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Barça ou Barzakh: The Social Elsewhere of Failed Clandestine Migration out of Senegal

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ABSTRACT

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This dissertation explores the social afterlives of forcibly returned clandestine migrants in Senegal. It takes as its starting point, the phenomenon of clandestine boat migration out of Senegal, which saw its peak in 2006, when 40,000 young predominantly male West African boat migrants landed on the shores of the Canary Islands. That same year, 6,000 migrants were forcibly repatriated by the state. In Senegal, where histories of labor migration to Europe are profound, and where migration is an index of masculinity, success, and spiritual devotion, return is frequently experienced as traumatic and shameful. This dissertation argues that clandestine boat migration out of Senegal between 2005 and 2008 was not simply a response to rising poverty; nor was it an irrational option of last resort for young men. Rather, clandestine migration was an increasingly visible and valued mode of spiritual striving and a means to

provide for families. Three temporal lenses—departure, transit, and return—provide the narrative structure through which their experiences are reflected. Departure analyzes why young men decided to depart and what spiritual and financial resources they invested in the migratory project. Transit explores how they experienced passage across the Atlantic as a spiritual, social, and somatic phenomenon, and how they made sense of their encounters with increasingly militarized borders in Africa and Europe. And Return finds them six or seven years after their forced repatriation as they remember the complex host of responses to failure: disappointment and outrage, resistance and faith. Like these temporal lenses, three conceptual frames—hardness, risk, and struggle—are echoed throughout, as these young men struggle against the hardness of life by risking their physical existence to support their families and gain spiritual knowledge through sacrifice. By grounding the analysis in the ethnographic, this dissertation argues that the circulation of bodies and identities is not the result of economic austerity *tout court*, but is imbricated in systems of social reproduction, religious obedience, and gendered ideations. It further theorizes “failure” as a productive category, wherein performing suffering, mobilizing politics, and enacting spiritual submission and piety constitute a terrain of potential and help to shape an emergent vernacular of value in Senegal. Rather than sit idly by, *refoulés*, or failed migrants, create spaces of social, political, and economic possibility, suggesting that failure is not always a zone of negation, where an intended outcome is *missing*, but one in which novel strategies and flexible modes of self-creation are tested, bargained over, and produced. Likewise, the Senegalese state continues to adopt creative measures to “develop” its migrant youth, outsourcing its human services to international agencies and adopting policy transfers from abroad on matters of migration. Such a scenario of global sovereignty motivates youth to seek alliances “elsewhere,” with other multinational or non-governmental partners, many of which

operate in Senegal. By investigating these overlapping phenomena, this dissertation explores how clandestine migration, state-initiated repatriation and border policies, non-state development interventions, and the ability to imagine a future in the face of failure are all part of growing up for many in West Africa today.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract

Acknowledgments

Dedication

List of Figures

Chapter 1: Introduction

An Uneasy Title

Barça

Barzakh

Deciding on Discomfort

Three Frames

Hardness

Risk

Struggle

Shaping Social Worlds

Everywhere... and Hidden

Social Vouching

Part I: Departure

Portrait: Ibrahima

Chapter 2: Making the Decision

Introduction

Kinship

Political Economy

Labor

Mobility

Conclusion

Portrait: Abdoulaye

Chapter 3: Preparation

Introduction

Economic Arrangements

Spiritual Provisions

Conclusion

Part II: Transit

Portrait: Mansour

Chapter 4: The Phenomenology of Passage

Introduction

Interminable Beginnings

A Moveable Community

The Body in Transit

Ay Jambaaryi (The Warriors)

Conclusion

Portrait: Ndary

Chapter 5: (Temporary) Arrival

Introduction

Interception

Detention

Conclusion

Part III: Return

Portrait: Tëngéej

Chapter 6: Expulsion

Introduction

Random Removal

Erasure

Conclusion

Portrait: Moustapha

Chapter 7: Becoming *Refoulé*

Introduction

Disgust—Desire

Privation—Resistance

Shame—Courage

Despair—Faith

Conclusion

Chapter 8: Epilogue

Enduring Struggles

Unfinished Mobilities

Diogoufi

Continued Corruption

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DEDICATION

For Andy.

LIST OF FIGURES, TABLES and PHOTGRAPHS

- Figure 1: Senegal GDP Growth 1960-2014
Figure 2: Coastal Map of Senegal
Figure 3: Perceptions of Household Resources in Senegal
Figure 4: Modou and His Ablutions
Figure 5: SIVE
Figure 6: Trans-Saharan Trade Until the 1700s
Figure 7: Contemporary trans-Saharan Migration Routes

Table 1: Barça/Barzakh

Photographs:

Seydou's Shack

Ibrahima's Merchandise

Bokk Gis Gis and Goat

Soumbédioune_1

Abdoulaye and Mama

Magal

Gris Gris_1

Gris Gris_2

Mansour

Mansour's Sketch

L'Atlantique

Pirogue Mural

Ndary and Moussa

Joal

Group Interview

Îles des Madeleines

Moustapha, and His Baby Chickens

Office of AJRT

Soumbédioune_2

I. INTRODUCTION

An Uneasy Title

“*Barça ou barzakh*,” he tells me as we sit on the crumbling Dakar sidewalk in 2007. It’s my first time in Senegal, and I am unfamiliar with the phrase. “It means Barcelona or the hereafter,” he explains. “It’s what people say when they take the boats.”

