group. Section 5 contains my core research findings regarding the integration of participants in the Spanish labour market, divided by sector of employment. Section 6 closes the chapter by focusing on an unexpected finding: the centrality of the experience and practices of motherhood for migrant workers. In this last section I discuss three strategies that my participants adopted to meet their responsibilities as both mothers and breadwinners for their extended families, and how, in some cases, their children actually became a foothold for meaningful alliances between Senegalese women and the local population.

Once more, transnational social networks emerge as a key force in the migrants’ experiences. In this chapter I continue to map the shape, extension, hubs, linkages, and resources exchanged through these networks. I conclude that there was a definite continuity between the networks that enabled participants to migrate and those which facilitate their settlement in Spain and their access to employment in Spain. Nevertheless, the shape and functions of these networks morphed as Senegalese constructions of gender were shaken upon migrants’ arrival to European soil. The analysis of Senegalese transnationalism through the lens of gender prior to and after the crossing of the border will help flesh out some important elements of migrant transnationalism that go beyond the particular experiences of this group.

### 7.2 From the home to the workplace: migration, gender, and paid labour

In Chapter 6 I discussed men’s reluctance to support their spouses’ migration from Senegal to Spain, and how exposure to different models of gender relationships could destabilize rapport within migrant families. The opinions expressed by the men quoted in previous pages reflected widespread attitudes within this group. Once, very early in my fieldwork, I was with a participant at a coffee shop when a man entered and recognized the woman I was interviewing. He was a street peddler, an activity that was common among recent and
undocumented Senegalese immigrants. The peddler approached us and started scolding my interviewee in Wolof. Afterwards, obviously frustrated by my respondent’s nonchalant attitude, he looked at me and said in broken Spanish:

Ask her why she came, ask her! Shame on her: women should not be here [in Spain]. They should stay at home, take care of their children and their husband’s family. They should wait for their husbands to come home. They should not be out and about in public like this, look at her, here, with you, at a coffee shop full of white men. Shame on her (recorded segment from interview with Batouly, January 2009; my translation).

In fact, my interviewee did not have children and she was divorced, but the street peddler did not know that. Nevertheless, this vignette shows how respondents’ cultural constructions of gender were disrupted by migration. More broadly, the exposure to novel models of gender relations plus the new economic and legal context they encountered forced respondents to be creative about the structure and division of labour within the household. For example, for couples it was almost impossible to make ends meet and send remittances back home if both of them were not employed; in this context married women were encouraged to leave the house and venture into the paid labour market. Legislation that made family reunification expensive and time-consuming – and did not accept deviations from the monogamous marriage model – meant that more married men were without their wives, reducing the size of immigrant homes in Spain\(^\text{85}\) and forcing migrants to redefine themselves as individuals and members of households where gender relations had to be re-negotiated.

If migration challenged traditional gender roles, continuity was imposed through social control within the group. This social control took many forms: discrete surveillance, well-

\(^{85}\) It is not my intention to imply that Spain should allow polygamy. My argument is of a descriptive (not normative) nature: because migrant families had to pass through the filter of Spanish legislation, family forms upon migration took a specific shape. Households that, in Senegal, would have included one man and more than one spouse became monogamous due to the laws and regulations that govern family reunification procedures in Spain. Having said that, it is worth noting that polygamous families exist in areas with a long history of Senegalese settlement (Sow 2004). In this case second and third wives have migrated with forged documents pretending to be close relatives.
intentioned comments made to the transgressing migrant, gossip, public warnings and threats, the intervention of male authoritative figures, and even severe sanctions such as ostracism. The migrant’s family in Senegal kept a close eye (it would be more appropriate to say “an alert ear”) on their behaviour through an intense use of the cell phone, with which they stayed in touch with the migrant but also with other co-nationals and leaders of the Senegalese community where the migrant was settled. Mobile Senegalese and in particular marabouts (who traveled back and forth between Senegal and different Mouride communities in the diaspora) were also key mediators between the “deviant” individual and their families. Social control was instrumental to ensure the migrant’s “proper” behaviour in three main areas: money transfers to the family, donations to the brotherhood, and women’s sexuality. Thus, the transnational social network became not only a service provider and a facilitator of migration, but also an agent in the preservation of the group’s cultural identity and traditions.

Such a degree of social control meant that many women never actually ventured outside of the community. The more conservative men held on to traditional gender roles against all odds: I saw their wives elegantly dressed at Muslim religious celebrations with their children and patiently waiting by their husband’s stalls at day markets. I never had the chance to interview any of these women, however, because of the language barrier (they spoke neither French nor Spanish) but more importantly because they were not interested in participating in my study. Representatives of community organizations were concerned about these women and their children’s isolation: they said they regularly requested basic assistance (mostly food for themselves and their babies, diapers, and medicines) but otherwise refused to interact with social workers.

Some of the reunited wives I interviewed were in a similar situation when they first arrived in Spain this way but soon persuaded their husbands to grant them a bit more independence, either on the grounds that it was impossible to survive solely on their husband’s income or

86 See, for example, the case of the woman who decided to report her husband’s abuses to the police in the previous chapter.
because they grew tired of being secluded at home. This was the case of Mounash, who moved to Spain only to find her husband was having an affair with another Senegalese woman. When Mounash’s first child was four months old, she decided to take the initiative and start working as a street seller:

[At that time] we lived in a different apartment. My room was tiny, but my husband refused to move. I wanted to work because he gave me nothing. So when my daughter was four months old I found a woman who took care of her while I was at the market. (...) [I started selling with a bit of support from other Senegalese women] and when I managed to save 50 euros I started buying and selling my own merchandise. I would go to Madrid by bus, buy handbags, clothes ... Then I took the bus back and sold them at the day market. Things went well. (...) My husband – well, we didn’t really talk to each other. I was and am his wife alright, we’ve had another child since then, but we don’t talk to each other unless it’s absolutely necessary. He’s afraid because I have more money than he does. He doesn’t like that I am more independent [than I used to be when we got married]. But now that business is not good anymore he can’t say anything [because I bring money home]. Plus, I do all the work at home for him, my two children, and the five other men who live here. So he can say nothing. (Mounash, research site 1, February 2009; my translation).

A tight economic situation could be a strong enough impetus to make men lose their grip on their wives; this is what happened to Mounash. Money was necessary to cover living and, in some cases, business expenses in Spain. It was also crucial to meet the demands of the family back home. Although men claimed they received more pressure to send remittances, a comparison between the amounts sent by participants of both sexes showed small differences, more related to the income of the migrant and their families in Senegal than to their being men or women. Once the husband sanctioned his wife’s employment her family and other migrants would not object, particularly as their dependency on her money transfers increased with time. Working outside the home often involved interactions outside women’s immediate social circle, expanding their social network beyond their extended family, religious group, and even community of co-nationals.
It is worth noting, however, that before 2009 reunited spouses were not legally allowed to work until one year after their arrival in Spain. It is hard to understand the rationale behind this rule. The twelve-month moratorium sentenced wives (and a much smaller number of husbands) to social isolation and put the household close to or below the poverty line, forcing them into the underground economy. As a result this legislation effectively reinforced both the position of subordination of the reuniting wife towards her husband and the marginalization of foreigners in the Spanish labour market.

Religious affiliation also played a part in women’s employment. Catholic participants (both single and married) were employed in a greater variety of occupations than their Muslim counterparts. These respondents were often employed by Spaniards and had Spanish co-workers. When analyzed in combination with civil status, married Muslim women had the most limits to employment within the Senegalese population (usually they were street vendors assisting their husbands or other male relatives). Independent Muslim women occupied a space between Catholic women (single and married) and reunited Muslim wives. In this group, participants exploited the absence of a male breadwinning figure in their families to justify a greater integration in the local labour market (or at least willingness towards it, since jobs were not always available). Among Muslim participants only single women, those who were divorced or widowed, and women who for whatever reason were the main providers for their families were willing and able to work as domestic workers and caregivers in Spanish homes, bars and restaurants owned by locals, or factories – occupations that were not, generally speaking, accessible to married Muslim women. Of course, due to the small size of my sample this conclusion cannot be generalized to the overall Senegalese population who lived in Spain at the time.

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87 New legislation was passed that year stipulating that spouses and children over the age of 18 under the family category would be allowed to engage in paid employment without the need to do any other administrative procedure (artículo 19, Ley Orgánica 2/2009, de 11 de diciembre, de reforma de la Ley Orgánica 4/2000, de 11 de enero, sobre derechos y libertades de los extranjeros en España y su integración social; BOE de 12 de diciembre de 2009.)
Independent Muslim immigrants went out of their way to make their employment more palatable for members of their social network (in Spain, Senegal, and elsewhere, as their behaviour would be taken into account if they ever decided to migrate to another country) and protect their reputation as “decent” women despite their regular interactions with Spaniards. In an interesting study on the independent migration of women to the Canary Islands, Rosander (2001) discussed a number of protective behaviours that I also observed during my fieldwork. Rosander’ participants were Muslim (Mouride), low-status Wolof, married with their spouses in Senegal, and self-employed (they bought merchandise in different parts of the world, including Asia and the Gulf countries, and sold it in Spain). She argues that “[r]eligion, morality, and money dominate [the behaviour of] Mouride women in Senegal and abroad” (Rosander 2001, p. 118; my translation). To protect their respectability while engaging in independent commerce these women “stretched” the domestic sphere, conducting their economic activities from home – mostly with other Senegalese migrants – and avoiding public spaces dominated by men. These women also became much more devout when abroad, exaggerating pious behaviours such as large donations; were extremely generous towards their spouse’s family, sending copious and regular remittances; and were reluctant to interact with men, both Senegalese and European (Rosander 2001).

7.3 Working the margins: stereotypes and interactions with other racialized groups

Gender expectations permeated every aspect of migrants’ lives in Spain: interactions with the local population, with Spanish institutions such as the police, with other immigrants, and with members of their group. But the categories that each set of interactions was built upon varied. Thus, on the one hand, intra-group interactions were guided by nuanced social distinctions like marital status, motherhood, ethnicity, caste, religious affiliation (within Islam or Christianity), socio-economic status at origin, and so on. Inter-group relations, on the other hand, were dominated by stereotypes deriving from coarser categories such as

88 For a discussion of the caste system in Senegal refer to Chapter 2, section 2.1 (“The people behind the numbers”).
man / woman, black, African, immigrant, undocumented, poor, and illiterate. A Senegalese woman outside this group was, simply speaking, a “black woman” – her background did not matter. Senegalese men and women from very different backgrounds came to be thrown into the single and much denigrated category of “African immigrant” associated with poverty, backward culture, the spread of threatening religious practices in Europe, sexual promiscuity (Romero Bachiller 2007; see also Martinez Lirola 2006). In other works, once they arrived in European soil the importance of migrants’ prior ethnic affiliation and socio-economic status were obliterated by racialized, gendered, and, to a lesser degree, religious categories.

Participants had never seen themselves in this light before. They did all they could to free themselves from such negative labels. For example, although they were often employed in the underground economy (either because they were undocumented, or because they were unable to secure a legal contract) they emphasized that they did not deserve to be treated as criminals. They were also ever careful to put a good distance between themselves and other marginalized groups perceived to conduct shady business. This was difficult, given that rent prices and discrimination in the real estate market forced Senegalese migrants to neighbourhoods that they shared with Spanish Roma and other racialized immigrant populations. Particularly risky were relations with Moroccans and Algerians (both associated with drug trafficking) and Nigerians (seen as linked to prostitution). This avoidance responded to a double rationale: one, to prevent “contagion” of stereotypes that would taint them as criminals, reinforcing racist labelling and making their lives in Spain even more difficult. Second, to stay out of trouble. A male participant put it this way: “Moroccans are always having problems with the police because they know they deal drugs in [second research site]. Wherever there is a group of Moroccans, eventually there will be police. And I can’t afford to get in trouble with the police [because I’m undocumented].”

89 Islamophobia in Europe and North America has been a widely reported phenomenon both in academic writing and in the media (see Agrela Romero and Gil Araujo 2005, Allen 2010, El Mundo 1998).

90 Amnesty International recently conducted a small research project where they found widespread discrimination of immigrants in the rental market that affected black immigrants the most (AI 2011).
Not all Senegalese migrants shared this view. For example, some of the better known drug dealers in my first research site were Senegalese who sold hash and cocaine imported by Moroccan criminal networks at night clubs: it was a very profitable business. Participants also mentioned prostitution was an ill-reputed sector to be avoided. And yet, male respondents were rather open about Senegalese men’s interest in the trade, with one of them stating that his friends spent “almost 30% of their income in brothels.” Some interviewees were also part of this sector as workers as well. For example, during my involvement in *Mouride* religious celebrations I met Moor, a very large (and extremely polite) man in his mid thirties who explained to me the way he ended up as a security manager in the city’s largest brothel:

The *jefe* [owner of the brothel] came to talk to me when I was working at [a night club]. I didn’t have the papers. He offered me a job, he said it didn’t matter: he’d file my application [for regularization]. He offered me a very, very good salary – I wouldn’t make this money working the fields or in construction with my brothers [other Senegalese men]. I was hesitant to work in a brothel but I accepted this job because how else was I going to maintain my family back home? But my parents are ashamed of my occupation and I can’t blame them. I would like to say I’m quitting soon, but I’d be lying. It’s a good job (conversation with Moor, field notes, April 2009; my translation).

Like the case of independent migrant women, Moor “purged” his reputation by donating large amounts of money to the *marabouts* during religious festivities. He was well respected, a model to follow for other men and a highly sought after husband.

Women respondents were involved in the sex trade in a very different way. Men in their community were encouraged to be sexually promiscuous and mingle with as many women as possible (preferably white), but women’s legitimate sexuality was limited to her husband. When the issue came up in our conversations both men and women proudly pointed out that “Senegalese women are not like Nigerians” – that is, they were not forced or voluntarily
attracted towards prostitution to make a living. However, when digging a bit deeper into the issue, women were quick to denounce the precariousness of their situation, which had forced some to become sexual servants for the men they lived with, often in exchange for lodging and food. (Unwanted but consented sexual relations within the marriage were not considered under this light, as a previous quote from Mounash shows.) These stories emerged only with participants who were closest to me, and were always narrated in the third person. Here is a segment of the notes after a conversation with Neyba, an independent migrant in her fifties that I met in my first research site. The interview was not recorded upon her request.

When Neyba’s “niece” got off the plane in Madrid she took a bus to [first research site], where she spent the night at the bus station. She didn’t speak Spanish. At the time Neyba was in Senegal visiting her family. Her niece called her to ask for help, and Neyba advised her to find anyone from Senegal and ask for assistance. Neyba’s niece found a man who offered to take her into his home, where she stayed. The man lived with other Senegalese men in an apartment. They had agreed that she could stay there for one month doing housework and helping with their business [the men were street pedlars], and by the end of this period the men would lend her some money to help her get started with her own street selling business [this is a common arrangement among Senegalese immigrants in Spain]. But just before the end of the month the men said that before giving her the money she would have to have sex with all of them. She refused. Then the man that she had met at the bus station said that if she didn’t have sex with him he would throw her out of the house and ruin her reputation. She refused again and was thrown out of the house (notes from interview with Neyba, February 2009).

Neyba’s niece then received shelter from another Senegalese woman, but their agreement ended when she failed to pay her part of the rent. Broke and desperate, Neyba’s niece asked a second woman for money and took a bus to Madrid. Her plan was to buy merchandise at the Chinese wholesalers in the neighbourhood of Lavapiés. But when she got there she

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91 The stereotype of Nigerian women as sex workers is a generalization that has some empirical basis: since the early 2000s Spain has been one of the top destinations for Nigerian sex workers, who often are victims of trafficking networks (Carling 2006). In 2008 Nigeria was among the top five source countries of trafficked women involved in sex work in Spain, together with Brazil, Bulgaria, Colombia, and Ecuador (Red Española contra la trata de personas 2008). This, together with the hyper sexualization of the black female body in mainstream Western culture (Jewell 1993, Romero Bachiller 2007), may have helped establish the link between black immigrant women sex work in the minds of interviewees and the broader Spanish population.
discovered she did not have enough money to buy goods to start her own business. She then met a man who offered her 60 Euros to “marry” him (i.e., be his long-term sexual partner) and she accepted.

These stories were rarely shared with non-Senegalese. They show that although participants were invested in distancing themselves from irregular businesses, Senegalese (like Moroccans, Nigerians, or Spaniards) were involved in drug trafficking and prostitution, both visible and hidden. However, keeping the dirty laundry private was crucial for respondents, who were frustrated by the very low ceiling that racist stereotypes placed on their aspirations for economic success, particularly in the labour market. In fact, Senegalese migrants were seen as good workers, docile and dedicated – but they were also wanted only in unskilled and low-skilled occupations that happened in marginal (invisible) spaces and paid poorly (Jabardo Velasco 2006, Suarez-Navaz 2004).

Socially, the need to navigate strict stereotypes of race, gender, and nationality translated into a great deal of frustration and reinforced the group’s insularity. This was particularly the case for women in my sample – with the fascinating exception of mothers who had their children in Spain, as we will see below. In the remainder of the chapter I explore how the economic crisis and these stereotypes affected participants’ experiences in the Spanish labour market and in their interactions with local institutions – and how participants navigated the obstacles they found.