I was already aware of clandestine boat migration out of Senegal. The year before, in 2006, I had followed the news covering the exodus with a surprising dedication. I say surprising because at the time I did not know very much about Senegal. Nor did I really understand migration. But I was haunted by the stories I heard and the images I saw in the media. Brightly painted fishing pirogues, which looked at if they belonged on a postcard, were packed with bodies. Young African men gazed past the gunnels looking nervous, surprised, elated, joyful, afraid. Why would someone risk his life in this way? What was going on in Senegal that made such dangerous journeys possible? What happened in the boats during passage? And what would happen to the migrants once they landed on Spanish soil? You could say that it was at that point, in the summer of 2006, that my dissertation research began. Still an undergraduate student, I traveled to Senegal the following year to study rural-urban migration, which frequently led to international, and increasingly clandestine, migration. When my friend first told me about *barça ou barzakh*, I did not know that I would be returning to Senegal repeatedly over the coming years to try and untangle its complexities.

Over time, the phrase, *barça ou barzakh*, has catalyzed a variety of meanings in Senegal. It embodied the ethos of a moment in Senegalese history when, in a few short years (2005-2008), tens of thousands of young predominantly male clandestine migrants took to the sea in the hopes of leaving behind the perceived wasteland of African futures. As a rallying cry, it inspired feats

of resistance and struggle that were undertaken when all other options seemed foreclosed. It catalyzed a radical withdrawal, a movement outside and beyond the reach of the state. And it conjured the idea that, when options become increasingly limited, people would use their bodies as the last remaining tool with which to instigate change (Allen 2009; Aretxaga 1995). It was defiant. But it also spoke of an underlying contradiction. On the one hand, the number of people undertaking boat migration seemed, at first, to be a spontaneous surge coming out of nowhere. On the other hand, *barça ou barzakh* was also part of persistent daily struggles that were actually far from exceptional. And when decoupled, it foretold of the possible outcome of such a journey for many. Departing from Senegalese shores en masse and overloaded with passengers heading for the Canary Islands, the wooden pirogues of which my friend had spoken, and of which I had seen evidence on the BBC, were often no match for Atlantic swells. An untold number perished in the 1,500-kilometer crossing.¹

Of the 30,000-40,000 who did arrive safely on the Canary Islands in 2006 alone,² roughly 6,000 faced state-initiated repatriation according to a bi-lateral readmission agreement conducted between Spain and Senegal that same year.³ It is difficult to verify how many boat migrants were

¹ It is impossible to know how many clandestine migrants perished in the Atlantic. Most estimates suggest that roughly 6,000 people died en route in 2006 (Ifekwunigwe 2013: 226; Kenyon 2007). However, these figures are likely underestimated by a significant margin because migrant remains are often hidden at the bottom of the ocean or the middle of the desert. See Conclusion (footnote 2).

² Like many data associated with Senegal, arrival estimates are notoriously inconsistent. According to Papa Demba Fall, professor of geography and long-time scholar of Senegalese migration at the *Institut Fondamentale de l'Afrique Noire* (IFAN), 41,000 arrived on the Canary Islands in 2006 (Fall 2010: 31). By contrast, *The New York Times* reported that 39,180 arrived that year (Minder and Yardley 2013). A 2011 country report on Senegal's changing demography estimated that between 2006 and 2007, "a little more than 40,000 individuals (of Senegalese and other nationalities) reached the Canary Islands," the majority of whom (30,000) arrived in 2006 (ANSD 2013: 55-56). And according to a 2009 report commissioned by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), 901 embarcations landed on the Canary Islands in 2006 with 35,488 migrants on board (Some 2009: 103). For more on the irregularity of data in Senegal, see Ponce (2010: 13) and Some (2009: 29, 104-107).

³ Repatriation figures can also be contradictory depending on the source. According to a 2010 country report on Senegal, nearly 20,000 irregular Senegalese migrants were apprehended throughout the EU in 2006, almost 6,000 of whom were repatriated (Ponce 2010: 9). But an annual Frontex report in 2006 stated that over 6,000 were repatriated from the Canary Islands *alone* not counting other EU locations (Frontex 2006: 12). The following year, over 8,000 were apprehended and 3,400 were repatriated (Some 2009: 58). And according to Di Bartolomeo et al., over 8,000 Senegalese migrants were expelled from Spain between 2006 and 2007 (2010: 3). Accessing official data, which is

released from detention in Spain, though the prevailing assumption in Senegal is that the remaining 24,000-34,000 in 2006 were in fact “chosen” for entry in a process of selection that many described as fundamentally arbitrary. Though official European policy demands the forced removal and return of “illegal” economic migrants, in practice and in effect many are allowed to stay (Carling 2007b: 323).⁴ This is at least one reason why, even after an initial repatriation, many of the young men I met continued to try their luck, often multiple times, in traveling to Spain. Of the 170 *refoulés* I interviewed, roughly one-third attempted passage more than once. Others were marooned off the coast of North Africa and forced to return to Senegal by land (see Chapter 6).

I use the term *refoulé* to refer both to clandestine migrants who arrived on Spanish territory, but were compelled to return to Senegal in accordance with bilateral agreements conducted between these two nations in 2006 and those who arrived in North Africa and were forced back to Senegal by land. I use this word instead of *rapatrié* for two reasons. First, repatriation suggests being reunited with one’s *patrie* or national homeland, and thus carries overtones of willful and welcomed return. Also, as a juridical term in post-conflict settings, repatriation signifies a legal status that often implies access to reintegration resources that my research participants did not enjoy. By contrast, *refoulement* underscores the coercive nature of being forcibly turned back to a place against one’s will (see Pian 2010a). Importantly, it is this term that my participants invoked when referring to themselves. That the Senegalese government

collected by the Senegalese Ministry of the Interior, is next to impossible. In a 2011 conversation I had with Papa Demba Fall, he lamented the many times he had been stonewalled by the government when he attempted to access the figures. According to him, the Senegalese state deliberately kept such numbers secret because the government ministers feared massive public protests if the figures were released. As I discuss in Chapter 6, public opinion of the repatriation deal was profoundly bitter. See also, Moustapha’s portrait (footnote 4).