### 7.4 Senegalese migration in a context of economic crisis

I began my fieldwork in 2009, in the midst of an acute economic crisis that everyone thought was a temporary interruption of a period of unprecedented growth. The crisis was triggered by a combination of factors: the bursting of the property bubble, the increase in prices (particularly fuel), the dysfunctionalities of the country’s banking system, and skyrocketing unemployment. After reaching a historic low in 2007 (8.3%), the unemployment rate in Spain increased to 21.5% in 2011. In 2009 (the year I conducted most
of the interviews) 18% of the active population did not have a job. Workers under 25 and immigrants the hardest hit by this turn of events: 48% of the youth and 30.4% of foreigners were unemployed in 2009. Among immigrants the number of jobs lost was larger for men than for women (INE 2009-2011, OPAM 2010).

Graph 7.1: Number of Senegalese immigrants with a valid contract (line) and total legal Senegalese population in Spain (columns) between 2001 and 2009. Sources: MEYSS (2009), INE (2001-2009).

It is hard to estimate how many Senegalese immigrants were engaged in an economic activity in 2009. First, the gap between the number of Senegalese given by the Yearbook and the Padrón widened during the crisis. In 2009 the disagreement between the two sources was almost 20,000 – out of an estimated 56,000, this figure is significant. Second, as we will see in Section 5, many Senegalese were working in the underground economy or with fictitious contracts.

Despite these limitations, statistical data points to a number of trends that frame the experience of participants. The first trend, summarized in Graph 7.1, is the declining rate of legal employment for this group, which decreased from 57.5% in 2001 to 41.6% in 2009. The second trend relates to the sectors where these workers found employment (Graph 7.2). When compared to the overall immigrant population, what we see is that Senegalese
migrants were overrepresented in agriculture and fishing and underrepresented in domestic work, self-employment, and the General Regime.  


This information is even more informative when broken down by sex (Graphs 7.3 and 7.4). Here we find that Senegalese men were seven times more likely to work in the fishing industry than the average male foreigner, 2.5 times less likely to be self-employed, and 1.6 times more likely to work in agriculture. Overrepresentation in the fishing sector was due to institutional (state) efforts to persuade national companies to hire men from this specific group. These efforts took place in the context of bilateral treaties against illegal migration by boat: in 2007 alone, 700 Senegalese men found employment in Spain as fishermen thanks to the mediation of the government. According to Spanish policy makers this group was the most likely to migrate: by providing legal channels for their migration, they hoped to deter undocumented boat migrants.

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92 The General Regime (in full the Régimen General de la Seguridad Social) is the legal framework that applies to all contractual relations not included in the special regimes for agriculture, fishing, mining, and domestic work.
Agriculture, on the other hand, was a prime employment niche for recent Senegalese migrants, both men and women. The state had also encouraged the incorporation of temporary migrants (particularly women) into this sector through the recruitment of temporary foreign workers in programs such as the one for strawberry pickers that I discussed in Chapter 5. Although by 2009 this bilateral agreement had already expired, the sector was still short of low-skilled workers. Salaries were low and working conditions hard, which may help explain why in 2009 the majority of workers in agriculture were foreigners. Of these, Africans represented the largest single group with 36.7% of the foreign agricultural workforce (MTIN 2010).

Conversely, Senegalese men and women were underrepresented in the self-employed category, for reasons that will be explained later. Women from this group were almost half as likely to be domestic workers (Graph 7.4), a sector where Latin American women (who were both Spanish-speakers and usually Christian) were a sweeping 66% of the foreign workforce. My hypothesis is that the lower participation of Senegalese women in this sector is due to perceived cultural differences as well as racial and religious discrimination. Language barriers could also be a factor. Finally, the overrepresentation of Senegalese women in the General Regime is reflected in my sample. During my fieldwork I observed that Senegalese women were more likely than men to find employment both in factories and in hospitality services, although the reasons for this are unclear.

7.5 Evidence from the field: sectors of employment and the use of networks

In the previous section I have discussed the profile of the legally employed Senegalese population in Spain. Among participants, employment was crucial for two main reasons: the first was financial, the second legal. Having a steady income helped migrants pay the debts they had incurred to finance their trip, send remittances to their families, and cover their living expenses in Spain. Being able to contribute to the family’s economy was a matter of reputation and prestige as well, as we have seen in Chapter 2. But having a job also meant having a contract – a requirement *sine qua non* to obtain a residence permit through extraordinary channels (an amnesty or the legal process of *arraigo*) or to renew an already existing permit. “Having the papers” became increasingly important as the economy deflated and competition for low-skilled and low-paying jobs – migrants’ niches – stiffened. At the same time, Spanish authorities became more active enforcing legislation against the presence of undocumented migrants in public spaces, their employment, and street peddling (one of the main sectors for undocumented and, to a lesser extent, documented Senegalese migrants).93

Participants talked about a golden age that ended shortly before I began my fieldwork in 2009. By then most participants were going through hardship: families that used to live in an apartment by themselves had to rent out some of the rooms to pay their lease or mortgage, at least three participants had had their electricity cut for not paying the bills, and

93 For example, the Roman Catholic organization Caritas Internationalis (which provides front-line services for people in need) claimed that the number of police raids in and around its facilities increased by over a third between 2009 and 2010 (El Mundo 2011a, March 17). Amnesty International also denounced an increase in the use of racial profiling in public spaces as police practice geared towards the control of undocumented migration (AI 2001). Police practices confirm the tightening control of economic activities Senegalese were involved in: although prison ceased being the default sentence for street vendors selling illegally copied CDs in 2010 (a fine was put in place instead), a few months after the new legislation passed the Catalonian government opened 341 files on street peddlers and confiscated over 8,600 CDs in only one weekend (El Público 2011).
some were having a hard time providing for their families. Senegalese homeowners were being evicted for failing to pay their mortgages. They were affected by a larger trend of dispossession: between January 2007 and June 2011 Spanish courts signed over 290,000 eviction orders (El Mundo 2011b). Immigrants were hit the hardest in this process. For example, the number of people who asked the Catholic organization Cáritas for help to cover basic needs (food, rent / mortgage, bills, or school material) doubled between 2007 and 2009. More than 800,000 individuals would knock on the organization’s doors the year I began my fieldwork; of these, more than half (53.59%, or 220,719) were immigrants, 52% of them non-EU immigrants (Bedoya, 2010; Cáritas Diocesana, 2011).

Participants accepted the harsh economic reality, but they did not believe that the crisis alone could explain their failure to find permanent and well-paying jobs. Many complained that Spaniards could not conceive of a black person performing non-manual labour. Besides, skilled or not, the worker was expected to remain invisible (see also Jabardo Velasco 2005). As a result, participants were channeled into sectors like agriculture, construction, or fishing (if they were men); or domestic work, agriculture, factory work, and ethnic catering (if they were women). Among both men and women contracts tended to be short-term, working conditions precarious, hours long, and salaries low. Respondents complained that even public workers were unable to see black immigrants in other occupations. According to one interviewee:

In [second research site] Spaniards look at immigrants as if we were coming from another planet. When I go to church they don’t even sit on the same pew. Things have changed a little bit, but (…) that means that when we go looking for a job we have to be hidden. I can be a construction worker but not a truck driver. And at the INEM [National Employment Agency] it’s the same thing: if you are an immigrant, they try to find you work in the greenhouse or in construction. They do this with all black people: they send us straight to the greenhouses, as if we couldn’t work anywhere else (Goor, interview, August 2009; my translation).

This discrimination meant that employers did not consider participants’ previous professional experience, an argument presented by interviewees and supported by members
of several Spanish pro-immigrant NGOs and Senegalese organizations. Pierre, a former teacher and artisan, said sarcastically: “people here [in Spain] think that in Senegal I spent my time jumping from one tree to the next in a loincloth.” Racial discrimination in the labour market was the reality not only for black immigrants, but also for black and mulatto Spanish citizens, as shown in Vives and Sitè (2011).

Despite these obstacles and the high unemployment rates of the overall foreign women population (around 50% in 2009) (Pajares 2010), virtually all my participants had a job at the time of our interviews. Respondents’ activity depended on two main variables: place of residence and gender. Gender has always been a key variable for immigrant employment in Spain, determining particularly their sector of employment. Domestic work has traditionally been the primary gateway into the national labour market for migrant women (Colectivo Ioe 2001, Parella 2006). Participants’ employment trajectories were also intimately linked with the diverse economies of the three sites (described in Chapter 3). The first and third research site drew most of their revenues from the service sector (and to a lesser degree industry), while the second research site was heavily geared towards agriculture. Legal status seemed to play a much less important role for participants, although a larger sample would be required to confirm this preliminary finding.

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<td><strong>Men</strong></td>
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<td>Industry / recycling (with contract)</td>
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<td>Construction (no contract / with contract)</td>
<td>Hospitality (cook, waitress; no contract / with contract)</td>
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<td><strong>Women</strong></td>
<td>Street vending (legal and illegal)</td>
<td>Agriculture (seasonal, no contract / with contract)</td>
<td>Hospitality (waiters, dishwasher boy; no contract / with contract)</td>
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<td>Domestic worker (no contract, with contract)</td>
<td>Industry / food processing (with contract)</td>
<td>Street vending (illegal)</td>
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<td>Industry / food processing (with contract)</td>
<td>Self-employed (seamstress, braider; illegal)</td>
<td>Immigrant services (Senegalese organizations)</td>
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Table 7.1: Respondents’ past and current sectors of employment.
7.5.1 Street peddling

Recent Senegalese migrants were likely to enter the Spanish labour market as street pedlars, particularly (but not only) in the first research site. This sector was for the most part unregulated. Street pedlars were, by definition, self-employed and did not have benefits of any kind – neither did they pay taxes or qualify, with this work alone, for a renewal of their visas.

Although a number of participants appreciated the autonomy this occupation gave them to conduct their business (they had no boss, schedule, or commitment besides the one they made every morning) for the most part street vending was quite unattractive for migrants. Sellers were responsible for acquiring their own merchandise and selling it on sidewalks and markets (see Figures 7.1 and 7.2, below). Underground pedlars must keep an eye out for the police, not only because their activity was illegal, but also because many of these men and women were undocumented. A whistle from one street peddler triggered a quick reaction: sellers grabbed the blankets laid on the street (which had a makeshift rope mechanism that turned them into a bag) and ran in different directions. Men worked in jeans and runners; women almost without exception wore traditional Senegalese long skirts and heels, which made their escape slow and treacherous. If street pedlars were detained, their merchandise was often confiscated by the police. If they were found to trade imitation luxury items or illegally copied CDs they also risked fines of thousands of Euros and (prior to 2010) imprisonment. Most respondents resented the daily humiliations they were subjected to, and felt that they were treated “like infected dogs, criminals that have to run and hide from the police.” In addition, business was conducted in all kinds of weather all year around and sales were unreliable. Because of the risk and discomforts involved, street peddling tended to be a temporary occupation for recent undocumented migrants or those who were unemployed at that particular time, but who were actively looking for a job elsewhere. As a respondent explained:
If you don’t have papers you don’t have the right to work. (...) There’s no other option for us but to sell on the streets. Nobody wants to be a *top manta* [the trade of black street pedlars became known this way because they often sold current hit CDs (“top”) over a blanket (“manta”) on the sidewalks]. (...) But there is so much trouble with the police, when they catch you they take you to the police station and open a file, then they keep your merchandise. You have committed a crime: no chance of regularization for you in five years. (...) If you are taken to Court, you can end up in prison for two years plus you get a fine. That’s disproportionate. (Badji, interview March 2009; my translation).

There were other, more fortunate respondents who had permits to sell their merchandise in weekly flea markets and town fairs. These respondents either owned a vehicle or had a working arrangement with another migrant who did. This was necessary, since they travelled between one and eight hours daily, seven days a week, to different towns across two different provinces (*Comunidades Autónomas*). They left as early as 5 am and returned as late as 10 pm. Women rarely had their own vehicle, so they relied on other co-nationals’ availability and inclination to conduct their business. A number of women travelled as “support staff:” they cooked for the men and helped with the set up or selling for a small portion of the earnings. Other women travelled with their husbands but did not work (they were being kept under surveillance). As long as they had a permit from the city hall to sell in the market and their goods were not obviously forged, participants said the police gave them no trouble.

Figures 7.1 and 7.2: Street pedlars in my first research site. Photographs taken by the author with permission.
A final version of street peddling was more welcoming to women. This trade was conducted on the beaches of Andalusia and Catalonia in the summer. Senegalese women would move there for the tourist season to sell small goods (usually necklaces, earrings, bracelets, and little statues) and braid hair for a fee. At night, some had stands in the local street market or approached inebriated tourists, who would pay much more for the same products (for a detailed account of this trade in the Canary Islands see Rosander 2001). Participants who did this seasonal work believed the police were less likely to enforce anti-street peddling legislation in tourist spots. Whether or not this was the case, after 2008 the sales declined so sharply that the travel costs surpassed the benefits, and many of my respondents moved or tried to move to other sectors.

Other researchers specialized in Senegalese migration to Italy and the US have argued that street pedlars in this group rely heavily on transnational religious networks who provide support for migrants in the form of travel counselling, free lodging and advice during the early stages after settlement, merchandise and loans to launch their business (see for example Sinatti 2008, Babou 2002, Ross 2011). During my fieldwork I did not find evidence of this. Respondents consistently said that they bought merchandise from Chinese gross retailers in the multicultural neighbourhood of Lavapiés (Madrid). The money to purchase this merchandise came from their own savings and small loans from other co-nationals in Spain, who often belonged to their same religious denomination but did not necessarily hold a position of institutionalized power over them. In summary, respondents did not seem to be deeply embedded in a relation of domination vis-à-vis their employers / religious leaders. They were entrepreneurs, held back only by the debts towards other migrants in the same situation, lacklustre benefits, and the police. While it is possible that my findings reflect a reluctance to tackle religious issues on the part of respondents, it is more likely that the reason my findings may diverge from other researchers’ is that my main respondents were women, and thus notoriously relegated to the margins of their religious communities. To this we may add that Senegalese settlement was relatively recent in the first research site and the population too religiously diverse in the second research site for

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7.5.2 Domestic work

Domestic work has been a chief source of employment for immigrant women since the 1990s, mainly Latin American and North African women (Parella Rubio 2000 and 2006, Gregorio Gil and Ramírez Fernández 2000). The importance of immigrants in this sector has led scholars to talk about “transnational care chains” (Yeates 2004) and register a large-scale transfer of ethnic and class inequalities among women, based on foreigners’ widespread employment as domestic workers in their countries of destination for the benefit of native-born ones (Parella 2006). Despite this, participants had a hard time getting jobs as cleaners and caregivers.

A number of the interviewees were actively looking for a job as domestic workers. However, only two had found employment in this sector, Neyba and Diabira. Neyba was a Muslim woman in her late fifties with a large family to provide for in Senegal. This respondent had tried her luck as a street peddler for six months when a co-national told her she was quitting her job as a live-in caregiver. Since Neyba been a rather unsuccessful street seller (the police confiscated her merchandise twice and a co-national stole all of her savings, among other things) she immediately offered to replace her friend.

Neyba’s employers were a middle class married couple with two kids who lived in a compound 20 minutes from the city centre in my first research site. The wife immediately informed Neyba that her new name was Nicole. She also promised to get her a residence and a work permit in 6 months – but only if they found her work satisfactory. This way “Nicole” began her life as a domestic worker, labouring for 6 and a half days a week for 500 Euros a month. Her day began at 7 am and ended when the kids went to bed, usually at around 10 pm. She had been working under these conditions for three and a half years.
when, in 2005 (two years after obtaining a residence and work permit) she fell off a chair while cleaning a window. According to Neyba, her employers refused to let her go to the doctor. In the end a neighbour drove her to the hospital, where she found out that she would have to undergo surgery to treat her broken leg. When Neyba came out of the surgery room she had already lost her job. She had no option but to go back to street peddling and cooking Senegalese dishes for the men selling at the market.

Another respondent, Diabira, worked as a nanny for a Spanish family. She got that job through a priest in the local church (she was a devout Catholic), but found the interaction with her employers extremely difficult. Her working conditions were not bad for the sector: she worked from Monday to Friday and from 7:30 am to 2:30 pm for 634 Euros a month. However, Diabira felt that her employers were quick to point their finger at her if something went missing in the house. The mother of the children in particular went through her purse every day before Diabira left her employers’ home.

Diabira’s relationship with this Spanish family may be a sign of greater issues of trust between locals and black immigrants, and there is no question that Neyba received unfair treatment from her Spanish employers. They did not abide by the vastly insufficient, but nonetheless extant, legislation regulating the conditions of live-in domestic work. They exploited Neyba’s ignorance of the law and her desire for a residence permit to their advantage. It was perhaps that perceived vulnerability that motivated this Spanish family to hire her whereas others refused categorically to open their homes to black domestic workers.

One of the respondents who experienced this refusal was Batouly, a woman in her mid 40s. Batouly was a well-educated migrant: she had worked as a secretary for a Senegalese minister prior to her migration. When looking for a job through a community organization, she was advised to delete all her studies and working experience from her resume because “nobody would want to hire a cleaning lady with such a previous professional experience.
Potential employers get scared when they see [that the prospective employee] has so much experience, they think she’ll get them into trouble” (NGO in Spain, interview, January 2009; my translation). But Batouly was determined to stay in Spain. She figured that her best bet was to let go of her previous qualifications and professional experience and start afresh – ideally, in a booming sector open to immigrant women. To that end, she enrolled in courses taught by public agencies and NGOs and became a certified nurse’s aide specialized in elderly care.

Batouly was an intelligent and hardworking woman, so when I got word that a Spanish family was looking for a caregiver for their aged mother I recommended her. However, in spite of her training and the impressive letters of recommendation that her instructors wrote for her, Batouly did not get the job. When I asked a member of the family what they did not like about Batouly, they said that they were very impressed by how “clean” she looked, but unfortunately they did not think their mother would be comfortable with a black caregiver. Besides, how would they accommodate someone who had to pray five times a day and did not eat pork? In the end they hired a (Catholic) Bolivian immigrant.

Some of Batouly’s experiences were not unique to Senegalese migrant women. For example, the “trimming” of the resume is relatively common among immigrant women of all nationalities and ethno-racial backgrounds (with the possible exception of white EU citizens). But, unlike other immigrants, this strategy did not seem to help Senegalese women get a job as domestic workers. Latin Americans (both Spanish-speaking and Catholic) were clearly preferred as domestic workers (Solé and Parella 2010).

In informal conversations with prospective employees it was made clear to me that black women were not suitable for jobs in the homes. When asked to elaborate, white Spaniards would express their conviction that these women were uneducated, unable to use modern household appliances, unable to care for Spanish children in a culturally appropriate way,

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94 In my MA thesis on the experiences of Argentinean migrants in Spain I observed the same phenomenon (Vives 2007).
and impossible to integrate into the daily routine due to the daily prayers and dietary restrictions of their Muslim faith (despite the fact that Moroccan Muslim women are a major pool of domestic workers in the country [Gregorio Gil 2000, MTAS 2010]). Besides, a lady hinted, “you wouldn’t leave a black woman anywhere near your husband when you’re not around, would you?”

7.5.3 Agriculture

A large number of the participants in the first and second research sites had been or were employed in agriculture at the time of the interview. Most of them had been hired as undocumented workers. Opportunities for work in this sector (for men) only appeared during the time of the olive harvest in the winter, but the demand for foreign workers plummeted between 2007 and 2009. In Jaén (the national powerhouse for olive oil production) the number of immigrants employed in the 2009 harvest campaign was 92% lower than the previous year (El País 13/4/2011).

Figure 7.3: The “sea of plastic” in Eastern Andalusia. Image by José Palazón, reproduced with permission from the author.

The second research site had a more steady need for greenhouse workers. According to a Catholic organization providing front-line assistance in the area, the first black immigrants
arrived to the region in 2002 in buses paid for by the Spanish government. These were West African (mostly Senegalese) migrants who had been detained when trying to reach the Canary Islands by boat. As was often the case at the time, the archipelago’s CIEs (Centros de Internamiento de Extranjeros or Immigrant Detention Centres) were already over their full capacity and so the government flew these migrants to Madrid. But the CIEs there were also full, and someone in the government decided to send this group of roughly 30 black immigrants to Southern Spain, to an area known as the “Poniente almeriense” (Western Almeria) – or, less flatteringly, “the sea of plastic” (because of the concentration of greenhouses; see Figure 7.3, above). The buses left the immigrants in the centre of the town at Colonization Square and drove off. Many locals remembered this was the first time they saw a black person face to face.

Figure 7.4: A woman working in a greenhouse in Southern Spain. Photograph by Samuel Aranda, reproduced with permission from the author.

Since the emergence of the local greenhouse agriculture in the 1960s, the region has experienced an increasing demand for cheap labour. The “Poniente almeriense” became a meeting spot for immigrants of all nationalities in the 1990s and particularly after the turn of the century, when word spread that there was work available for undocumented workers. Some migrants left Senegal by boat with the contact information of other co-nationals who lived there in their pockets: they knew that if they were detained and the Spanish
government could not deport them, they were likely to be taken to Madrid, and from there they could take a bus to the greenhouses in southern Spain. Others heard about the greenhouses through the grapevine once they were in Europe. That was the case of most of my respondents in this site.

One of these migrants was Diadhiou, a 29-year-old man from Casamance. Diadhiou had moved to Paris with a scholarship to finish his university degree, but once there he realized his monthly stipend was not enough to make ends meet. Seven months later (still a student visa holder) he crossed the border with Spain and went to visit a close friend in Barcelona, where another Senegalese migrant recommended he take a bus to southern Spain. As the following quote shows, the reality he found was not as rosy as others painted it:

[Other Senegalese migrants] told me that it was harder to find a job in the big city if you’re undocumented. (...) I knew that [name of Senegalese migrant] lived in [second research site]. He told me that here there’s work on the fields and not many [police] controls. They [the other migrants] also told me that here in Andalusia it was very, very easy to get the papers, and that there would be another amnesty in 2007 [this was a rumour among immigrants; this amnesty never took place]. (...) I thought I would come here and find a job right away, but in the last eight months I have only worked one month. I worked in the greenhouses. A friend got me the job, he worked in [that greenhouse]. (...) The salary changes. Some people pay 30 Euros, other 33, others 35. 44 Euros if you’re Spanish. It depends on the boss. (...) If you have a friend who has a job they’ll call you when the patrón needs a hand. It isn’t always the same greenhouse (Diadhiou, interview, July 2009; my translation).

Like Diadhiou, most migrants waited for their cell phones to ring. Men would also gather on the squares and country roads, and even in crossroads among the greenhouses, where large groups of them offered their services to patrones (greenhouse owners or managers) who came with their trucks ready to load workers. Others walked from greenhouse to greenhouse offering their services. The stiff competition meant that workers sold their labour for less and less money to the benefit of their potential employer. In 2009, when I began conducting interviews there, salaries for migrants could vary from 15 to 35 Euros a day for the same work depending only on the employer’s inclination (women and recently arrived migrants
made less than men). The salary, agreed prior to the beginning of the workday, did not always reach the migrant’s pockets. Otherwise working conditions were terrible: temperatures inside the greenhouses became unbearably high after 11 am and the concentration of chemicals in the air was stunning, not to mention the fact that most of the work involved bending over completely to weed and harvest at ground level. Workers were not provided with any kind of safety equipment and, as a result, many of my interviewees in the second research site had chronic skin, eye, and respiratory conditions that they blamed on the chemicals used in the greenhouses.

During my fieldwork I met Spitou Mendy, a Senegalese migrant and spokesperson of the local branch of the SOC (Sindicato de Obreros del Campo, Agricultural Workers’ Union) who had spent the previous five years raising the alarm about working conditions in the greenhouses of eastern Andalusia. He has often argued that we are witnessing a form of slavery whereby the most able young men of Africa arrive at the greenhouses only to be treated like raw power – workers without rights.

Farmers only want an unqualified, malleable workforce that costs absolutely nothing [sic]. Only one part of the business is benefitting from this: it’s the big entrepreneur. It’s the agribusiness that wins. It’s capitalism that wins. And humanity is killed this way. You slap me once, the second time I’ll raise my hand and you’ll have to kill me. That’s what will happen. People just don’t want to hear. Everyone knows this system exists. It’s slavery in Europe. At the doors of Europe, slavery exists, as if we were in the 16th century. Let’s speak together, let’s say no! (quote from “Salad Slaves,” The Guardian, 2011).

Mendy, a former schoolteacher, had himself worked as an undocumented worker in the greenhouses before his application for extraordinary regularization was approved. He was a very powerful speaker and an indomitable networker, and soon he became the union’s spokesperson. Following the radicalization of the SOC’s discourse (led singlehandedly by him) federal and provincial funding was withdrawn: Spitou then secured funds from the European Civic Fund to continue decrying working conditions in the greenhouses that kept
European supermarkets well stocked. While Spitou managed to deal with the lack of Spanish funds, the institutional ostracism that came later was a harder bone to chew.

That ostracism arrived in 2011. In the summer of that year there was an outbreak of *E. Coli* in Europe that caused over thirty deaths. Political leaders originally (and wrongly) pointed to the greenhouses where the migrants that Spitou represented worked as the origin of the deadly bacteria (The Local 2011). With eastern Andalusia being the focus of international news, Spitou repeated to anyone who wanted to hear that the produce that Europeans ate was the fruit of exploitation of the black by the white, the rich by the poor, Africa by Europe. Calling migrants “slaves” put Spanish employers in a position of slave masters and laid the blame on the table of European consumers. The demand for Spanish produce plummeted, mainly because of the *E. Coli* scare but also because of this campaign to denounce working conditions in Spanish greenhouses. Not surprisingly, did this not make Spitou the most popular person in town.

The “slaves” that the international media reported about (with Spitou’s help) were mostly men, but women also found employment in the greenhouses. Women were second-class workers, rarely hired and paid considerably less. Some who were desperate for work went from greenhouse to greenhouse begging for a day’s work, often with little result. More often women were employed in related occupations, like sorting and packing produce and restocking in the local market. Because of the discrimination they suffered in this sector, having strong connections with employers was crucial. The case of Nima, who arrived in 2000, illustrates this point:

I’ve worked at a warehouse for six years now. I worked in greenhouses for three years before that, first in [second research site] and then in [neighbouring province]. But when I got pregnant with my youngest the manager at the warehouse fired me and I went back to picking tomatoes at a greenhouse. The manager was [same ethnic group as interviewee]. His wife is a very close friend of mine. That’s why I never had trouble finding a job. But this year, since he died, I’m having a lot of trouble. I will be able to pay the mortgage for a while because I saved a little money, but once
Nima had been lucky to have such strong connections with a greenhouse manager. Other women spent many months without working even for a few hours: they made some money with small side jobs. For example, Solinda hemmed pants for one euro and other participants went to other parts of the country for months at a time to braid hair or sell trinkets. Among men, most recent migrants who had little social capital had a hard time finding their way into the local economy. When in dire need, both Muslim and Christian migrants approached front line services, an area overwhelmingly run by local (Catholic) churches. In this context it was Senegalese Catholics who really benefitted from the alliances that could be built with and through their church, as we will see below.

### 7.5.4 Hospitality

The first and third research sites (a medium and large urban centre) offered more varied employment to respondents than the second research site. Madrid had a numerous Senegalese population, concentrated in the neighbourhood of Embajadores / Lavapiés – and, as a result, many businesses that catered to and hired Senegalese immigrants. Most of these businesses were corner stores and restaurants that looked as if they had been transplanted straight from Senegal. Two of my respondents (a Wolof Mouride woman and an animist Diola man, both in their 20s) worked in such restaurants. The woman (Mamina) was hired as a cook making *thieboudienne*\(^{95}\) for her co-nationals, while the man (Badji) was a waiter. Although their working conditions were not great, they did not differ much from those of Spaniards working in the same sector: they worked from noon to 10 pm with a break in between and earned between 600 and 800 Euros a month. As for how they had landed their jobs, in both cases it had been a matter of connections within the Senegalese community.

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\(^{95}\) Senegal’s national dish.
Other respondents were or had been employed by Spaniards. In Madrid, I interviewed a man in his late 30s who was – thanks to his connections with highly positioned diplomats in the Senegalese embassy – a waiter in official events hosted by the Spanish government. Mbakhane’s situation was as good as it got for work in hospitality: he made over one thousand Euros a month (the exact amount depended on the number of events he worked at) and had a full-time contract that allowed him to renew his permits when the time came.

Paulette (introduced in Chapter 4) was also employed in this sector. The midwives who attended her daughter’s birth were deeply moved by the story Paulette told them, the one where she was an abused wife who had risked her life taking a boat to Spain when she was four months pregnant. One of these midwives saw to it that Paulette found a job at a local coffee shop. Her new bosses not only offered a legal contract: they also submitted the documents for her regularization covering the expenses themselves, and adapted their working hours to her daughter’s school schedule. With their support, Paulette went on to pursue a professional certificate in restaurant management. By the time I interviewed her she had two half-time jobs (as a waiter in her protectors’ coffee shop and as a cook at a hotel) and attended night classes. Her daughter lived with Paulette’s employers during the week. With her two salaries (800 and 600 Euros respectively) and the money she made renting one of the rooms of her apartment to a Senegalese man sent by her husband to keep an eye on her, Paulette made enough money to send remittances to her family, start a hairdressing school in her hometown, and cover her expenses in Spain.

The experience of these migrants highlights the importance of social capital to enter the legal labour market. Moreover, whereas Badji and Mamina’s experiences show the importance of strong personal connections and the opportunities offered by a burgeoning Senegalese population in Spain, Mbakhane and Paulette’s stories show that the more direct the link with Spanish entrepreneurs, the better the jobs migrants could aspire to. Other respondents who had to figure things out by themselves and got a job in the hospitality sector were not as lucky.
One of these participants was Djibril, a Muslim man in his late 20s who had arrived at the Canary Islands by boat and who was taken by Spanish authorities to Madrid when it became impossible to deport him back to Senegal. He was at a shelter for homeless migrants when a Chinese restaurant owner came looking for a dishwasher boy. The salary, the Chinese man warned, would be low: 600 euros a month for six and a half days of work; working hours were from one pm until closing time, which could be anytime between 11pm and 2 am. The employer also provided lodging but the worker would have to pay rent, 200 Euros a month for a shared room in a flat with ten other of his employees (all of them Chinese migrants). Besides, he was not interested in supporting anyone’s regularization application.

These conditions were clearly exploitative, but Djibril did not have many options and he took the job. Three years later his salary had increased to 1,000 Euros a month. In the end his employer supported his application for regularization. With time, Djibril even developed a taste for Mandarin. As he put it, either that or he would not have anyone to talk to for weeks at a time. However, the excessive working conditions were taking a toll on his health: he developed a skin condition and his hands and ankles were grotesquely inflamed.

Other women working in hospitality both in Madrid and in Southern Spain had found both racism and gender discrimination in their workplaces. Sanakha was a Catholic woman in her early thirties who had reunited with her husband in 2006. When she arrived, reunited family members were not legally allowed to work for a year (the legislation would change in 2009, see discussion above). But with one young daughter and only one very low income in the household, Sanakha soon had to venture into the labour market. In 2007 she worked (illegally) at several restaurants owned by Spaniards, making about 500 Euros a month for six and a half days of work per week. Her Spanish co-workers made almost twice that amount and had one month of paid vacation a year. Once she received her work permit Sanakha started looking for a more permanent and better-paid job. She thought she had
found it when she got pregnant with her second child. The day her pregnancy became too noticeable to ignore, Sanakha’s employer fired her. She received no compensation.

A last example showed how deeply embedded racism was in the workplace. Liwane was a Catholic woman in her mid 20s. She had a university degree and had entered the EU through Germany as an exchange student; her dream was to work as a hotel manager. Liwane had been working at a meat-packing factory for a year when a friend (a Spanish middle-aged lady who went to the same church as her) decided to intercede and get her a job at a four-star hotel.

My friend recommended me when she saw my resume. She said at first the work wouldn’t be much, but if I worked well I might make my way into the marketing department. (...) So I gave up my job at the chicken plant overnight, I was so excited! I worked as a hotel maid for a week and then they gave me the weekend off, which is quite unusual if you have just been hired. The other hotel maids were very jealous. But then they didn’t call me on Monday. Or Tuesday. Or Wednesday. I called my friend [who had recommended Liwane for the job] and she called the hotel: they said I was too slow at the job. (...) My friend was outraged, they had a huge argument over the phone, but in the end they didn’t hire me back. It turns out the hotel manager was responsible for this: she said she had looked at my resume and did not believe a thing she read. ‘How can she have all this education and speak five European languages, being black?’ That’s what she said to my friend (Liwane, interview, March 2009; my translation).

Shortly after this episode, Liwane found a job as a receptionist at a ski resort. She then decided to obtain some Spanish credentials and moved to Barcelona temporarily. There, where the black population was both more numerous and better integrated into the urban landscape, she found a permanent job in the marketing department of a prestigious hotel. “The work there is great and I feel they don’t treat me like a black woman: when they look at me I am a skilled worker. I make 1,200 Euros a month. It’s great, but my people are not there.” Because of this she kept looking for a job in my first research site (she even started her own business but it did not succeed). Liwane felt very strongly that the reason she did not even get job interviews in this city was because of her skin colour.
7.5.5 Factory work

Like Liwane, other women in the first and third research sites had done factory work or were doing it at the time of our interviews. Liwane had been plucking, gutting, and packing chickens for a year before she was able to find employment in the hospitality sector. She had found this job through a Senegalese friend who worked there and who had met his employers at church. Liwane submitted her application to change her status from international student to resident shortly afterwards, and found it a rather easy process. During twelve months she worked five days a week for a minimum salary that, with extra time, increased to 900 Euros a month. She left the job not because she found the working conditions excessive (although she reported having excruciating back pain and inflamed joints in both hands and ankles from standing for ten hours a day) but because she wished to become a hotel manager. Liwane came from one of the tourist centres of Senegal and thought the professional experience in Europe would be helpful once she returned, which she hoped to do in a few years.

The two other factory workers that I interviewed were also Catholic immigrants who had found a job through the Spanish connections they had made at church. After she had her second child, Sanakha got a position at a recycling plant sorting garbage. Her forty-hour week plus occasional extra time earned her 900 Euros per month, she was entitled to one month of paid vacation time a year and two extra pay cheques during Christmas and summer. She was the only black worker in the plant, although many of her co-workers were also migrants, all of them legal residents.