⁴ The reasons for this are complex, and I explore them in more detail in Chapter 5. On one level, there seems to be some tension between EU policy mandates and the discretionary powers of individual member states. On another level, states like Spain have a vested interest in accommodating a cheap, illegal and flexible (i.e. deportable) workforce for its agriculture and construction industries.

prefers the term “*rapatriés*” downplays their active role in the expulsion of thousands of clandestine migrants from Spain and their tacit acceptance of the expulsion of their citizens from Mauritania and Morocco.

Whereas successful migrants brought wealth, status and development projects to their communities back in Senegal, *refoulés* returned with *mains vides*, or empty hands. The social context of contemporary migration out of Senegal is linked to profound histories of labor migration to Europe in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which enabled families in Senegal to send their children to school, build houses, and contribute to community development projects such as the construction of hospitals and mosques. That the vast majority of these early, or first-wave, labor migrants were men suggests the extent to which migration became an index of masculinity, success and spiritual devotion for younger generations. Like their forebears, the young men in this dissertation also aspired to contribute to their religious and domestic communities through migrating to Europe for work. Their forced return was thus frequently experienced as moment of rupture, wherein their desire to honor, and live up to, their social obligations was set against the disappointment of returning with nothing. But it was also articulated as a continuation of struggle and striving.

This dissertation explores not only what motivated young men to leave in such numbers—to seek out the *barça* of Europe—but also how the journey and the experience of forced return continues to shape *refoulés*’ ability to imagine a future in the face of failure. Whereas media and policy reports continue to argue that clandestine migration out of Senegal is a response to brute poverty, this dissertation recasts such mobility as a mode of spiritual labor that holds out the possibility of supporting kin in a way that is morally valuable. Faced with a corrupt state that had effectively retreated from the social sphere and was more interested in distributing political and

economic privilege to an elite class of clients, the young men in the pages that follow sought “*la vie digne*” (a dignified life) in the elsewhere of *barça*. As such, migration was also a mode of critiquing the postcolonial state in Senegal.

If the current literature on Senegalese migration tends to focus on successful migrant practices, it also fails to explore what happens to migrants when they fail to reach their intended destinations. The vast majority of scholarship on deportation focuses almost exclusively on the moment of return, thus overlooking the long-term effects of *refoulement*. Moreover, deportation policies are frequently examined in the literature as extensions of Euro-American conceptions of sovereignty, thus missing the ways that deportees understand such policies. For the young men I met, repatriation was not seen as the result of European directives but as the machinations of an immoral, and thus illegitimate, sovereign power in Senegal (see Chapter 6). Instead of describing return as a discrete moment that neatly tied up the loose ends of their peregrinations, the *refoulés* here reveal how forced return was a social process that continued to unfold long after the temporal conclusion of the event. These young men were not the same people when they returned to Senegal. Preparing for departure, undertaking transit, and managing return reshaped their conceptions of who they were and what was possible.

Barça

Mobility has been a central feature of West African societies for centuries. Political historian, Boubacar Barry, attributes this mobility, at least in part, to the region’s physical geography (1998). Demarcated by the Senegal River in the north and the Gambia River in the south with a vast semi-arid basin in between, the Northern Senegambia region became something of granary built on rain-fed and flood recession farming practices during the fifteenth through seventeenth

centuries. The large rivers also functioned as riparian highways along which goods and people were shuttled back and forth from the coast to the hinterlands. As such, the Senegambia was characterized as a “terminus for incoming populations and a point of departure for migrants on the move” (Barry 1998: 3; see also Mann 2006: 146).

The Soninke of the Senegal River Valley, for example, pursued a combination of livelihood strategies that often necessitated varying degrees of mobility before the colonial encounter (Manchuelle 1997). Agricultural calendars revolved around the monsoon season lasting from June to September, which meant that during the dry season people could engage in temporary labor and trading activities. This alternating pattern of sedentary and mobile labor resulted in episodic but established cyclical movements in the region. Not only was the Soninke homeland ideally located between the commercially vibrant Saharan zone and the interior Senegalese River basin, it encompassed the actual river itself, which accommodated floating trading stations (*comptoirs flottants*) as well as gum-trading posts (*escales*), and facilitated the transport of grain and groundnut harvests. Across the river, sorghum and millet were exchanged with Arabo-Berber pastoralists, who migrated from the Saharan littorals to the Senegal River basin in the dry season to graze their herds. In exchange, products such as livestock and salt flowed south, thus contributing to the milk-millet trade (Austen 2010: 8).

Up until the fifteenth century, trade was oriented primarily inland; that is, towards the Sahara, which shuttled gold, salt, slaves and knowledge across the desert and connected the Mediterranean to sub-Saharan worlds (Austen 2010; Lydon 2009). Maritime trade, consisting primarily of the exchange of slaves and gum arabic for European commodities, began when Portuguese boats lighted off the West coast of Africa in the middle of the fifteenth century. It was not until the French captured Île de Gorée in 1677, however, that European influence could

really be felt in the region. Groundnut cultivation was introduced in the 1840s and, with the abolition of the maritime slave trade in 1848, groundnut exports provided a profitable alternative to the trade in humans (Irvine 1973: 10-11).

Given this long history of mobility, it is not surprising that populations from the Senegal River Valley (including Soninke, Serer, and Toucouleur) constituted the first wave of Senegalese immigrants to France. After World War I, Senegalese laborers were contracted to work as merchant marines on French commercial vessels, and later settled in places like Le Havre, Marseille and Bordeaux (Willems 2008: 280; see also Manchuelle 1997; Timéra 1996). The second and more substantial wave, which followed WWII and continued until 1970, consisted mainly of students and veterans. Before going on to occupy administrative and civil service posts in the political bureaucracy after independence, Senegalese students were often sent first to the metropole for university education.⁵ In addition, former *tirailleurs Sénégalais*, who had fought in both world wars on the side of the French, also migrated to work in the automobile and construction industry in the metropole after demobilization (Mann 2006).