Finally, Diabira, also Catholic and with an oscillating legal status (she was an asylum seeker, a resident, and an undocumented worker at different times during her stay) had worked in several family-run food factories in my first research site. She had not been as lucky as Liwane or Sanakha. As a sometimes-undocumented migrant, a black woman, and a single mother, she had had a really hard time keeping a steady job.
Diabira travelled to Switzerland as an athlete. Once there she applied for refugee status, but after her asylum application failed she moved to Spain with her partner and got pregnant. Shortly after the birth of her daughter, he (whom she called husband although their marriage was not legal) was detained and deported for allegedly hitting a police officer. Diabira found herself in a difficult position: she had to provide for herself and her daughter, but she had neither experience in the Spanish labour market nor contacts beyond her husband’s friends’ wives, and they did not work outside of their homes. At first she worked as a street peddler and braided tourists’ hair in beaches some hours away, but taking her child made work difficult and daycare was not an option. When she almost lost the custody of her daughter (more on that below) she decided to stay put and found a job at a chip factory through a church contact. There she had two employers: the first one was the original founder of the factory, an old man who adored Diabira’s daughter and even babysat her when Diabira worked during weekends or statuary holidays. This man went out of his way to adapt Diabira’s working schedule to her daughter’s daycare hours. But his son, the new factory manager, was not happy with the arrangement. He harassed Diabira at work and called her names in front of her coworkers.

One day he tried to rip my clothes off. I grabbed his hair and pulled, yelling like a pig under the knife. He pushed, we tripped, and my face was this close [she puts her thumb and forefinger a couple of centimetres away] from a giant pot with boiling oil. He yelled, I yelled. We insulted each other. Then someone pulled us apart and sent me to the office [where the old boss was with her daughter]. He [the young boss] came upstairs with a crowbar. He opened the door and yelled, ‘get out of here you miserable whore, get out of here now or I’ll beat you up! I don’t want you here, out, out I say!’” I could have gone to the police, you know, and give him some real trouble. But his father had been an angel to us, so I just left (Diabira, interview, December 2009; my translation).

Despite this unfortunate incident, overall, of all the occupations discussed so far, factory work offered the best conditions. True, employment in this sector was not very interesting and salaries were low, but migrants had a steady occupation and, for the most part, were hired legally. Also, although racism still existed, its impact was less noticeable than in
agriculture or hospitality. In other words, the problems that respondents encountered at the workplace did not necessarily stem from their being migrants.

Something that the experiences of participants in factory work confirmed was the relation between social capital and working situation that we have observed before: the stronger the migrant’s connections with the local population, the better the job. In this sense it is worth noting that, in my sample, only Catholic migrants managed to enter the factory and they did it through Spanish contacts they had met through their local church. This again highlights the role of the church as a key space of socialization and a provider of bridging capital for migrants (Ley 2008). Other (Muslim) migrants had in some cases established instrumental relations with locals, but in general it took them longer to meet someone willing to act as a guide and reference in the Spanish labour market. In most cases employment was treacherous territory that led migrants to look for creative solutions, some of which are discussed in the next section.

7.5.6 Self-employment, multi-employment, and community activism

All respondents wanted to work. When asked, virtually all of them expressed preference for self-employment, mostly as a way to avoid ill treatment on the part of Spanish employers. The bureaucratic context made this almost impossible, though, since most migrants (except those in the family category) had to go through a series of renovations of their residence and work permits, and for that they had to prove they had been steadily employed and paying taxes for half the period the previous permit was valid for.96

Self-employment did not allow the migrant to navigate this system. As a result, virtually all my respondents with a legal status in Spain were hired by a third party (only 5% of Senegalese immigrants were self-employed, compared to 17% of the overall population in the country). In some cases this employment was real and in others it was not. For example,

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96 See explanation of the procedure in the previous chapter.
I have mentioned in previous chapters that migrants could buy contracts from a Spanish employer via a mediator (paying dearly for the initial contract, and then contributing monthly to cover the taxes and insurance fees that corresponded to their contract); or agree with a Spanish friend or acquaintance to be fictitiously hired while they went on with their own underground businesses (in this case the migrant only had to pay the monthly dues to the administration).

Recent migrants usually resorted to the first option. I also found this was the most common choice in my second research site, where greenhouse owners found they could: a) make money selling a contract; b) save money hiring undocumented workers who were paid lower salaries; and c) maintain the appearance, vis-à-vis local authorities, that the people working in their greenhouses were the legitimate workers that public records showed. Police controls were rare, even though this situation was regularly reported in the media and was common knowledge to those who lived in the area.

Migrants with more experience in Spain were more likely to reach an agreement with a local friend or acquaintance than to buy the contract. Two of my respondents (both men in my first research site) provided fascinating accounts of the ways cross-national networks could be deployed to this end. The first case was that of Woury, a Muslim man in his late forties who claimed to be the first Senegalese man to settle in my first research site.

I got my papers [work and residence permit] fifteen years ago, in 94. Back then it was a piece of cake. I had a friend who worked for the National Police. His wife was a labour accountant. Her mother was handicapped, so they offered me a fictitious contract and that’s how I got my papers, she did all the paper work and he just used his influence in the Police to speed up the procedure.97 (...) I paid my monthly dues for several years and meanwhile I did my own thing: street peddling, took some courses, worked elsewhere. Here in [first research site] I have also had two of my own businesses. I worked in agriculture, restaurants, many different places, but they never hired me. I just kept paying the insurance to my friend [the policeman]. Once a month we went for a coffee together and I gave him the money. I also worked as a

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97 In Spain, immigration procedures are the Police’s responsibility.
street peddler and then I had my own business, a dollar store. That was in ‘95. I had
to close the store a couple of years ago because the rent was high and now with the
Chinese dollar stores there’s too much competition (Woury, interview, February
2009; my translation).

The unusual thing in Woury’s case was that he had found a police officer and a labour
accountant to support his application. Otherwise, many other respondents reported having
similar arrangements with fictitious Spanish employers and working on their own business
to make ends meet. Most of the Senegalese vendors who had regular stands in town markets
were in this situation. I also found several respondents who owned (or had owned)
businesses in the first and third research site: these were either restaurants or corner stores
catering to the Senegalese immigrant population. In all cases there were Spanish citizens
involved, either as guarantors for the bank or as co-owners. With only one exception these
Spanish partners were migrants’ spouses.

Discrimination, bureaucratic hurdles and the disastrous economic situation in the country
after 2008 explain that underemployment and multi-employment were more common than
self-employment among participants. But the situation resulted in a great deal of frustration
and resentment. Respondents believed this failure to thrive economically was due primarily
to racism in the Spanish administration as well as in the marketplace. The most vocal of my
respondents in this respect was Sokhna, a Muslim woman in her mid twenties who had left
her two children in Senegal to pursue advanced studies in Madrid. She won a scholarship
given by the AECID (the government’s development agency) to do an MA in journalism, an
area where she had extensive professional experience. But the scholarship was not enough
either to maintain her family (Sokhna’s husband was also in Spain) or to feed her
professional ambitions: soon after her arrival she started looking for a job and found she
could not find an employment that matched her professional qualifications because of racist
discrimination.

They say that a wet cat isn’t afraid of the water, and this cat [points to her chest]
takes a shower every day. You have no idea what we see and hear every day. No
idea. (…) I have looked for jobs everywhere and … well … what can I say, it seems normal to me now, I’m over it. Sometimes I understand, you discriminate against us because we are black. I say to myself, these poor ignorant people have never left Spain. I feel sorry for them. (…) They see my resume and they can’t take it, I understand it: they don’t expect such a resume from a black woman like me. But even in customer services [for cell phone clients] they have discriminated against me. They see my resume, they call me, and when I get there after two hours in public transit – this has actually happened to me, the lady when she saw me her face turned green and she started mumbling: “oh, well, but-but-but … you are … black!!” WHAT THE FUCK!? I turned around and left. My knees were shaking with rage!! It’s always the same, either I clean toilets or I’m over qualified. Sometimes I can’t believe I left my work and my children in Senegal to come to this land of shit and honey. It’s outrageous. I’m a professional, you know? (Sokhna, interview, February 2010; my translation).

Not all respondents communicated their anger as effectively as Sokhna, but many – especially those who had held professional jobs in Senegal – were unequivocally frustrated. Others tried to sweeten the bitter pill of racism and discrimination in the labour market with a healthy those of sarcasm. Mbakhane, for example, laughed when he told me that “because I am the only black man at work I can’t ever step outside for a smoke with my co-workers, because it’s obvious I’m not there! If I go take a piss, even before I reach the stall I hear my boss saying: ‘where’s that lazy nigger again?’” (Mbakhane, interview, April 2009; my translation).

The frustration they experienced as black people in a racist context (in particular, the unfair treatment they experienced in the labour market) led many to become politically active in Spain. I will not expand on this issue here, but it is worth noting the variety of positions that politically engaged respondents took. In my third research site (with the oldest, largest and more geographically concentrated population of Senegalese migrants all research sites) several young women were members of radical organizations such as the Spanish Black Panthers and the Pan-African Youth Organization (FOJA). These organizations demand, among other things, that the Spanish government assumes and apologizes for the country’s role in African slavery and compensates black citizens financially for it (see Toasije 2009). Other respondents (like Mbakhane) founded movements to continue Sengor’s intellectual
labour on *négritude* in the diaspora and have an impact on their homeland’s politics. Finally, a last group were part of cultural organizations funded by the Spanish government whose goal was to promote light-hearted multicultural exchanges a few times a year.

By contrast, activism in the first and second research sites was mostly informal and aimed at providing for the immediate needs of the Senegalese population. Alliances with local (mostly Catholic) organizations were vital in these sites, because the Spanish church received the bulk of state financial resources in the area of social services. The first Senegalese-only associations that appeared in both sites had one single goal: collect money for the repatriation of co-nationals’ bodies upon their death. With time, other organizations began to formalize and reach out to local NGOs. By doing this, respondents hoped to create a job for themselves while opening comfortable spaces for Senegalese migrants (particularly Muslims). With the support of Spaniards who were familiar with the process of registering an organization and applying for public funds, these migrants hoped to become important players in the (at the time) burgeoning field of social service provision for migrants.

Senegalese citizens also integrated successfully into local, pre-existing organizations and labour unions. In fact, the relationship between respondents and local NGOs and unions was extremely fluid: most migrants had reached out to these organizations in their search for a job and other needs. In turn, Senegalese migrants were seen as prime mediators by these organizations for their communication skills (they often spoke several African and European languages) and their ability to negotiate across religious and ethnic lines.

An excellent example was Spitou, who brought a dwindling SOC back to life in the “Poniente almeriense” region. The union was asphyxiated by lack of funds when Spitou was hired as their spokesperson. He was incredibly successful attracting resources and logistical support from other European labour unions from the far left, particularly in Switzerland and Germany. His influence was such that some called into question the survival of the SOC when Spitou was diagnosed with diabetes. Another respondent, Aïssatou, was also hired by
a national labour union to work in the area of food safety. This woman worked as a mediator with greenhouse workers, many of whom were Senegalese. Also in a crucial mediating role was Pierre, interlocutor between the main provider of front line services in the first research site (a Catholic organization) and the West African population. Like Spitou, Pierre spoke three European and at least five Senegalese languages, which made him a very efficient employee. He was also in good terms with the Muslim population in this site (although he was Catholic). His work was so appreciated that the local archbishop himself fought to have Pierre regularized. As a gesture of appreciation Agustin put together an all-African choir and organized a concert. Thus turned to be the first occasion ever that a djembe was played in the city’s six-century old Cathedral.

In this section I have discussed the difficulties encountered by migrants in different sectors of the labour market. Although organizing the information this way makes analytical sense, the truth is that respondents’ employment trajectories were extremely fragmented. Abrupt changes in career paths, precariousness, discrimination, and lack of professional prospects best describe the labour histories of those migrants that I encountered. Their vulnerable position in the labour market was paralleled in other areas where black people (not only Senegalese and regardless of immigrant / citizenship status) were regularly abused or denied access. As I have shown, however, with the assistance of a variety of other actors, participants developed coping strategies that allowed them to more successfully navigate the obstacles in their path. I have discussed the role of religious groups, Spanish allies, and civil society groups in helping women negotiate the challenges of the labour market. Running as a subtext through these discussions of challenges and tactics has been the theme of motherhood. I will finish this chapter with a brief discussion of the kinds of trans- and cross-national networks that emerged in the context of respondents’ experience as mothers.

98 West African hand drum.
7.6 Resolving the tensions of motherhood and employment: collective mothering across state and cultural boundaries

Sixteen of the 17 core respondents (all of them women) had children. Some had left their sons and daughters in Senegal under the care of a close relative; in a few cases, the older children were in a situation to take care of the younger ones. These respondents had a great responsibility to provide for their families, but they were also relieved from having care for their offspring while in Spain. The situation was very different for the six respondents who had their children with them. These respondents faced many challenges: their daily expenses increased, their ability to work diminished (at least, temporarily), their husbands still expected them to contribute to the household economy, and employers did not want them. Worse than all that, Spanish immigration law (with the system of periodic renewals described above) did not contemplate maternity leave. This meant that, as a direct consequence of their becoming mothers, all the women in my sample who gave birth in Spain either became undocumented or had trouble maintaining their legal status. The only exceptions were those with fictitious contracts, since they did not actually work for an employer.
Mothers found combining paid work and motherhood challenging for years after giving birth. They had little or no support from their partners and daycare (if available) was not always compatible with their working schedules. More important than the logistic impossibility was their reluctance to engage in intensive mothering – “a gendered model that advises mothers to expend a tremendous amount of time, energy, and money in raising their children” (Hays 1998). Participants did not see the need to stay at home with their babies beyond what was strictly necessary. There were two reasons for this. On the one hand, motherhood in Senegal is largely a collective endeavour, the shared responsibility of the women who live in the same household (Vázquez Silva 2010). This may be the reason why in Wolof (the language spoken by the majority of the population) there is not a word for biological mother: all women one generation or more older are referred to as Yaayi, “mother.” On the other hand, a very important part of respondents’ identity had to do with being workers who provided for their (extended) family in Spain and Senegal. As a result, participants were comfortable leaving their children (even very young ones) with other caregivers when they went to work. But in the Spanish context (where familiar support networks were absent) mothers had to be creative to come up with strategies that would ensure that their children were taken care of yet did not block their path towards economic success.

Two of these strategies involved resorting to the Senegalese community for help. The poorest women in my sample tried to reproduce pre-migration forms of childcare, collaborating with other Senegalese mothers in a sort of communal daycare arrangement. Money was not involved in these transactions; it was understood that favours would eventually be returned in kind. The problem with this arrangement was that women were already overstretched by their precarious employment situation. As a result, children were often left alone and fights emerged over who had taken care of whose children and for how long. Only in the third research site, where there was a large pool of unemployed women

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99 This is a departure from most literature on transnational motherhood, which focuses mostly on Latin American and Filipino mothers and highlights feelings of guilt, emotional distress, and depression as characteristics of the separation between migrant mothers and their children (Bernhard et al. 2005, Boccagni 2012, Carling et al. 2012, Fresnoza-Flot 2009, Menjívar 2012).
and a relatively cohesive Senegalese population, did this “Senegal in Spain” arrangement work.

Other women with more resources (both economic and social capital) sent their children to Senegal when they were just a few months old. This was a prime example of “transnational motherhood,” where biological mothers provided for their offspring while their own mothers (or another older woman in the extended family) performed the daily tasks of caring for and raising the migrant’s children. Exchanges between participants and their children’s caregivers happened regularly over the phone, as often as every other day, making ICTs a crucial element in participants’ experiences of motherhood (see also Madianou and Miller 2011). Migrants called home to make sure everything was going well, and the caregiver called the migrant if something exceptional happened. Migrants sent money every month to cover school fees, food expenses, etc., usually a minimum of one hundred Euros a month plus some extra money for religious celebrations and other special events.

Transnational mothers had mixed feelings about this arrangement. They had no doubt that their children were receiving the best care available, but at the same time they believed their families were keeping part of the money they sent to cover their children’s needs. This made them resentful. Respondents also feared that residing in Senegal on a permanent basis might interfere with their offspring’s ability to obtain Spanish citizenship in the future. For this reason, some mothers had their children travel between Senegal and Spain regularly. An example of this was Mamina, whose 9-year-old son Badou spent six months at his paternal aunt’s home in Senegal, going to Islamic school and learning Wolof; and six months with his parents in Madrid, learning Spanish. Ndiaty (Badou’s caregiver in Senegal) was proud that Mamina had trusted her with the care of her first-born male child. She said: “here [in Senegal] he learns where he comes from and who he is. He learns to be proud to be black and Muslim. When that sinks deep into his heart, then he can go to Europe and fight his way through, with the strength that those roots will give him” (Ndiaty, interview, June 2009; my translation). Mamina echoed this belief.
What seemed like a perfect arrangement – both to give Badou the fortitude to face a possibly challenging future as a black European citizen and to ensure he could become a Spanish citizen – did not seem to sit well with Badou. I met him in Spain and in Senegal on several occasions. He was extremely disoriented. He was nine years old, yet he behaved like a much younger child, wetting his bed at night and needing constant physical affection from his mother or aunt. In Senegal he could not catch up with his classmates and other children in the neighbourhood called him “black Toubab.” He did not fare much better in Spain: unable to make it through a full school year at a time, he was behind the rest of his classmates, who made a habit of mocking him. In short, he did not belong to any of these two worlds.