In the middle of the twentieth century, France was faced with a demographic challenge: in addition to a declining birth rate and an ageing population, many young laborers had been killed during the two successive World Wars. Setting their sights on industrial recovery, which would require significant labor power, France turned to its colonies. As part of post-war reconstruction, labor migrants from across francophone Africa were courted to work in French industries and on infrastructure projects. Known as the *Trente Glorieuses* (thirty glories), the three decades after the war saw the dirigiste revitalization of France's economy, which was made possible, in part,

⁵ Promising students had been migrating to France long before 1945, however. Blaise Diagne, for example, the first black African to be elected to the French National Assembly in 1914, was educated in Aix-en-Provence. Moreover, after economic austerity set in beginning in 1980, students would often overstay their visas to look for informal employment in Europe rather than return to Senegal where jobs were anything but guaranteed.

by the importation of cheap labor from North and West Africa. The “economic logic” of immigration legislation between 1945 and 1973 enabled France to remedy its domestic labor shortage by extracting labor from the colonies (Wadia 1999: 172). France established official recruitment centers in eight foreign countries, one of which was Senegal. According to French census data, the number of sub-Saharan Africans (mostly from Senegal and Mali) working in France increased from 17,787 to over 80,000 from 1962 to 1975 (Robin et al. 2000: 34).⁶ The “Renault-Dakar office” thus became a euphemistic expression for the massive recruitment of Senegalese laborers to work in the automotive industry.

Even after Senegal’s independence in 1960, France continued, with varying degrees of enthusiasm, to encourage labor migration from the former colony. It was not until the oil crisis of 1973, and the beginning of economic recession, that France would reconsider its open-door policy when it came to immigrant labor. That year, France abandoned its worker recruitment programs (Guiraudon 2001), though it was not until 1986 that Senegalese citizens were required to obtain an entry visa before traveling to France (Vickstrom 2014). Family reunification schemes reshaped what had been a circular form of labor migration, in which Senegalese workers periodically returned home, into a permanent form of immigration and settlement after 1976. What this meant in practical terms for aspiring migrants was that unless they had a family member already in France who could sponsor their visa application under the rubric of family reunification, legal pathways to gain entrance were suddenly, and very drastically, limited.

Sylvain Laurens analyzes how the “turning point” in French immigration policy was not simply a matter of economic crisis brought on by the oil embargo, but was rather part of a longer process of restructuring that had been taking place in the federal bureaucracy (2008). For one

⁶ Gregory Mann points out that figures diverged greatly, with some independent sources reporting 50,000-60,000 West African workers in France in 1963, and between 200,000 and 250,000 only six years later in 1969 (2015: 130).

thing, France was in the midst of redefining its own sovereignty as a member of the still-nascent European Economic Community, which required a political and economic re-orientation towards Europe and away from the former colonies. Laurens writes, “The decision [to close the borders] was the product of profound transformations of the [French] state apparatus which placed certain agents in a position to defend the ‘necessary’ idea of controlling migrant flows [which had been in place] since the end of the 1960s” (93). In part, those ideas were influenced by growing unrest among West African migrant workers in the metropole whose rent and labor strikes in the early 1960s publicized their deplorable living conditions and disrupted French business (Mann 2015: 145-161). But the turning point was also influenced by the experience of decolonization, which reevaluated notions of belonging among postcolonial authorities and their subjects.

As Gregory Mann points out, immigration reform was not simply a unilateral decision that was handed down *fait accompli* to former colonies. Rather, it was also the result of African states like Senegal negotiating the project of nation-building in the era of decolonization by claiming its citizens as members in its national polity (2015: 143; see also Sayad 1999). “The struggle over what had become international migration in the immediate wake of African independence was a struggle for control over the meaning of political membership that followed the end of empire... For newly independent states, breaking away from the colonial economy meant asserting that one’s citizens were someone else’s [i.e., the former colony’s] strangers” (Mann 2015: 122-123). Contrary to depictions of France mercenarily using and then discarding West African labor, there is a way in which the West African states, from the moment of independence, also contributed to policy design on matters of migration flows due to demographic, economic and climatic changes taking place in within their own borders.