A third group of young mothers (the “intercultural mothers”) found white Spanish families to take care of their kids. I only encountered this in my first research site, a medium-sized city where the cost of living was lower (and the daily rhythms less stressful) than Madrid; but where, unlike the second research site, there was not a large pool of unemployed women available for informal daycare arrangements. Mothers whose children were raised by Spanish families had neither the social capital to have their children be taken care of by Senegalese women, nor the economic capital to send their children back to Senegal. Most importantly, they believed that if white people raised their children their chances in life would be better.

In fact, this sort of informal arrangement amounted to a de facto adoption of participants’ children by families they did not always know that well. These families lodged, fed, dressed, and in summary provided for all of these children’s needs while their mothers where working, usually six or more days a week. Spanish families raising Senegalese children were usually neighbours, but not necessarily: once I became a familiar face among the Senegalese population, several women I had never talked to asked me to find a suitable
family for their babies (the youngest of which was two weeks old) so that they could go back to work.

The fact that this arrangements between Spanish white families and black migrants (both Christian and Muslim) existed emphasizes that the racism participants experiences was criss-crossed by concrete acts of inter-racial solidarity. Host families took participants’ children in their midst asking for nothing in return. In all the cases I studied, these were childless couples (either because of fertility problems or because their children had already left the family home). Although host families were racially awkward (they were uncertain about how to approach the minors’ race) for them, children’s skin colour soon stopped being important.

However (and perhaps, unsurprisingly), informal Spanish-Senegalese inter-racial adoptions were rarely a seamless arrangement. Mothers were not fluent in Spanish and host families were neither knowledgeable nor committed to Senegalese parenting practices, although all of them without exception came to love these children as if they were their own. The cultural perceptions of the situation could not have been more different: where the migrant perceived herself as a working mother who looked after her child’s best interest, host families saw her as a neglectful parent. Under this light, Spanish adoptive families became benevolent souls taking care of a semi-abandoned child whom they loved intensely. But foster parents disapproved of physical discipline and were not strict with their adoptive children.

From the perspective of the biological mother, Spanish parenting practices resulted in spoilt children. Participants wanted their children to be fed and dressed, but also raised respecting rules that they alone knew or cared about. As one respondent summarized: “A child never raises her voice to her mother. A woman doesn’t challenge her man. The younger respect the older and the women the men. You don’t ask me why I’m telling you to do that.” (Paulette,
interview, February 2009; my translation). Another mother of two whose eldest daughter lived with a Spanish family elaborated on this issue:

You know why I don’t want to give my second daughter to a Spanish family? Some neighbours came to ask me if I’d give her to them – you Spanish people are so funny when it comes to black babies – but I have a problem. I don’t like the education that my first one has, she’s plain rude. She’s also ignorant. So I’m afraid to give my second daughter to a Spanish family, because this one [her eldest daughter]… she’s spoilt. In this neighbourhood there are a lot of gypsies and she behaves like one. And I don’t like that. She does what she wants and never says ‘thank you.’ She doesn’t speak Wolof even though she’s six. (…) I want to send her to Senegal with my mother when she’s 10 or 15, that way she can go to Islamic school, because if she stays here she may become a Catholic. Imagine: now she doesn’t even want to go to Senegal, she thinks herself a Spaniard! And she behaves like one: rude, plain rude. (…) I’m grateful that family has raised her, but I don’t like how they’ve done it (Mounash, interview, February 2009; my translation).

Mounash was obviously not impressed with the education her daughter had received from her Spanish adoptive family. This was a common complaint, and a reasonable one considering the gap between parenting practices in Senegalese and Spanish societies. But it was not only an issues of cultural differences between the two countries: it was also a matter of children who lived in marginal neighbourhoods where illiteracy, unemployment, drugs and crime were rampant. Like all children, they tended to imitate the behaviour of those around them in these dysfunctional neighbourhoods.

Other respondents had a much tougher pill to swallow when reaching to the Spanish population for help to take care of their children. One of my respondents (Diabira) had scarcely any resources when her husband was deported and she found herself responsible to provide for her and her child’s needs. As a Catholic and a new arrival, her Muslim spouse’s friends were lukewarm to the idea of sharing daycare responsibilities. Other Catholic immigrants (much less numerous in this site) were not available, and her daughter was undocumented and could not be sent back to Senegal – not that Diabira had the money to buy the ticket, anyway. Following her husband’s incarceration, Diabira spent some weeks at
tourist beaches braiding white foreigners’ hair. But she found it was difficult to do while taking care of her baby. So when she heard that a public institution took children in temporarily she asked if her daughter could be accepted.

Mame [respondent’s daughter] wouldn’t stop crying, I couldn’t work! And then a friend said: let’s take her to the nuns, that way you can work and feed your family. I took Mame there and they took her to [name of a public home for orphaned children]. I didn’t speak Spanish back then, I didn’t know what that meant. (…) I said: look, the daycare is closed, I want to take her to daycare but it’s closed, I need to work but I can’t because she won’t stop crying, so I want to leave her here with you until September when they open the daycare [this happened in July]. They gave me a paper and told me to sign it. And then they said: “that’s ok, but you must come every week to visit her.” And I said, ok. (…) I left Mame there and went to [another province] to work, I made money but it was rough. (Diabira, interview, March 2009; my translation).

Diabira spent the first week after dropping her daughter at this institution in a city five hundred kilometres away. She was making lots of money. She thought it better to stay for a few more days and sent a Spanish neighbour to make sure the baby was doing well. The days turned into weeks. She called the institution her daughter was in regularly and talked to a nun, but her ability to communicate was so limited that she did not understand anything the old woman told her. When Diabira returned a few weeks later, the province (who by then had legal custody of the child) accused her of abandonment. They informed her she would have to return once she had obtained legal status in the country, a few years later. Diabira lost her mind. She only had one person to call, her neighbour and fellow churchgoer. This woman and her husband decided to step in: they gave her a fictitious contract, hired a lawyer to get the baby back to her mother, and became the child’s actual adoptive parents. Diabira called this family “my magic fairies.” They had indeed pulled a bit of a miracle getting the child out of the orphanage.

The variety of mothering strategies found among participants point to the specific difficulties that women found when trying to be both breadwinners for their families and caring mothers to their children. Sometimes the results were far from satisfactory, and many
questions remain about the future of these Spanish children’s well being. But that is the object of a different research project. My goal in this section has been to highlight some of the most poignant obstacles that affect immigrant women in the labour market. Also, I have explored the critical role of transnational and cross-cultural social networks in participants’ responses to this challenging situation. Either in Spain or in Senegal within their own community, or in Spain thanks to the support of Spanish neighbours, these women were successful in creating alliances that allowed them to move forward as workers. This was possible, among other things, because mothers believed it was perfectly fine to share parenting responsibilities with other women. These “guilt-free mothers” (Vázquez Silva 2010) felt it was not only acceptable, but desirable to reach out to other women to advance their economic status. And thus instrumental alliances were built, particularly with Spanish homes that would otherwise not be part of their networks but that became key sources of both economic and social capital for respondents.

7.7 Discussion

In a smaller study that I conducted with political activist Sesé Sité (Vives and Sité 2011), a group of ten black women under the age of 30 were encouraged to discuss the three areas where they had had the most difficulty blending into mainstream Spanish society. Interviewees had very different backgrounds: some were foreigners and some Spanish citizens; some illiterate and others highly qualified professionals; some recent immigrants (less than five years) and some born in Spain to a native-foreigner couple. The only thing they had in common was that they were black women. And yet, when we posed the question, their answers were identical: paid employment was the place where they found most explicit racist discrimination, followed by public spaces (where their encounters with the public authorities were most traumatic) and educational institutions. At a personal level, these women’s interactions with the local population were marked by the hyper
sexualization of their bodies,\textsuperscript{100} to the point that the five native-born black women we interviewed had made the conscious decision of not having any romantic relations with white Spaniards because they were “tired of having men drool all over me calling me their ‘black Venus.’ It’s gross and it’s too much pressure, I’m just a young woman and that’s what I want to be treated like” (Paula, interview, January 2010; my translation).

When in public spaces, these women were invariably taken for sex workers. It could happen in a park while they were having a picnic with their families, or at a night club, or even at metro stations. Respondents discussed the strategies they used in great detail: they changed their routes when moving around the city and wore conservative clothing. One of them even reported carrying a “nerdy looking book” in her purse with the sole purpose of pretending to read it whenever she had to wait for a friend. Although they found racial discrimination in public spaces mortifying and unacceptable, their main concern was how such racism entered the labour market and curtailed their chances in life.

Those findings were replicated in my PhD research. Participants claimed they could live with discrimination and abuse on the part of authorities, but the reason they had migrated was to advance their (and their families’) economic situation. Racist discrimination in the workplace prevented them from doing so. Considering the pervasive experience of racism and the impact on both black foreign and black Spanish workers, the near-to-absent investigation on race in the Spanish academic literature is shocking (Vives and Sité 2011).

I have discussed the roots and implications of Spanish racialized thinking elsewhere (Vives 2010, Vives and Sité 2011). A deeper investigation of these issues falls outside of the scope of the present study. My concern here has been instead to focus on how the strategic use of the resources provided by transnational and cross-national social networks allowed participants to overcome the obstacles that racist discrimination placed in their path, at least

\textsuperscript{100} This is the case in Spain and, more generally, in Western culture. To provide only one example, Jewell argues that “from the early 1630s to the present, Black American women of all shades have been portrayed as hypersexual "bad-black-girls" (1993, p. 46). A similar argument has been presented by Romero Bachiller (2007) in Spain.
partially, specifically when entering the local labour market. In conjunction with the study of the role that Senegalese transnational networks played in the migration of participants to Spain, the evidence collected advances the literature on transnationalism in a number of ways. Before turning to the theoretical contributions of this and the previous chapter I will briefly summarize my empirical findings.

In Spain, the two main factors that explained participants’ employment routes were gender and place of residence. Religious affiliation, marital status and the presence / absence of caring responsibilities in the country were also important in this regard. Administrative status followed. But the most interesting finding is the evidence that networks were the main factor aiding Senegalese migrants to negotiate the Spanish labour market in the face of widespread racial and gendered discrimination. (Of course, it would be necessary to run this research with a larger sample to deepen our understanding of the specific ways in which this happened.) These networks – which were, at the same time, shaped by the individual’s gender and her socio-cultural and economic background – provided access to employment opportunities in different sectors of the economy.

The information gathered during this research points to the concentration of Senegalese migrants in very few sectors. All of these sectors were immigrant niches, but within these, only “invisible” occupations welcomed them. Many were part of the underground economy (e.g., street peddling) or severely under-regulated sectors (e.g., domestic work), and virtually all offer poor working conditions. Street peddling was a key sector of employment for men (and less so for women) in the first research site, seen as temporary and compatible with other occupations such as seasonal work in agriculture or hospitality. Street vendors relied on their connections to get a loan to launch their business, take their stalls and merchandise to the places where they sold, and start all over again if the police confiscated their goods. Co-nationals were the safety network that allowed these participants to jump into a risky business, but I did not find that transnational Mouride networks played the role that other scholars have argued they did in other places.
Greenhouse agriculture dominated the working opportunities of respondents in the second research site. Here, the stiff competition brought connections to the forefront of participants’ experiences, particularly for women. The best positioned workers in this site were Catholic participants, part of an extended family that migrated to the region some years before I conducted my fieldwork. Whenever one of these respondents was promoted to a position of authority – and this happened often, because these migrants had a thick social network that linked them to Spanish employers who attended the same local churches – they would hire their relatives and other members of the same ethnic group. Muslim migrants, on the other hand, did not have access to this network: they were forced to compete with the bulk of the unemployed on crossroads and public squares for a day’s work. Muslim women were in the worst position, and the ones that I found were not wanted in the greenhouses and often lived off charity or their husband’s income.

The third research site had a more varied economy and a larger (mostly Muslim) Senegalese population. This allowed for the emergence of a market internal to the group where some of my participants found employment. The community sector was also relatively important. Here, the church played a less important role than co-nationals’ social networks (the role of the daara or local Mouride associations was not as clear). Participants’ working conditions in Madrid seemed to be more on par with those of other immigrants and even Spaniards, although more research would have to be done to confirm this hypothesis. In any case, the third research site proved to be a more complex context where both the number and type of social networks and participants’ employment sectors were greater than in the other two sites.

Regardless of the differences in sector of employment, what I observed in virtually all the cases that I encountered were participants’ vulnerability as workers and their lack of professional prospects. Deskilling was a common experience for those who had professional qualifications before migration, and even those who had acquired credentials in Spain.
Vulnerability was even more obvious among women who were mothers of young children living in Spain. Their situation required them to find a solution to the challenge of making employment and carework compatible. While they were the most vulnerable of my interviewees, the strategies they came up with proved that much could be done with the right kind of trans- and cross-national networks. In fact, after a first period of adjustment, those who decided to keep their children in Spain often saw their situation improve thanks to the meaningful links they established with the local population through their offspring.

The evidence presented here suggests that, first, the term “transnationalism” may be misleading, and we may need to consider alternatives that better summarize migrants’ experiences. Second, the transnational social network seems to morph as the migratory project advances, pointing to the need to engage in a “mobile cartography” of the network. And, third, the relationship between gender and transnationalism emerges as a complex and ambiguous one. These are important points that have not always been considered in the literature and that need to be more thoroughly researched. In the meanwhile, there are some preliminary theoretical claims that could help advance the field.

In the first place, the need to keep examining the relationship between location and transnationalism has long been emphasized in the literature (see for example Smith and Guarnizo 1998), but one that cannot be overstated. As this discussion shows, pre-migration family forms, social structure, and societal norms have a crucial impact on the morphology of transnational social networks. The first two tend to be replicated through transnationalism (e.g. in the organization of specific communities of migrants), while the latter is the glue that keeps the members of the networks connected across vast distances. In the case of Senegalese migration to Spain, extended family forms and the rules of inter-group solidarity across ethnic and religious differences (discussed by Suarez-Navaz 2004) resulted in a highly functional transnational network – although a very insular one as well. In this context the ideas of chain migration and migration as a family business (Herman 2006) take a new spin where kinship – and not the family as it is often understood in western countries –
becomes the main category of analysis (as seen in Chapter 6). In this sense it can be said that there are as many incarnations of transnational networks as there are migrant communities (see also Riccio 2001b).

Second, an individual’s position in the social structure at origin shape the differential access of migrants to the network and the resources it provides. In other words, the same network does not offer the same to everyone who is part of it. The border-crossing experience made this point clear, and there gender emerged as the main mediating factor between the individual and the transnational network. But other factors that seemed to be of little importance when crossing the border emerged with force upon arrival. In Spain, religious networks determined participants’ access to key local resources. As it applies to Senegalese transnational social networks, my findings suggest that we need to move beyond Mouridism to understand the role of religious affiliation in their formation and the resources they provide.

More generally, this finding suggests that the composition as well as the resources provided by the transnational network is not only dependent on geography, but on the stage of migration as well. The network is not a static entity: it is transformed through migration. Mobility results in the expansion of the network, its diversification, and a marked increase of the resources it provides – particularly when transnational social networks have a way into ones. This emphasizes the need for a mobile cartography of the transnational network, one that follows the migrant through the different states of their journey.

A final point that I will come back to in the concluding chapter is the relationship between transnationalism and gains in gender equity. The evidence analyzed here once again calls for caution when equating the two (something that feminist migration scholars have long argued against; see for example Pratt and Yeoh 2003). In this sense I have found the concept of “translocal conservatism” (Sinatti 2006) of great use. Sinatti offers this concept to emphasize the “instinct of self-preservation” (46) that characterizes most expressions of
Senegalese transnationalism. This author is mainly concerned with the experience of *Mouride* migrant men. But when taken beyond this specific context, the concept of “translocal conservatism” brings home the point that, although transformed through migration and transnationalism, gender relations are not necessarily more egalitarian in Spain than they were in Senegal. The concept of subsidiary agency (which I proposed in Chapter 6) is also important: in Spain as in Senegal, women were often acted upon by men. The extent to which women’s agency is controlled is likely to be downplayed in this study, since I only had access to those women who already interacted with the Spanish population.
8 Conclusions

8.1 Introduction

Most of the respondents who were part of this study had left Spain by the time I wrote these lines. They became part of a larger exodus of citizens and foreigners hit by the current economic crisis: an army of unemployed and underemployed workers who left looking for greener pastures. Most remained in Europe. They took advantage of the absence of internal controls in the EU and moved to other countries where they had relatives and friends. Others returned to their families in Senegal. Their particular journey in Spain came to an end, but the larger story of Western African migration to the EU remains. This dissertation is still relevant as countries in the EU continue to define their relationship with their black immigrants and citizens; as this supra-national entity and its member states continue to pursue perfectly managed borders and immigration management systems; and as migration scholars advance in their study of transnationalism.

As I explained in the introduction, three questions framed this research project:

- What is the genealogy of the Spanish - Senegalese border for the purposes of migration control? How has this border evolved to repel unwanted migrants from the region, and how is it gendered (or not)?
- What are the obstacles and barriers encountered by Senegalese migrant men and women in their migration to Spain? Which of these have to do with the state border, and which do not (e.g., obstacles resulting from gendered collective constructions of the migrant)? How are these obstacles gendered?
- What kinds of social networks have been deployed by Senegalese migrants in Spain to migrate and settle in the country? How is gender, along with other axes of social differentiation such as ethnicity, religion, and place of settlement in Spain, relevant to understand the ways these networks function and the kinds of services they provide?
Much of the discussion here has been about struggles between different actors who approached the border of the EU with diverging goals. I have identified some of these actors (migrants, relatives, policymakers, activists, and members of migrants’ transnational social networks). I have discussed what their role was in this particular migration; in the case of migrants, I have addressed their objectives, their options and limitations, the strategies they used to achieve their goals, and the results of their struggles. When doing this, I have been particularly attentive to the impact of social constructions of masculinity / femininity on respondents’ experiences.

My goal in this concluding chapter is to summarize my main research findings and show how they contribute to our understanding of larger processes and to the advancement of migration studies. The chapter is divided in five sections. Sections 2, 3, and 4 summarize and reflect on the implications of my empirical findings to support or challenge existing literature in the areas of border studies (“Borders”), migration studies (“Boundaries”), and transnationalism (“Networks”). In Section 5, I focus on the limitations of this research, discussing areas of my inquiry that would benefit from further research, as well as some ways to improve the methodological approach. In the concluding section I argue that, with most of the leaders who implemented the militarization of the border gone and a negative migration balance in Spain, it is time to move on to another form of migration management.

8.2 Borders

... the situation on the Western African route has been mostly under control since 2008 but remains critically dependant of [sic] the implementation of effective return agreements between Spain and western African countries. Should these agreements be jeopardised, irregular migration pushed by high unemployment and poverty is likely to resume quickly despite increased surveillance. (FRONTEX 2012: 41).

In the introduction I proposed the idea of the migrant-on-the-beach approach to recent policymaking at the border between Senegal and Spain. This approach results from the
perception that the “mass” arrival of undocumented migrants posed a threat to the integrity of Spain and, by extension, the EU. The usual metaphors were used: this was an “invasion,” a “flood,” and “attack,” a “wave” of desperate black men who, by upsetting international regulations (i.e., the need to cross the border through an authorized post and with a proper travel document), wanted to take advantage of the prosperity of Europe. Here the “domopolitics” (Walters 2004) emerged with force, imposing a new form of regulating the relationship between territory, belonging to the nation, and security at the border.

As I have discussed at length in previous chapters, the alarm resulting from this perception triggered the creation of an EU agency in charge of coordinating actions along the Union’s external border (and beyond whenever it was deemed necessary). In Spain, a multi-faceted strategy was adopted, including preventive measures like investment in development aid and the implementation of faulty temporary migration programs; and defensive measures, including agreements to train Senegalese state forces on border surveillance, the deployment of high-technology at the border, and the signing of return agreements with Senegal. This way the border became less of a line on the sand (or the water) and more of an assemblage of spaces that needed to be managed to stop unwanted migration. This is one of my contentions in this dissertation: that the border is a form of control of the population and, in particular, of human mobility. Moreover, I have argued that the creation of a crisis at the land and sea borders of Spain allowed the state and the EU to advance their anti-immigration agenda, as it has happened in other contexts such as Canada, the US, and Australia (Mountz 2010).

For participants, the EU / Spanish border extended well beyond the administrative limit of the state. Although they talked about this border as a line or a wall, in fact since they first took action to leave their country of origin they found obstacles in places far away from the physical border of the EU. These obstacles included the failure to meet the demands to migrate to Europe legally or the lack of resources to cover the costs of the trip; the long, long lines and bureaucratic rigmarole of European embassies and consulates in Dakar; the
bribing and coaxing needed to get selected as temporary workers; and, finally, the passport control at the airport. Migrants were creative in their strategies to overcome this extended border. Most of these strategies were, at least partially, legal. They involved applying for a visa under the family reunification procedure, obtaining a visitor’s permit to enter the EU, or being recruited as a temporary worker by a Spanish company. Often, however, there were irregularities involved: maybe respondents hired an entrepreneur to “speed up” the application process or used a relative’s passport to pass through the border control at the airport; others bribed Senegalese officials to be selected for that year’s agricultural campaign. In either case, more often than not the crossing of the border happened through a pre-established border control and involved an officer stamping the migrant’s passport.

Another, much smaller group of Senegalese migrants, arrived in Spain between 2005 and 2010 by crossing the border illegally either by land or by boat. This is the group that haunted policymakers and the media and that the quote from a FRONTEX report given above refers to: they, in their small numbers and shanty boats, triggered the crisis of the EU border. Sea migrants attempting to reach the Canary Islands and Southern Spanish coasts are today virtually non-existent. While this route worked (and a number of my interviewees used it) the business was mainly managed by seasoned fishermen who became human smugglers in order to make some extra money and even migrate themselves. It was a loosely organized enterprise run by neighbours and friends, or friends of friends in the worst case. Sea migrants were not the destitute migrants media coverage would make us believe: they had the means to pay a relatively high fee, or were well connected enough to pay for their passage by recruiting other aspiring migrants. Interestingly, despite the near-absolute absence of arrivals to the Canary Islands, both the Spanish government and the EU remain invested in protecting the archipelago. HERA has become a permanent FRONTEX operation, and as of 2011 it consumed 18% of the agency’s total budget for the control of the sea borders – 6,020 million euros plus the resources that Spain and other member states invest in this section of the border. In their assessment the agency’s analysts note that HERA remains crucial because “there is a risk that [once] the control is gone the arrivals at
the Canary Islands will start again” (FRONTEX 2011:133). While the EU honed its defensive strategy, Spain’s overall budget for development aid (one strategy of migration control) has been decimated: in 2012 there will be 683 million euros available for all programs in all countries where Spain is involved (virtually all going to salaries and rent), 65.4% less than in 2011 (El Mundo, 2012).

The poorest and most vulnerable of migrants continue to travel by land. This group is at a heightened risk to fall prey to smuggling organizations. While evidence suggests that a variety of disconnected and barely professionalized entrepreneurs are in charge of human smuggling in the West African region, things change as migrants approach Arab countries – the external guardians of the EU border. Transit migrants often depart with little money. They work their way north, while at the same time they must remain as invisible as possible to avoid unwanted attention from state security forces and, sometimes, locals. Those who have money spend weeks and sometimes months in tranquilos – apartments or caves where they wait before continuing their trip. Land migrants try to buy protection, but by doing so they put themselves at the mercy of smugglers and are forced to remain in transit for longer periods of time. Women are a minority among this group, but according to organizations working on the ground they are overwhelmingly victims of sexual abuse; more often than not, these women are pregnant or travel with small children. For both land and sea migrants, it is evident that increased control of the EU border has meant longer, riskier, and more expensive journeys.

Despite this, EU and Spanish policymakers still maintain that alliances with North African governments (in particular, readmission agreements for both nationals and non-nationals from countries in the continent) are key to stop unwanted migration. For example, the FRONTEX 2012 Program of Work instructs the EU to put more effort into enlisting Morocco to ensure the success of its anti-immigration strategy (FRONTEX 2012). By doing this FRONTEX analysts are making a clear choice to ignore Morocco’s repeated and flagrant violation of human and migrants’ rights (AI 2005, Collyer 2008 and 2010, among
others). In other words, the EU and FRONTEX are hiring governments in countries of transit to do what neither the Union nor its member states can do without breaking the laws they themselves have created or committed to abide by.\textsuperscript{101}

The reterritorialization of the border, the adoption of new strategies to control South-North migration, and the collaboration with non-EU governments to this end are processes at the forefront and centre of this discussion. Echoing the findings of other scholars, during my research, I have found the Spanish / Senegal border to be an exercise of power, and a polysemic ideological construct (Sidaway 2002, Paasi 2005, Sparke 2005). The border that I encountered served a number of functions (Paasi 2005) as an instrument of state policy and territorial control, since it served to enforce national legislation and filter those who belonged inside the sovereign space of the state / the EU and those who did not. The border also functioned as a marker of identity, keeping out those defined to be different and threatening to the members of the nation and acting as a “purifying” instrument. Finally, the border was also a “discourse manifesting [itself] in legislation, diplomacy, and academic or scholarly languages” (Paasi 2005: 666). The return agreements pursued by FRONTEX officials are just one example of this. But what this “clean” analysis of the border hides is the messiness and friction that results from the concentration of power and the coming together of conflicting interests along the EU’s Spanish section of the border: in other words, the functions that the border is expected to perform do not come without a great deal of negotiation and conflict.

Through the construction of a genealogy of the sea border – from the moment it was little more than a line in international waters to the moment when it became the weakest spot of the EU’s southern frontier space in terms of migration control, to its intensive militarization and securitization in 2006 – my analysis coincides with a main argument in critical

\textsuperscript{101} Having said this, several southern EU states have frequently disregarded human rights in favour of more efficient border control. For example, Spain has “repatriated” undocumented migrants to countries where they were not nationals, or have rejected groups of migrants at the border with Morocco without first giving them a chance to identify themselves as status refugees or giving them a chance to present their case if they meet the criteria to apply for refugee status.
geography scholarship: that the state border is more a process than a permanent effect. Moreover, in support of the critical perspective discussed in Chapter 3, my findings suggest that the border of the EU is being reterritorialized. Specifically, this process of re-signification of the border has been carried out through state and non-state agencies (e.g., the Guardia Civil and FRONTEX); through cooperation with countries of origin and transit (e.g. Senegal and Mauritania) and in joint land and sea operations (notably HERA); and through the creation of spaces of “paradoxical sovereignty” (Agamben cited in Mountz 2010) such as the CETIs in Ceuta and Melilla.

In the case of the land border, what has emerged in this study is its transformation and expansion from two simple fences around the Spanish territories of Ceuta and Melilla in Northern Africa, to two double and triple razor-wire fences and a myriad of new technologies, fronted by a vast expansion of non-Spanish territory that acts as a de facto border. My argument is that managed migration schemes and development initiatives are also part of this reterritorialization, since they seek to intervene in a space beyond the border of the state in order to control access to the national territory. In this complex and multifaceted process of reterritorialization, the land and sea borders of both Spain and, as a result, the EU have become more spatially diffuse and mobile. It is a form of “networked border” that brings together a myriad of spaces and political actors and places in the name of control and security, and that (like migrants) relies on new information and communication technologies. This process of elongation of the border is not unique to Spain, as studies on the use of islands and transit spaces for the control of migration in other places have shown (Mountz 2010 and 2011b, Walters 2004a).

In this case, the struggle over space and territory is, at the same time, a struggle of self-definition of a young Europe in an enduring state of crisis (either identity crisis or, more recently, economic crisis). The rapidly-changing nature and physiognomy of the EU / Spain - West Africa / Senegal border thus urges us to study it as a process in constant motion where territorial struggles (and thus the evolution of territorial sovereignty at a time of ever-

The border is a fertile place to try to put a name to this new form of territoriality – and to test its limitations and potentialities. In many ways, CTAs (Clandestine Transnational Actors) are the control group to test official discourses on what kind of EU exists (as opposed to the one we hope will one day exist, which can be found in glossy EU brochures). In this sense, although the metaphor of “Fortress Europe” has been particularly popular (Carter and Merrill 2007, Geddes 2000 and 2008) the image may be misleading, for the EU is no military stronghold. My findings on the southern EU border suggest that the metaphor of the “firewall” (Walters 2006) may be more appropriate to talk about the border, while the governing ideology of EU border and migration management philosophy bring it closer to that of the “medieval city” (Johnson 2012). Both metaphors insist on the “filtering” function of the border. The image of the “firewall” is particularly useful because it emphasizes the importance of new technologies of surveillance and control, while at the same time highlighting the processual nature of the border:

To compare the border to a firewall is to register the fact that the force of autonomous migration means border control cannot be static. It is not a question of putting in place a system, building a wall once and for all time. More than ever, border control has become a dynamic, agonic [sic] process, a field of permanent social struggle in its own right. If border control can be understood as a practice, the logic is that of the ‘update’ and the ‘patch’ (Walters 2006: 152).

I want to highlight two adjectives that Walters uses in this quote: dynamic and “agonic” (in the sense of deep struggle), both only too fitting for this discussion. Contemporary surveillance and control practices along the southern EU border aim at an elusive target that needs to be caught while in movement and has the capacity to constantly change strategies and routes. Old technologies (i.e., the reinforcement of controls along the traditional territorial limit of the state) are not enough for this task. What has emerged then is a
network of control nodes within, at, and beyond the state, connected through new technologies and personal and institutional connections. In other words, this is a transnational network enabled through new technologies to detect, deter, detain, and (if possible) deport unwanted migrants. These new technologies are designed to move along with migrants: they are helicopters, speed boats, rotating radars, squads, satellites, and cell phones. Their efficacy depends on their flexibility to adapt to novel border crossing manoeuvres and ever-changing patterns of human mobility. However, as (often sedentary) researchers, our profession is ill-equipped to move from “seeing like a state” (Scott 1998) to “seeing like a border” (Rumford 2011) – particularly one in constant movement.

If the image of the firewall tries to capture the logic and functioning of the EU / Spanish border, according to Johnson (2012) its underlying rationale is that of the medieval city. The metaphor accounts for the decoupling of politics and economics that characterizes the Westphalian nation-state. It also highlights the “purifying” function of the wall / border and the control to access privileges such as physical security and legal, economic, and political rights reserved to those who have made their way in legitimately.

The similes of the EU as a medieval city and of its borders as a technological firewall point to something that Johnson (2012) mentions only in passing and Walters (2006) ignores altogether, but that is central to this discussion: race, religion, and national origin are crucial in determining an individual’s options to make it into the EU (see van Houtum 2010). This was clear enough in the experience of Senegalese migrants, who were black, mostly Muslim, and came from a poor country. When the experiences of migrant men and women were compared, it became evident that gender played a very important role in determining which options the state (and social conventions) made available for them to cross the border legally. Moreover, once in Spain I have shown how that ideology of the medieval city that is put into motion through political discourses, official policy, and media coverage makes its way into daily interactions with the local population, forcing Senegalese migrants to the
margins of society – turning them, in fact, into a local underclass regardless of their legal status in the country.

These conclusions apply specifically to the border of Spain / the EU, but evidence suggests that the mobilization of geography through the reterritorialization of the border, militarization, or the creation of zones of “paradoxical sovereignty” (Agamben cited in Mountz 2010) is a widespread practice in the Global North (Crépeau 2011, Mountz 2010). The question remains whether these are practices that can be justified in the name of security. In this specific case, the lack of proportion between the size of undocumented migration from West Africa to Spain and the resources poured into addressing this “problem” suggests the opportunistic use of the phenomenon to crack down on migration from the South. At the same time, the nature of the response – particularly the militarization of the border and delegation of border control responsibilities to countries of origin and transit – calls into question the EU’s commitment to international legislation for the protection of human rights. If these are extended practices in rich countries (and all evidence points in that direction) we are coming upon a new era of migration control.

On a different note, the continuum between the obstacles participants found at the border and those they faced once they settled in the country should be an invitation for migration scholarship and critical geopolitics alike to engage in a multi-scalar analysis of migration control. My goal in the previous pages has been to engage in this kind of analysis and discuss how the body, the home, and the transnational community become subjected to state control when they approach the border. In regards to the southern EU border, I am particularly concerned that little attention has been paid to race, and more specifically to the construction of both Spain and the EU as a white and Christian space. I strongly believe that “the taboo of race” in Europe (Goldberg 2006) poses important challenges to our understanding of the logic and functions of the southern EU border (Vives 2011, Vives and Sité 2011). In Spain, both the past five centuries of official efforts to construct a national identity based on the opposition to everything African and Muslim and the present
opportunity to have this collective self-image ratified through entrance into the EU make an exploration of the intersections of race, religion and class more urgent than ever, particularly as it influences official and popular attitudes towards the international migration of racialized populations.

8.3 Boundaries

Respondents already in Spain discussed their journeys as something far more complex than the image of the border as a line to be crossed implied. The “obstacle course” began within their own household, where they had first presented their relatives with the idea of leaving for Europe. Here, for the first time, emerged the centrality of gender in respondents’ migration: men were encouraged (almost expected) to leave, sometimes regardless of the means used to do so, to assist their families; women, on the other hand, were pressured to remain at home or at least migrate under the protection of close relatives. Whenever women migrated independently, they had strong connections at the point of destination and were closely surveilled by prominent male figures within the Senegalese community in Spain, mainly religious leaders (*marabouts*). These processes highlight the need to approach migration as a gendered experience from before the moment of departure (Pessar and Mahler 2006, Lutz 2010) and the advantage of doing so with a multi-sited research approach (Vives 2012). In fact, without a multi-sited ethnographic approach it would have been impossible to bring together the perspective of the state and the migrant, one of the main contributions of this research.

Social boundaries in Senegal were many, and were not only gendered but were also firmly set on a migrant’s religious affiliation, ethnicity, socio-economic status, and degree of integration into the transnational space of Senegalese migrants. Once in Spain, the boundaries they found on their way to achieving their migration goals were transformed by the new socio-cultural and political context. This happened at a variety of scales, from the household to the local labour market and their relationship with state authorities. Many men lived in male-only households. They found domestic tasks emasculating, and had to redefine
themselves as men that did womanly tasks like cooking, cleaning or doing the laundry – a sort of “desperate times call for desperate measures” approach. Things got even more complicated if they brought their wives over, though, as exposure to novel forms of gender relations in Spain and economic stress often forced a renegotiation of gender roles within the migrant household.