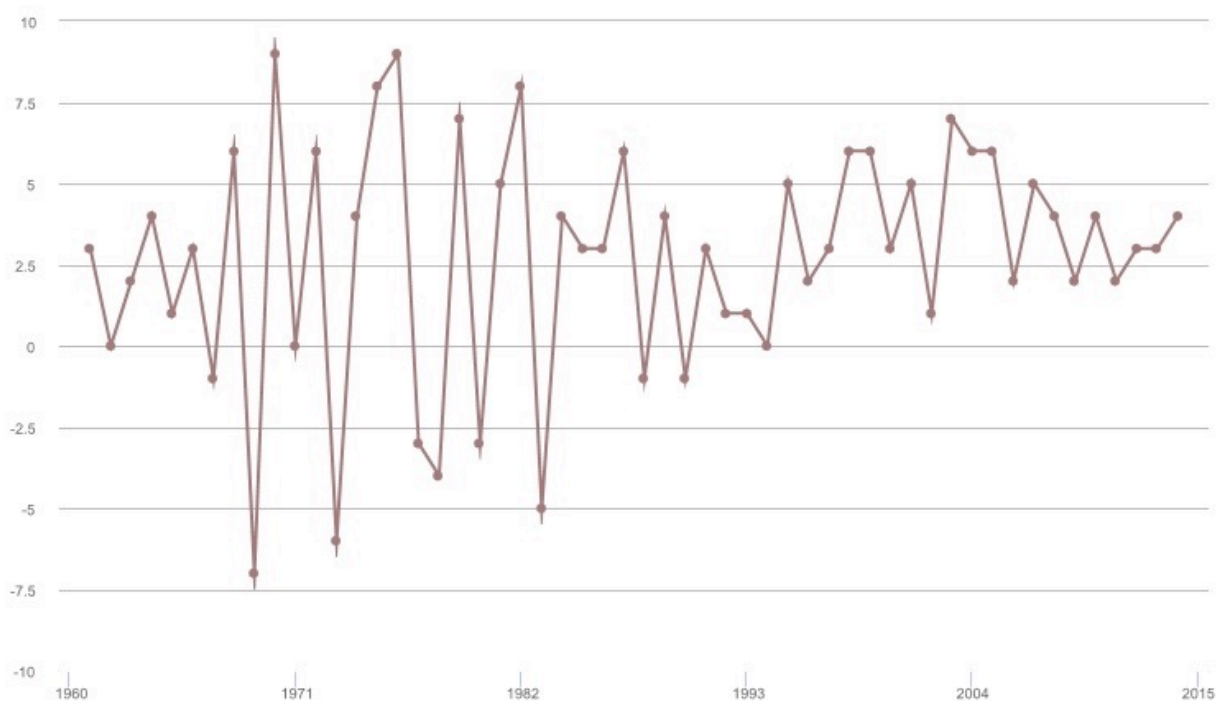
Between 1960 and 1988, the population in Senegal more than doubled (Pison et al. 1995: 30). The elimination of French subsidies on groundnut imports in 1967/1968 dealt a serious blow to Senegalese farmers, their households and the national economy (Mbow 2011: 96; Boone 2003: 131; Youm 1991: 24). The late 1960s also marked the beginning of what would become a multi-decadal drought in the Sahel, further crippling the groundnut economy and leaving many families to seek work in urban centers. Declining exports and the global economic recession due to the oil crisis of the 1970s meant that Senegal had little choice but to accept the conditions attached to foreign structural adjustment loans, which exacerbated unemployment, disenfranchised a class of civil servants and *évolués* in urban centers, privatized industry, devalued the currency, and deregulated markets.

Senegal became the first African state to get a structural adjustment loan from the World Bank in 1979 as part of the Structural Adjustment 1 paradigm (SA 1). Contrary to analyses that see early structural adjustment as a policy foisted on passive developing nations in the late twentieth century, Christopher Delgado points out that the SA 1 paradigm “was motivated in large part by African ministers of finance, who had to produce the foreign exchange to meet the burgeoning demands of other ministries... [In Senegal] the government approached the World Bank on this matter, and not the other way around, following a disastrous peanut crop in 1978 that added to imbalances already in place” (Delgado 1998: 189; see also Delgado and Jammeh 1991). However, rather than investing in productive industries, the Senegalese state engaged in “lending to local private parties in the 1970s [which] followed political rather than economic or development criteria” (Boone 1990: 440). In other words, the aim of state intervention in the market had more to do with maintaining a network of clients, which helped Léopold Sedar Senghor’s *Union Progressiste Sénégalaise* consolidate power. Later trade liberalization schemes

in the 1980s also enabled state agents to “tap commercial rents themselves” as licenses were granted, and blind eyes were turned, to clientelistic affines engaged in the highly profitable trade in contraband imports (Boone 1994: 458).

Thus, the economy in post-independence Senegal experienced several major ruptures: the end of groundnut subsidies in 1967/1968, the oil crises of 1973 and 1977, and structural

Figure 1: Senegal GDP Growth 1960-2014



Source: World Bank
(<http://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?source=2&country=&series=NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG&period=#>)

adjustment programs beginning in 1979, which resulted in wild fluctuations in GDP growth (see Figure 1). Although Senegal’s GDP growth rates did positively stabilize in the mid-1980s after a period of intense fluctuation, such indicators do not necessarily reflect real living conditions for the majority because growth is often unevenly distributed (Monga 2006; Ravallion 2001).

One way to manage such economic instability was to do what the Senegalese had always done: that is, migrate elsewhere for work. While Senegalese laborers had been going to other

African countries for decades, the economic crisis at home only increased pressure to seek work elsewhere during the 1980s and 1990s. Along with the fishing economy in Mauritania and cacao farming in Côte d'Ivoire, the construction industry in Gabon likewise attracted thousands of Senegalese migrants (Robin et al. 2000: 35). Senegalese migrants had also been working in Central Africa for decades, and they maintained a substantial presence in the two Congos (1965-1974) before the mass expulsions of 1977, when 6,400 West Africans (of which 2,364 Senegalese) were deported within a few weeks (Whitehouse 2009: 51). From 1985, Senegalese migrants also traveled to Cameroon, which functioned as a temporary way station for migrants on the road to other destinations (Tall 2008: 40).

The pattern of intracontinental migration shifted in the early 2000s, however, after growing xenophobia and regional conflicts broke out (Gubert 2005: 42). While neighboring countries such as Mauritania and Gambia hosted the majority of Senegalese migrants, Côte d'Ivoire's share was not insubstantial. After the 1999 coup and ensuing civil war (2002-2004) in Côte d'Ivoire, however, Senegalese migrants shifted their sights to Europe. Some scholars assert that Senegal continues to send more migrants to other sub-Saharan countries than to the EU (Schoorl et al. 2000: 78). However, a recent analysis based on MAFE (Migration From Africa to Europe Project) data reveals that from 1975 to 2008 the number of Senegalese migrating to other African countries decreased steadily, while migration to Europe increased from forty to sixty percent (Schoumaker et al. 2013: 12; see also Gubert 2005).⁷

Italy became a new destination as early as the 1970s as its less restrictive immigration policies and demand for labor made it relatively easy to access (Willems 2008: 280). As of 2000, there were nearly as many Senegalese immigrants in Italy as in France (Jettinger 2005: 5).

⁷ MAFE is essentially a compendium of retrospective data on migration flows. A number of insightful analyses have been generated based on MAFE data. See <http://mafeproject.site.ined.fr/fr/>.