As other scholars have suggested, the negotiation of gender roles that resulted from migration and transnationalism did not necessarily translate into advances in gender equity within the household (Pratt and Yeoh 2003). Improvements in women’s economic self-sufficiency, whenever present, did not always result in greater independence. The ability to work outside the home only meant a greater workload for wives and mothers, who still shouldered domestic chores. The fragility of what some would term their gains in gender equity became prominent with the birth of children. Raising offspring was most definitely not a task men were willing to take on, and this responsibility linked migrant women to other women, both in Spain and in Senegal, resulting in a form of transnationalism unique to this group (see discussion in the next section). On the one hand, Senegalese migrant women saw their social status (and thus their symbolic capital) increase upon migration by virtue of the money they made (or were thought to make) in Spain. On the other, those women who remained in Senegal but who were linked to migrants through kinship also
experienced an increase of their social status, in this case because of their role administering the money they received (or were thought to receive) through remittances. In both cases the situation of women who were one way or another affected by migration improved in Senegal. This improvement was mainly measured through a lesser housework load. The impact of this on gender relations was negligible, though, as these tasks were simply absorbed by women with a lower status (either relatives or employees).

In Spain, migrant men and women were perceived mainly as black individuals. This resulted in barriers in a myriad public spaces, in their interactions with the local population and, particularly, the labour market. They were marked as outsiders. Work was important for economic reasons, but also because it allowed migrants to become legal residents if they lacked proper status, or to maintain that status. However, as workers, respondents found that entering the local workforce was extremely difficult. They frequently found employment in the underground economy, often in the company of other co-nationals (e.g., as street pedlars). In all cases their options were reduced to a few occupations that offered poor working conditions, low pay, and uncertain status.

The impact of official border control discourses on respondents’ personal experiences once in Spain, both as workers and as residents, highlights the need to approach the border as a continuum that is constructed and performed across a variety of interlocking scales (Silvey 2004 and 2006). In a study like this, such a project involves bringing together the micro (the body, the home), the meso (the neighbourhood, the community) and the macro (e.g. labour market, migration policy) to understand how different axes of social differentiation intersect in a migrant’s experience (Lutz 2010). Finally, there is a need, as Hyndman (2004) wrote, to bridge the gap between political geographers, who tend to focus on the border of the state, and feminist geographers, who often emphasize the experience of the migrant. If we bring the state and the transnational network together in the same analysis, as I have done here, then we can also see why the state is mobilizing space to crack down on unwanted migration. The practice of embodiment puts the bureaucrat and the migrant in their context:
the former is limited by their vision of the space “from above” and a multiplicity of legal and jurisdictional constraints; the migrant and the transnational network, in contrast, have a practical and intimate knowledge of space (Mountz 2010). The state thus needs a justification (a crisis) to adopt an innovative approach to migration control that addresses unwanted migration before it reaches the border of the state and engages a greater number of actors. The interaction between these two – how migrants’ strategies adapt to state border control practices and vice versa – has been at the centre of this discussion.

Tracing this interaction has also allowed me to contribute to the broader literature in feminist geopolitics in a number of ways. I have examined how power at different scales operated to shape migration, bringing together the concept of the state border and the social boundaries. I have tried to de-centre (without displacing) the level of the state to make room for other levels of analysis. The big politics involved in border control and the little politics involved in gender and race relations have been discussed together to show how they shape migrants’ experiences and reinforce each other. Along the way, I have deconstructed the illusion that the state is a unified and homogeneous actor, and propose instead that it is a project made by specific bureaucrats and fraught with conflicting interests; the border that results from their intervention is thus necessarily ripe with contradictions. Besides, by engaging in a transnational analysis of the borders and boundaries that participants encountered, I have contributed to our understanding of how “dimensions of power and identity ... contribute to the very constitution of people and places as subjects” (Hyndman 2004: 315) of migration control, both at and beyond the level of the state.

8.4 Networks

I have repeatedly argued throughout this dissertation that to overcome both borders and boundaries Senegalese migrants relied heavily on their transnational networks. When analyzing the connections that had made their crossing of the border possible, the route followed (air, sea, or land) and the migrants’ gender became the primary factors determining the strength and durability of their networks, as well as the kinds of services they provided.
Most of the women in my sample were air migrants, and two interviewees lived in Morocco with the vague intention of one day moving to Europe. Strong, reliable, and durable members of their social network (mostly relatives or fictitious kin) made their migration possible. These connections provided financial and logistic support while participants were applying for their visas in Dakar, as well as housing, lodging and advice both at origin, in Morocco, and during the earlier stages of their settlement in Spain. There were accounts of women who had no support whatsoever and had to rely on other migrants they had met at bus stops or while in transit in North African countries, but I did not encounter these.

The polarization of women’s experiences (very strong networks and no networks at all) contrasts with the range of links that male respondents depended on during their trip, once again highlighting the need to integrate gender further into analysis of migrant transnationalism. All migrant men who travelled by air had the support of their families, who helped pay for their ticket with whatever economic means they had. But, unlike women migrants, men had access to networks that included a larger variety of links, from very strong and permanent to weak and ephemeral. These connections provided information, help to obtain travel documents, divine protection, food and lodging, and sometimes job opportunities. In the case of air and sea migrants, virtually all the connections were Senegalese. The case of land migrants was different. Throughout their trip they became dependent on migrants from a variety of nationalities and a number of smugglers. The conditions of the trip were hard, and groups often were separated. Migrants frequently made vital decisions based on the information provided by a member of their network with whom they had weak and ephemeral connections (see also Collyer 2007 and 2010, de Haas 2008, UNODC 2011).

Prior to their journey, respondents’ gender determined the networks that were available to them and limited their options to leave (this is why so few women migrated by sea, for example: they were considered to bring bad luck to other sea travellers in the boat and smugglers refused to sell them a spot on the cayuco). Once across the border, respondents
moved in a transnational social space that included not only their country of origin (Senegal) and destination (Spain), but also people and organizations in other countries. I am not the first one to observe the thickness of Senegalese transnational space, built upon religion, ethnicity, and kinship. The networks that have evolved within this space allowed migrants access to resources like information, housing, and advice, all vital throughout their migration experience, but particularly during their first months and years abroad.

Overall, the evidence I found supported the findings of other scholars in Spain and elsewhere in Europe: Senegalese, and more specifically, Mouride networks are instrumental in helping migrants get where they want to go and providing them with emotional and religious guidance while they are abroad (Moreno Maestro 2006 and 2008, Suarez-Navaz 2008, Riccio 2001b, Rosander 2001, Sinatti 2006; among others). Mouride networks are at once a blessing and a curse: they support migrants in very difficult situations, but in many ways they also have the power to constrain the choices available to them (e.g., in regards to the use of their income). Although according to my findings all this is true, what other researchers have not paid attention to – and what is one of the main contributions of this dissertation – is the role of gender and religious diversity in Senegalese migrant transnationalism. First, Mouride networks are not available to all the members of this group, notably not to women. And second, important forms of Senegalese transnationalism take place outside the umbrella of Mouridism. Although for reasons explained earlier my conclusions in this regards are preliminary, I will discuss some of my findings on the role of gender and non-Mouride denominations in Senegalese transnational practices.

In the first place, few scholars have concerned themselves with how gender determines migrants’ access to Mouride networks. Mouridism is a Muslim (sufi) religious order that has a great deal of influence in Senegalese economic, social, political, cultural, and political life. Although Mouridism originated in the rural areas along with the groundnut industry, it made its way into the country’s cities via the rural to urban exodus three decades ago. The brotherhood has achieved its current status as a major force in Senegalese affairs, to a great
extent, thanks to its hold on the migrant population. According to all evidence, *Mourides* have excelled at adapting to globalization (see Bava 2003, Copans 2000, Moreno Maestro 2005 and 2006, and Sinatti 2006, among others). However, the order remains a patriarchical organization that holds traditional hierarchies based on family background and gender in very high esteem. Women are marginal members of the *Mouride* community: in Senegal they are very rarely allowed to have any influence in the *Mouride* institutions.¹⁰² When it comes to Senegalese migrants in Spain, the relationship is one of mutual convenience, whereby women donate money to the *Mouride* brotherhood and in exchange they are endowed with social praise from their community abroad and their *marabout* when he returns home. This legitimizes women’s migration (independent or otherwise) and helps them overcome social barriers derived from their gender and ethnic or socio-economic status at home. Nevertheless, donations do not allow women to enter further into the power structure of the *Mouride* order.

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¹⁰² Important *Mouride* women exist, but without exception are noted because of their family connections with a prominent religious leader (they are usually mothers of a *grand marabout*) and the reason why they are praised is their pious, devoted, and submissive behaviour. In other words, they know their place in the organization and behave accordingly.
Although previous research has pointed to hierarchy as a fundamental aspect of Senegalese religious transnationalism, scholars have failed to address the role of gender in the *Mouride* order (for an exception, see Rosander 2001 and 2005). My study demonstrates that bringing gender into the discussion enriches our understanding of Senegalese transnational communities, spaces, and practices. In other words, the resources provided by transnational *Mouridism* (which remains the overwhelming focus of scholars interested in Senegalese migrations) are not, as is often assumed, available to all *Mourides*. This conclusion challenges common understandings of this group’s transnational practices that take gender (i.e., migrants’ masculinity) for granted.

There were also those networks built upon religious affiliation beyond Mouridism. A share of my respondents identified themselves as *Tijan* (a largest but less powerful sufi order), although they participated in *Mouride* religious celebrations and donated money to this order to gain access to the resources of their transnational network. These participants were often seen with suspicion by “legitimate” *Mourides* (i.e., those who could claim to have familial links with members of the order and in particular with *marabouts* back in Senegal); they occupied marginal spaces and roles in religious celebrations and had limited access to the network.

There were other forms of affiliation to transnational networks and spaces that can be as important as, if not more important than, Mouridism. Catholic migrants (a small and diminishing minority in Senegal) effectively deployed their religion to transcend their migrant status and link with the local population (and with other migrants elsewhere in Europe). Among themselves there was a strong identification with the image of a minority that, if not abused, was seen with certain contempt in Senegal. In Spain (research sites 1 & 2, the medium-sized city and the rural town) their relationship with Muslim Senegalese migrants was amiable but took place at a cautious distance. Catholic Senegalese migrants mostly kept to themselves in their interactions with other co-nationals. When it came to their relationship with Spaniards, their religious affiliation was a very strong asset that opened
doors to the church, which in turn opened the doors to migrants’ integration into their new socio-economic context.

To explain this phenomenon I have found the work of David Ley (2008) very useful, despite the obvious differences between the populations we have studied (his were Korean and ethnic Chinese churches in Vancouver). Ley distinguished between bonding social capital within homogeneous groups; bridging social capital, which “stretches across social boundaries, connecting diverse collectivities and extending the field of resources and responsibilities” (Ley 2008: 2058); and linking social capital, which highlights the vertical connections “through social strata to centres of power and resources” (idem). In my study, Mouride communities and migrant-only Catholic groups provided bonding social capital during the early stages of settlement. And while Mourides had either no capacity or no desire to connect with other groups in Spain (e.g., because it would mean losing their grip on dependent migrants), achieving bridging social capital was the aim of Senegalese Catholic groups, and linking social capital was a resource they reached by becoming part of the dwindling church-going population in Spain. To date, this is the first study that addresses non-Muslim forms of Senegalese transnationalism in Spain (and possibly in Southern Europe).

To provide an example of how these networks worked I will use the case of one of my respondents, Pierre, a Catholic migrant of Serer origin. Pierre felt grounded and protected through his connections with the Senegalese Catholic community. His belonging to a local church allowed him to interact regularly with Spaniards in a meaningful context. Moreover, because of the withering popularity of the Catholic church in Spain, it was in the priest’s interest to promote such interactions, thus providing Pierre and his relatives and friends with bridging social capital that was out of reach for most Senegalese Muslims. This church-provided bridging capital was the key to many participants to find a job in the formal workforce. Finally, through his active role in the church, Pierre gained access to crucial linking social capital. For example, when his application for regularization was refused, the
When kinship, ethnicity, and religion came together (as in the case of kinship-based migration discussed in Chapter 6), the resources provided by non-
*Mouride* transnational communities were phenomenal. In Spain, the Catholic church supplies a vast array of services for all sectors of society in the areas of education, health care, front-line services for marginalized groups, etc., with public funds (by default the Catholic church receives a percentage of citizens’ taxes, plus the funds allocated for specific projects and services). When Spain became a country of immigration in the 1990s it was only natural then that local churches began providing services for the foreign population, and soon the Catholic Church became a source of bridging and linking social services for immigrants. The case of a multi-confessional group such as the Senegalese, however, proves that immigrants do not have equal access to the resources within the reach of the Spanish Catholic Church: belonging to the community of faith matters.

In short, the importance of non-masculine and non-
*Mouride* forms of Senegalese migrant transnationalism is something that has gone unnoticed by scholars. With this study I have contributed to filling some of the gaps that exist in the literature on Senegalese transnational networks in the EU and, more broadly, discussions on transnationalism and gender. In the next section I point to some avenues for possible future research that would deepen our understanding of this and other phenomena linked to my study.
8.5 Limitations of this research and directions for future projects

8.5.1 Approaching the border

The heart and soul of this study are migrants. I was interested in their stories and strategies, the obstacles they found and the use they made of their networks to reach their migration objectives. I was less interested in the role of policymakers, and thus relied on secondary information and a limited number of interviews. This was also due to problems of accessibility: it is hard to interview elites (see for example England 2002).

My goal was to trace journeys, but during my fieldwork I found the reverberations of the Spanish / EU border across North and West Africa a fascinating case. More work needs to be done to understand how the different spaces that documented and undocumented migrants traverse are connected. In the case of documented migrants, my study benefitted enormously from the interviews I conducted with a number of government workers and organizations of international NGOs. Their narratives underlined the importance of *ad hoc* decisions made by policymakers, initiatives not necessarily logically linked to a broader regulatory framework or previous decisions. This more than any other thing gave meaning to Mountz’s words that the state is “a category that is often more coherent in the writing of academics and activists than in the daily work lives of bureaucrats” (2010: 170). Indeed, Spanish interventions to manage documented migration from Senegal were fragmented at best, as was made clear in the case of the illegal border-crossers that had been deported to Senegal and that the Spanish government promised to engage as temporary agricultural workers (despite extant legislation on the re-entry of returned migrants to the EU). Only with this knowledge in mind could I believe and make sense of the sometimes bizarre stories I heard. A more balanced approach to the border that gives equal importance to an “ethnography of the state” (Mountz 2004 and 2010, Kuus 2011a) and an “ethnography of the migrant journey” at the limits of the state would be very illuminating. So far, most of us lean towards one approach or the other.
The experiences of undocumented land and sea migrants while in transit need to be part of such a study. Spain may no longer be an attractive destination, but there are many land migrants who began their journey years ago and are today trapped in transit spaces along West and North Africa. Different organizations working in the region offer us a glimpse of the abuses and suffering of the black migrant population in Morocco, Algeria, Mali, or Mauritania. We know the EU (who first sought these states’ alliance to control transit migration) is turning a blind eye, while local authorities engage in and encourage these abuses. All undocumented migrants, and particularly women and children, can easily become trapped in situations of destitution and everyday violence. I believe it would be possible to reach out to organizations working in transit spaces to reconstruct these migrants’ experience of the border. These organizations know the context they work in very well, and they often also have access to people in their country’s government. As an outsider, I believe it would be possible to bring together (analytically) the centres of power where decisions on migration control and border surveillance are made, and the shantytowns where migrants themselves survive a day at a time. If my findings are right, the results of such research projects would be useful to advance our understanding of contemporary migration and border control practices. Also, such a project would contribute to making the dramatic consequences of contemporary EU border and migration control practices more visible.

8.5.2 Research design

When I began this project there was very little information about Senegalese migrants in Spain. I chose my research topic at a time when several others had began to work with the black African population. A handful of these researchers had selected Senegalese migration for their study, and all of us had very limited information to work with at first. We designed our research projects taking into account the lack of statistical information and problems of accessibility, using anecdotal evidence and our researchers’ instincts to define our search. Accordingly, we used qualitative approaches and worked with small samples, trying to
maximize the amount and depth of the information we collected (see for example Rosander 2001, Sow 2004, Vázquez Silva 2010). Since we were all captivated by Senegalese migrant transnationalism, most of us chose multi-sited ethnographies, starting with migrants in the Spanish cities we were most familiar with and then going to Senegal, where we met and began to form a community of researchers.

This approach made sense at that time. But because of the complexity of Senegalese society (divided in ethnic and religious groups, enormously divided along the rural / urban axis, and largely based on kinship) and the characteristics of our research designs, our findings differ. In other words, our findings talk about the experience of particular subgroups within the Senegalese population in Spain. The truth is that we cannot talk about one form of Senegalese transnationalism, because there are many. We worked on the assumption that Mouridism was the main (and perhaps the only) infrastructure for this phenomenon. Once we delved into migrants’ narratives it became obvious this was a fallacy. Upon this discovery some researchers chose to focus only on Wolof Mouride migrants, but since gender was the articulating rationale of my study and women were so hard to access, I made the decision to take whatever stories I could collect. As a result, the experiences I gathered show a much more complex picture than I had originally expected.

A reasonable number of studies and statistics have been published in the last few years. With this information, it would be possible to carry out a more comprehensive project that reflected the diversity of experiences among Senegalese migrants in Spain without sacrificing generalization. One such study could integrate religious communities from the beginning, or study the trajectories of kinship groups (which are generally speaking contained within specific religious affiliations). Knowing what we know now, it would be possible to work with larger samples.