Likewise in Spain, semi- or unskilled labor was also in high demand. Periodic regularizations in both Spain and Italy meant that even if one had entered southern Europe illegally or overstayed a visa, many could still benefit from temporary residence and work permits as they became available (Arango and Jachimowicz 2005; Calavita 1998). Between 1986 and 2002, five regularization programs were undertaken in Italy, which offered temporary work and residence permits to over 1.4 million applicants. Similarly in Spain between 1985 and 2005, six regularization programs were undertaken, offering at least half a million immigrants temporary residence, which was often renewable (Levinson 2005; see also Beauchemin et al. 2014: 5; Peréz 2003).

Responding to the open immigration policies in southern Europe, and the Sahelian drought of the 1960s-1980s, which crippled local groundnut economies in Senegal, the Murid brotherhood began cultivating new global commercial trading circuits (Ebin 1992).⁸ Murid *talibés* were sponsored to work as merchants in tourist destinations like Florence and Valencia, as well as the United States (Bava 2003; Diouf 2000; Ebin 1993; Gemmeke 2013; Tall 2008: 46-47). The word *talibé* is taken from the Arabic *talib*, which means “follower” or “seeker.” In Senegal, it refers to adherents of a Sufi *tariqa*, or “path.” *Talibés* have devoted relationships with their *marabouts*, or spiritual guides, who provide religious instruction and, in the case of the Murids, paths to global mobility. Whereas the upper Senegal River valley had been, historically speaking, the largest producer of migrants from the early twentieth century, in the 1980s and 1990s, the central regions of Diourbel and Touba in the Peanut Basin became the new generators of emigrant

⁸ The Murid brotherhood is one of several Sufi “ways” or *tariqa* in Senegal. Other prominent *tariqa* include the Tijaniyya and the Oadiriyya. Though not the largest in terms of their following, the Muridiyya, which was founded by the influential saint Cheikh Amadou Bamba in the nineteenth century, has the distinction of being the only indigenous brotherhood in Senegal (see Babou 2007).

stocks. By and large, the new candidates were young, single, and fully embraced the Murid work ethic that linked labor to divine recompense, a topic I cover more fully in Chapter 2.

Historically, individual migration from Senegal to Europe has been a largely male activity. This reflects a social context in which masculinity is linked to providing for kin as both the spiritual and economic *borom-kër* (head of the house). On the level of the economy, caring for family members by providing shelter, sustenance, education, and health care was seen as an occupational necessity and a moral duty for my participants. Though Senegalese men and women alike mobilize a host of diverse income-generating strategies to make ends meet, a man's status is ultimately determined by his ability to care for kin. Whereas a woman's earnings from petty trade or agricultural activity remain her own, a man's income is to be distributed among his dependents. This constellation of dependents locates him in a particular social universe without which he would be lost. Being seen as a husband or son who sits idly waiting for providence, or seeking out "*la facilité*" (what comes easy), carries a heavy stigma because it indicates someone who has removed himself from the sphere of exchange and responsibility and has thus become a stranger. Migration then was an active undertaking that fulfilled commitments to a larger affective network and generated meaningful identities for individuals located in those networks.

In addition to being positioned as the economic "head" of the house, men are also seen as spiritual guides for their wives and progeny. Though it is important for women in Senegal to be able to read and recite the Qur'an, young girls have had limited access to religious instruction at *daraas* (Quranic schools). As Rudolph T. Ware points out in his historical study of Quranic education in Senegal, "girls were not expected to be long-term students in the Qur'an schools. They were expected only to learn enough of the Qur'an to pray and to learn the letters of the [Arabic] alphabet... Qur'anic schooling was seen as a way to shape girls into proper Muslim

wives” rather than to provide them with inner knowledge of Quranic scholarship (2014: 173-4). Thus, although some women do obtain some basic instruction, matters of religious authority still fall largely to men. Because of this structural inequality which privileges men in terms of Islamic scholarship and learning, the moral health of the family is seen as resting in his hands. Advising wives and children on proper Islamic comportment and attitude is thus an important patriarchal duty. Most of the *refoulés* I met were already married and had children at the time of departure. As they articulated it, a man who possessed the spiritual fortitude and faith requisite to withstanding the vagaries of passage across the Atlantic would, by extension, also be able to guide his family in the right way of Islam.

At the same time, there is a way in which their masculinity, as a gendered identity construction, actually foreclosed certain possibilities. As the *refoulés* in Chapter 7 reveal, current development agendas and NGO interventions in Senegal tend to benefit young girls and women more than men. In a conversation I had with Guy Benissan, regional coordinator for REPAOC, a network platform for NGOs working in Senegal, he said, “If you don’t have a gender dimension [as an NGO], no one will give you money.”⁹ Even anti-malaria initiatives, he explained, needed to talk about how they would specifically benefit women and young girls to get any international attention. Such a situation is indicative of the increasingly gendered lens through which global development operates in many parts of the world (Benería and Sen 1981; Boserup 1970; Rai 2002; Subrahmanian 2007). Not surprisingly then, many of the young Senegalese men I met saw themselves as outside the discussion of development altogether (see Moustapha’s portrait and Chapter 7).

As conditions in Senegal deteriorated through the end of the twentieth century, more and more young people came to see Europe as a beacon of fiscal, and thus moral, security. As

⁹ Personal interview, June 24, 2013.

Serigne Mansour Tall points out, in the mid-2000's *barça* became synonymous with success (2008: 47). Not only had the Barcelona soccer team become the League Champions in 2005 and 2006, but young men in Senegal began receiving phone calls from their friends who had successfully made it to Spain via pirogue in 2005.¹⁰ Those who had the good fortune to travel and find work in Barcelona (or other European cities) were idolized in popular stories and proverbs that began circulating widely in Senegal (Tall and Tandian 2010).¹¹ For those who lacked family or religious connections, one of the only alternatives was to attempt to migrate clandestinely. And yet, the journey itself was a dangerous undertaking which could, and often did, result in *barzakh*.