This would require choosing research sites wisely. In retrospect, choosing a large city with a majority of Wolof Mourides, a medium-sized city with an very heterogeneous Senegalese
population, and a rural setting where Catholics were overrepresented introduced too much complexity into my sample. It was not within my reach to provide an analysis that properly accounted for this level of intricacy. It would have been better to focus on one site or compare two (not three) equivalent sites. For example, two rural towns in eastern Andalusia, where the workings of Senegalese networks have resulted in nearby settlements that are internally very homogeneous but different from one another. Comparing the town that I chose (my second research site) and one of approximately the same size but where Senegalese migrants tend to be Tijan from Dakar, for example, could be the ground for very interesting non-Mouride-based research. If working in a medium or large city, I would limit my research to one site.

Another approach would be to compare the experiences of Senegalese migrants with another group. I would argue that a comparison of Catholic migrants from Senegal and Ghana would be particularly interesting, both in terms of transnational practices and integration strategies once in Spain (especially the role that local Catholic churches play in this process).

Beyond studies on transnationalism, a distinct area that emerged with force during my work was the question of migrant integration in Spain (specifically integration into the labour market). Today there is data to build a relatively solid foundation for a study using large statistical samples. Of course, there is the problem of the high percentage of this population that is not represented in official statistics. I found that in this regard pro-immigrant organizations and service providers have a rough idea of where the limits are for this population – for example, what racist discrimination means in the labour market. Using a mixed-methods approach combining published studies, official statistics, semi-structured interviews and focus groups with service providers, in-depth interviews with job counsellors in these organizations, and in-depth interviews with members of this group could provide a comprehensive overview of the obstacles this group faces in the Spanish labour market. This is an area I would have liked to explore further.
The main obstacle to using statistical sources to study these experiences, besides the lack of representativeness, is the sudden dearth of official publications since late 2011. Given recent budget cuts and the plummeting number of incoming migrants, the Spanish government has decided to put an end to much research on this topic. It will take some time to estimate how this decision will affect studies using official data.

8.5.3 Motherhood

During the analysis of the data, motherhood emerged as an unexpected analytical tool to study some of the ways gender impacts the migratory experience, at different scales from the body to the supranational. Fertility was a central aspect of women’s lives, and all but one of my female respondents were mothers. This had influenced the likelihood of their migration (depending on whether they were already married, had children, or were expecting children); the legal paths they could use (e.g., having under-age children was a formal requisite to receive a temporary agricultural worker visa); the leverage they had when negotiating with their husbands (stay-in-Senegal mothers were entitled to higher remittances, and wives in Spain were able to work outside of the home); their chances of obtaining or retaining a legal status in the country (e.g., Spanish legislation does not allow migrant women a period of maternity leave when they apply for a renewal of their residence status); their chances of getting and keeping a job in the legal market, etc. Of course, neither motherhood nor gender can singlehandedly explain a migrant’s experience. However, they help us trace inequalities across different spaces and scales in a more immediate way than other variables.

Also, mothering practices brought into view a kind of migrant transnationalism that tends to receive insufficient attention, and from which powerful religious organizations are all but absent. This is a day-to-day form of transnational network that links specific women (and to a lesser extent men, mostly through remittances) scattered across different homes through the tasks of “caring about” (at an emotional level) and “caring for” (at the level of everyday
decisions and actions) children. Some of these women are in different countries, while some are in the same country but do not necessarily belong to the same groups. I found mothering practices provided an unprecedented entry into intimate forms of transnationalism, and helped link different transnational spaces in ways that studying the use of remittances or the resources provided by the Mouride brotherhood simply cannot. However, I did not have the opportunity to fully explore this issue.

8.5.4 The church as a service hub

Besides motherhood, the other institution that took me by surprise was the Catholic church. Born and raised in Spain, I share with my contemporaries a strong suspicion towards an organization that was a vital ally during Franco’s regime, and which continues to have an excessive influence in the country’s political life given that it is an officially non-denominational state. There is no doubt that my views on this matter encouraged me to approach Catholic institutions as mere providers of services.

If there was one thing I would want to change in this project it would be my approach to all things having to do with religion, and in particular the role of the Catholic church in Senegalese migrant transnational spaces. Islam and Christianity (in their different variations) emerged as a source of resilience, motivation, and emotional protection for migrants. The Catholic Church provided services and much more. It was not only that migrants went to Cáritas when they needed food or to their local church when they needed clothes. It took me a while to see the Church as a place where instrumental connections emerged and were put to work to assist migrants throughout their journey. As I mentioned above, I found it to provide bridging and linking social resources – in equal amounts to both men and women, and probably of a more instrumental kind for the latter, who had a much harder time finding employment. I have discussed some of my findings referring to the role of the church in participants’ post-arrival experiences. Nevertheless, I now would argue that the field of transnational studies will remain severely handicapped until we integrate both gender and religion into our discussions, on a regular basis.
8.6 Concluding thoughts

As I write these lines, Spain finds herself in the direst of straits. Never in its recent history has this country been the centre of so much controversy. Internally, unemployment rates are soaring toward 25 per cent (and over 50 per cent for young adults) and social unrest seems ready to result in major confrontations. While those who remain keep hoping for the best and preparing for the worst (some organizing themselves against draconian austerity measures imposed by the EU and the new government), citizens and non-citizens are leaving the country. Migration is particularly intense among the highly-qualified and foreigners. In the international arena Spain’s current situation is the object of much discussion. In two years migration has been quickly relegated to an afterthought in domestic and international discussions.

The truth, however, is that what happened in Spain remains a current challenge in other parts of Europe. Besides, migrants may not arrive, but some are still in transit towards Spain, and many more will remain within its national territory for years to come. Having more pressing problems does not make these migrants disappear. Spain and the EU still have a responsibility towards the border policy that they imposed, and towards the actions carried out by governments and security forces in West and North Africa. In Spain, race and racism should not suddenly be made irrelevant just because no funds are being allocated to this kind of research. Despite the denial much of the population and the academic class seem to live in, race is a very important issue. Analyzing where it comes from and what it means is important to prevent migrants and non-white Spaniards (a rapidly growing group) from being pushed to the margins.

There is little doubt that the southern EU border was and is a deadly border (Carter and Merrill 2007, among many others). It was built in haste and with the only goal of stopping the arrival of unwanted migrants. Other policies in the region (such as development aid) are
at once insufficient and ill-conceived; migration management programs were faulty. Both
have ceased to exist due to lack of funding or political interest. During the time of my study
migrants continued to arrive in Spain through different means. Lured by the dream of both
more money and higher social status, men and women of all backgrounds left using
whatever means available to them and a few valuable contacts in Europe. They crossed the
border at the airport, or by boat, or climbing a razor-wire fence or swimming around the
fence that separates Spain and Morocco using gear designed for wealthy white kids. And,
when they arrived, they found out that being black can make your life very difficult indeed.
Then came the crisis, eliminating most of the few economic niches they used to occupy.

As I write this, the husband of one of my respondents has bought her a French passport; she
is now a cleaning lady in a government building in Paris. The legitimate owner of the
passport has moved to the US where she is a naturalized citizen. Another woman keeps
toying with the idea of also moving to France, where her daughter is a brilliant student in a
prestigious university; she does not dare to take the step out of fear of becoming a burden to
her child. One of my respondents left Senegal to flee a marriage she did not desire and the
stigmatization of her sexual orientation; she refuses to go back to Senegal, but as the days
go by her options become narrower and narrower. She currently must either pay a hefty fine
for trading counterfeit goods or leave Spain. Other women respondents have returned to
Senegal, tired of looking for a job and finding none. A few remain in Spain against all odds:
they either have a permanent job or families to care for, and one is waiting to see if her
husband can somehow migrate to France (he was deported back to Senegal after allegedly
hitting a policeman). None of the men I interviewed did return to Senegal or showed any
inclination to do so. Again, it is a matter of not being able to face the shame of going back to
their families empty-handed. As I have been told on several occasions, they would rather die
trying than face their mothers’ disappointment. For women, losing face seemed not to be
such an important issue, something that may explain the return of many of my women
respondents to Senegal.
The current border between Spain and Senegal, the EU and Africa, was built from the decisions of politicians who have now been replaced. There is a new government in Spain and the Arab Spring removed some of the strongest African allies of the EU’s anti-immigration policy, most notably Gaddafi’s Libya. Against all odds, last March old Abdulaye Wade lost the presidency of Senegal to Malick Sall. During the electoral campaign and the first round of the elections there was a great deal of social unrest, so much that international observers feared the end of democracy in Senegal. Despite the difficult situation the EU (in particular, Spain) finds itself in, the near-to-zero immigration rate in Spain, the massive cuts that virtually all budget headings are undergoing, and the very different political landscape we have today – despite all these things, there is still a strong emphasis on the need to protect our borders against unwanted migration. This highlights the existence of a hegemonic discourse on the mandatory need for a sealed and perfectly managed border, not only in the EU but in other countries of the Global North as well. This goal is an illusion promoted by the military security industry and pursued by politicians with an incomplete understanding of migration dynamics. More often than not, CEOs in this branch of industry and decision makers in EU governments are inextricably linked through work and personal connections – another type of transnational network that would be fascinating to decipher.

***

As border guards and public workers do their daily job to stop unwanted migration, in Guédiawaye life continued. Early this year Mame Fatou Sane gave birth to her fourth child in her 31 years of life. Like all the others (one boy and two girls) this baby was born in March, nine months after her husband’s annual visit. I once asked her if she had a preference for a boy or a girl. She started with her usual response to difficult questions: “whatever Allah’s will is, I shall accept with grace and humility. Allah Akbar, God is great. But, Inshallah, I will be able to give this baby the name of the Prophet (Muhammed).” After a pause of a few seconds, Mame Fatou told me that she also wished for this specific God’s
creature to be free of the many burdens women must carry. She wished it could make decisions independently, without always having to count on the support of their family and husband. She prayed the baby could choose when and who to marry, and pursue a university degree if that was a desire that burned in their heart. She hoped it was a happy, healthy child who could balance duty towards his family and a free spirit, always faithful to the teachings of the Quran. “So, you know what? I guess I really hope it is a boy, so that if one day he decides to follow the steps of Cheikh Amadou Bamba [the founder of the *Mouride* order] and migrate he can succeed where I have failed, because I was never allowed to leave my husband’s home.”

On March 1, 2012, Muhammad was born.

Figure 8.3: Mame Fatou doing the laundry with baby Awa on her back. Photo by Javier Acebal (2009), reproduced with permission from the author.
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### Appendix A: life histories and interviews

#### Life histories with migrant women in an urban centre, Andalusia (7)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Age and family situation</th>
<th>Origin</th>
<th>Arrived in Spain</th>
<th>Legal status(es)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neyba</td>
<td>+40, married with 5 adult children in Senegal and other EU countries.</td>
<td>Dakar, banlieu</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Tourist in other EU country, undocumented, resident, undocumented, resident.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diabira</td>
<td>20-30, married with 1 young child in Spain.</td>
<td>Dakar, banlieu</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Asylum seeker in other European country, undocumented, resident.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liwane</td>
<td>20-30, married with 2 children.</td>
<td>Mbour</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Student in other EU country, resident.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mounash</td>
<td>20-30, married with one baby in Spain.</td>
<td>Kaolack</td>
<td>2006/7</td>
<td>Family reunification, undocumented, resident.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batouly</td>
<td>30-40, married with no children.</td>
<td>Dakar, banlieu</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Tourist in other EU country, undocumented, resident</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table A.1: characteristics of core participant group in a middle-sized urban centre, Andalusia.

#### Life histories with migrant women in the countryside, Andalusia (5)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Age and family situation</th>
<th>Origin</th>
<th>Arrived in Spain</th>
<th>Legal status(es)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aïssatou</td>
<td>30-40, married with no children.</td>
<td>Dakar, banlieu</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Resident through family reunification.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table A.2: characteristics of core participant group in rural Andalusia.
### Life histories with migrant women in large urban centre (5)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Age and family situation</th>
<th>Origin</th>
<th>Arrived in Spain</th>
<th>Legal status(es)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rama</td>
<td>+40, married with teenage children in Senegal.</td>
<td>Tivaouanne</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Tourist in other EU country, undocumented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Batouli</td>
<td>+40, divorced and re-married with 5 adopted children in Senegal.</td>
<td>Tivaouanne</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Tourist in other EU country, undocumented, documented.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table A.3: characteristics of core participant group in large urban centre.

### Interviews with migrant men (23)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym/place</th>
<th>Age and family situation</th>
<th>Origin</th>
<th>Arrived in Spain</th>
<th>Legal status(es)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cheikh, urban Andalusia</td>
<td>20-30, single.</td>
<td>Dakar, banlieu</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Tourist in another EU country, undocumented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abba, urban Andalusia</td>
<td>20-30, single with no children.</td>
<td>Dakar.</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Tourist in another EU country, undocumented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migrant</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td>Children</td>
<td>Place of Birth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doudou, urban Andalusia</td>
<td>20-30, single with no children</td>
<td>Kaolack</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Undocumented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goor, rural Andalusia</td>
<td>40, married with children in Senegal</td>
<td>Dakar, banlieu</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Undocumented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yongan, rural Andalusia</td>
<td>+40, married with children in Senegal</td>
<td>Rural Casamance; Dakar banlieu</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Tourist in another EU country, undocumented, resident.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sakho, rural Andalusia</td>
<td>+40, married with children in Senegal and Spain.</td>
<td>Rural Casamance</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Tourist in another EU country, undocumented, resident.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albert, rural Andalusia</td>
<td>20-30, single with no children</td>
<td>Rural Casamance; Dakar banlieu</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Tourist in another EU country, undocumented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eloge, rural Andalusia</td>
<td>20-30, single with no children</td>
<td>Dakar banlieu</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Tourist in another EU country, undocumented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antoine, rural Andalusia</td>
<td>+40, married with children in Senegal</td>
<td>Rural Casamance</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Tourist in another EU country, undocumented, documented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diadhiou, rural Andalusia</td>
<td>20-30, single with no children</td>
<td>Rural Casamance</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Student in another EU country, undocumented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolphe, large urban centre</td>
<td>30-40, married with children in Spain.</td>
<td>Rural Casamance</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Tourist in another EU country, undocumented, resident.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mbakhane, large urban centre</td>
<td>+40, married with children in Senegal.</td>
<td>Saint Louis</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Tourist in another EU country, undocumented, resident.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Djibril, large urban centre</td>
<td>20-30, single with no children</td>
<td>Rural St Louis, Dakar banlieu</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Undocumented sea migrant, resident.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table A.4: interviews with immigrant men in three selected research sites.
### Interviews conducted in Senegal with relatives and former migrants (34)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relatives in Senegal</th>
<th>32</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In-depth interviews with temporary agricultural workers who had gone to Spain and returned to Senegal</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table A.5: interviews with relatives and key members of women’s social networks in Senegal.

### Interviews with researchers, organizations and government workers (20)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of expert</th>
<th>Type of organization</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Area of expertise</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>University / research</td>
<td>UK / The Netherlands</td>
<td>Senegalese migrations to Southern Europe, Senegalese transnationalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>University / research</td>
<td>Dakar, Senegal</td>
<td>Senegalese internal &amp; international migration, geography of migration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>University / research</td>
<td>Dakar, Senegal</td>
<td>Gender &amp; migration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>University / research</td>
<td>St Louis, Senegal</td>
<td>Senegalese international migration, temporary migration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Dakar, Senegal</td>
<td>Youth, employment &amp; migration</td>
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<td>St. Louis, Senegal</td>
<td>Youth &amp; employment (selection processes)</td>
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<td>Work &amp; immigration (policy design)</td>
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<td>Humanitarian</td>
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<td>Senegal</td>
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<td>Migrants’ rights</td>
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<td>Migration</td>
<td>Senegal</td>
<td>Migration, legislation, regulation</td>
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<td>INGO worker</td>
<td>Migration &amp; work</td>
<td>Western Africa</td>
<td>Labour migration</td>
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Table A.6: expert interviews with researchers, government workers and NGO representatives in Senegal and Spain.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Age and family situation</th>
<th>Origin</th>
<th>Observations</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oumar</td>
<td>&lt;20, older of a large single-headed household (mother)</td>
<td>Dakar banlieue.</td>
<td>Migrated as a minor, returned to Mali, long-term transit migrant - Tangiers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maïmuna</td>
<td>20-30, single with no children</td>
<td>Dakar banlieue.</td>
<td>Tangiers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sagar</td>
<td>30-40, single head of household, 3 children</td>
<td>Dakar banlieue.</td>
<td>Tangiers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pape</td>
<td>40-50, married</td>
<td>Dakar banlieue.</td>
<td>Tangiers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aziz</td>
<td>&lt;18</td>
<td>Dakar, banlieue.</td>
<td>Ceuta.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alima</td>
<td>20-30, single with children</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Ceuta - refused to be identified as a Senegalese citizen but accessed to be interviewed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table A.7: interviews with Senegalese migrants in Northern Morocco and Ceuta.
Appendix B: maps of illegal and mixed migration flows from Africa to Europe

Map 3.2: Map of Mediterranean Transit Migration (MTM), Mediterranean and African irregular migration routes. Source: ICMPD. Reproduced with permission.
Appendix C: map showing the deaths related to the EU’s migration policies.

Map: “The dark mirrors of European migration policies.” Reproduced with permission from the author.

Legend: Light orange dots: migrants drowned at sea; dark orange dots: migrants who died of thirst or hunger; red dots: migrants poisoned or killed by personal mines; purple dots: migrants who died of suffocation; blue dots: migrants victims of arson, murder and neglect; black dot: suicides.