Barzakh

In Islamic philosophy, *barzakh* is a threshold between this world and the next, a border, or isthmus, between death and the Day of Judgment. Not to be confused with purgatory, which is a punitive space wherein human souls must atone for their sins before being allowed into heaven, *barzakh* represents a time of great anticipation and respite for the faithful. Along with the sound of footsteps leaving the gravesite, the memories of earthly existence recede into the distance.

In Sufi thought, *barzakh* is both a temporal moment preceding the Final Hour and a spatial experience.¹² People in Senegal would often tell me that after death, one does not lie

¹⁰ Soccer is followed religiously in Senegal (Ralph 2007). Both the national team as well as European clubs are idolized, and some youth even dare to dream of becoming professional players. Some of the most popular attire in Senegal is soccer ware—t-shirts displaying the logos of popular clubs, like Barcelona or Roma (see Abdoulaye's portrait).

¹¹ Such proverbs and their popularity predate the phenomenon of boat migration. In the Senegal River valley, sayings include: "The Haalpulhar [ethnic group] know where they were born but not where they will be buried." Among the Wolof, it is often said: "He who does not travel will never know where it is best to live," or "Dignity [*jom*] makes people travel but courage [*foula*] makes them return" (Ndiaye 2014: 43).

¹² As Salman Bashier points out, the concept of the *barzakh* in the Islamic tradition developed "from its temporal designation in orthodoxy, signifying a period of time that extends between death and resurrection, to its spatial designation within mysticism" (2004: 81).

unconsciously in the grave, passively waiting for deliverance; rather, the deceased is visited and often vigorously shaken by angels who perform tests of faith. The body experiences the grave pressing in with suffocating pressure, or opening up like a garden. When someone passes away, it is not uncommon for people in Senegal to say, “*Que la terre soit légère sur lui*. [May the earth be light on him/her].” *Barzakh* is therefore not static; it is both variable in its spatial orientation and transforming for the soul passing through it. It is also conceptualized as a moment of rest (*repos*) preceding final judgment. “In the popular imaginary...” writes Tall, “to reach *Barzakh* is to remove oneself from the difficulties of the moment, and to rest in the afterlife... This is why, in cases of protracted illness or incurable diseases, death is often perceived as a deliverance from suffering” (2008: 48). That so many young men would risk their lives to escape this worldly suffering is, according to most scholars, not surprising given the paucity of alternatives.

As a threshold that precedes a final ontological state of being, there is something of the liminal in *barzakh*. In the Qur’an, *barzakh* is also a physical delimitation, a border between the “sweet and salty seas.”¹³ As I thought through *barzakh*, I began to think that youth, as a liminal stage between adolescence and full social maturity, was itself a kind of *barzakh*. I began to wonder if young people seeking to cross the *barzakh* between childhood and adulthood might be doing so by actually crossing the physical *barzakh* between Senegal and the Canary Islands. And it seemed, at least at first, that I would find ample evidence in the scholarship that would agree with me.

¹³ “And He it is who has given freedom of movement to the two great bodies of water—the one sweet and thirst-allaying, and the other salty and bitter—and yet has wrought between them a barrier [*barzakh*] and a forbidding ban” (Qur’an 25:53). Quoting the influential eleventh-century Sufi mystic and scholar Ibn al-‘Arabi, Fredrica Halligan writes, “[An] ‘interval’ is an expression for something which separates two other things, like the diving line between sun and shade, and as He said—may He be exalted—concerning the mixture of the two seas, ‘Between them is a barrier (*barzakh*) which they cannot cross” (2001: 279). For more on Ibn al-‘Arabi’s prolific writings on *barzakh*, see Chittick (1989).

In a great deal of the literature on youth and migration in Africa, transnational mobility is often conceptualized as a way for young people to achieve adulthood in the context of increasingly restricted opportunities for upward social mobility. Many scholars have argued that migration has become a “key rite of passage in and of itself” for African youth (Melly 2011: 370; see also Alpes 2012; Ba and Ndiaye 2008; Bjarnesen 2007; Bredeloup 2008; Carling 2014; Fall 2010; Fioratta 2015; Fouquet 2007; Hernández-Carretero and Carling 2012; Jackson 2008; Lucht 2012; Mbow 2008; Poeze 2010; Tall and Tandian 2010; Timéra 2001; Uberti 2014; Vigh 2009). As Thomas Fouquet puts it, migration to Europe is “a means of feeling *complete, whole, accomplished*: [migration is] a transitional stage without which it is not possible to inscribe oneself in the modes of personal realization on offer in the society of origin” (2007: 84-85, italics in original). As such, migration is a means of becoming visible as an “adult” within social worlds (87).

Such research is reminiscent of early anthropology, which theorized youth as a temporal stage through which people moved, often aided by rites of passage (Turner 1967, 1969; Van Gennep 1960). According to Arnold Van Gennep, an initiate undergoing “transition” within a rite of passage “does not belong either to the sacred or the profane world... and he is therefore isolated and maintained in an intermediate position, held between heaven and earth” (1960: 186). In transitioning from childhood to adulthood, initiates are considered socially “dead” and are therefore dangerous as their energies have not yet been domesticated (Van Gennep 1960: 75; see also Turner 1967: 98). They exist “outside society” (Van Gennep 1960: 114). Their re-incorporation is thus a kind of social resurrection. In the case of contemporary African societies, then, the question becomes: what happens when the ritual fails (Geertz 1957; Hüsken 2007)? If

youth become trapped in transition unable to achieve adulthood? For Victor Turner, transition itself would then “become a permanent condition” (1969: 107).

Working from the same premise that youth is a stage through which one passes on the way to adulthood and an unachieved rite of passage indicates a rip in the social fabric, more recent scholars have argued that youth in Africa are indeed “stuck” in a transitional “waithood” that signifies a “social moratorium” (Sommers 2012; Honwana 2012, 2014; Vigh 2008, 2010). The underlying assumption is that because young people are unable to acquire the trappings of adulthood, such as establishing an independent household, marrying and producing children, youth become trapped in a social stasis regardless of their biological age. Adopting such a lens has allowed researchers to explore how youth face war, economic volatility, corrupt governments and declining infrastructures, all while trying to “grow up” (Cole and Durham 2007). Scholars have revealed how, even when facing formidable constraints, African youth are not always passive victims of subordination, but can be agentive and resourceful (Christiansen, Utas and Vigh 2006; Honwana and De Boeck 2005; Utas 2003, 2005). Having been ejected and excluded from national politics, youth can be seen bristling against the oppressive demands of their gerontocratic elders, and left with little choice but to seek social and economic mobility in the margins of informal economies, religious associations and militia movements (Comaroff and Comaroff 2005; Diouf 1996, 2003). On the one hand, being unable to achieve social adulthood means that youth languish in kind of “social death” (Hage 2003: 78). On the other hand, youth also protest and assemble in novel ways by mobilizing “tactical agency” (Honwana 2005: 49). Drawing on Michel de Certeau’s distinction between the strategy and the tactic, Alcinda Honwana describes tactical agency as “sporadic, and mobile... [that which] seizes every opportunity... to cope with the constraints imposed upon them” (2005: 50). Whereas a strategy is

calculated by autonomous actors, tactics “play on and... within the enemy’s field of vision” (de Certeau 1984: 37). Strategies are for those with some degree of power; tactics are “the *art of the weak*” (49). Tactical agency, then, is a kind of “making do” in order to navigate and survive uncertainty.

In the early stages of my research, the idea of “tactical agency” helped me to think through how young men “seized” migration as a way to escape prolonged waitthood. Without clandestine mobility young Senegalese men had few options for “navigating” a way out of their social liminality. Though my training as an anthropologist taught me to be skeptical of binaries, I nevertheless saw the tension between *barça* and *barzakh* in the following way:

Table 1: Barça/Barzakh

Barça	Barzakh
Spain	Senegal/Atlantic Ocean
Adulthood	Waitthood
Success	Failure
Life	Death
Achieved status	Liminal status

Reading *barça ou barzakh* through the literature on youth in Africa suggested that it was not simply a matter of Barcelona *or* death, but Barcelona as social resurrection *from* death.

Deciding on Discomfort

Barça ou barzakh, seemed, at first, to map rather well, if a little too conveniently, on the dichotomy between resistance and social death in the literature. If *barça* was a way out of waitthood, then, according to the scholarship, it was also a kind of social navigation, active

engagement and tactical agency. And if *barzakh* was a failure to attain Barcelona, then it was also a symbol of liminal protraction, structural constraints and social death.

But then I conducted fieldwork. And very soon *barça ou barzakh* started looking less like a conceptual tool to explain tactical agency and protracted social liminality and more like a measuring stick of what young people were willing to sacrifice, and the lengths to which they were willing to go, to help their families and strive in the way of Islam. If the young men I met shared the same markers of generation and economic status as the “stalled youth” described in some of the scholarship, they did not define their condition as “socially dead” (Salehi-Isfahani and Dhillon 2008; Singerman 2007). Instead, they continued to strive for a moral and meaningful existence within, and not outside, their social worlds. For them, being an adult had more to do with the ability to care for loved ones than it did with separating from those loved ones as atomized individualized beings. If we conceive of adulthood as truly social then we might come to understand the risks young men would take to improve the lives of their parents, siblings, wives and other kin not as an overbearing burden but as a means of establishing and nurturing a moral community. At the same time, family concerns were also entangled with those of personal progress, achievement, and faith.

If clandestine migration was in fact a rite of passage, then failure to migrate successfully would indicate a breakdown, or a “procedural failure,” in the ritual’s execution and efficacy (Schieffeln 2007). There are two immediate issues with the idea of a breakdown of the ritual’s procedural execution. First, it presupposes that failed migration was in fact a failed ritual. My participants suggested that even though they may have “failed,” they nevertheless returned with new conceptions of self. In some sense, even failure and forced return brought new knowledge or transformation of a social identity. Secondly, such a focus on procedure leads us to critique the

ritual itself as an “inefficient” cultural mechanism instead of critiquing the political economy of the situation, which made such a ritual simultaneously imaginable and unachievable. Moreover, if we understand clandestine migration as ritual, with its attendant focus on outcome, then we miss the ways in which the migration “process” was a way for young men to perform their struggle in a register of moral value. Though the migration goal failed, the rite of passage as symbolized in migration, was not failed at all, but was successful at creating new social beings.

When I began talking with *refoulés*, they spoke of the journey itself as unlocking limitless potential. The ocean was prefigured as a threshold between foregone conclusions in Africa and open possibilities elsewhere, a theme I discuss in Chapter 4. But travel was also articulated within the framework of rights. As global transportation opened up limitless possibilities for people in Europe to travel to Senegal, increasingly restrictive immigration policies made it impossible for travel to occur the other way around. Even today, foreign tourists, investors, merchants, NGO workers, mining officials and laborers on government contracts can enter Senegal with no more than a valid passport.¹⁴ Should a Senegalese citizen try to do the same and book a flight to Madrid, they would be turned away at the airport.¹⁵ To a young Senegalese

¹⁴ For citizens of non-ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) countries, Senegal’s visa policy, for many years, has been to allow travelers to obtain a free 90-day visa upon entry into Senegal with no prior arrangements. In July 2013, Senegal instituted a biometric visa system, which required visitors to pre-register online months prior to traveling and pay a €75 fee for the same 90-day visa. However, as of 1 May 2015, this policy has been cancelled and the old system of offering 90-day visas, free of charge, upon arrival has been reinstated. There is some speculation that this reversal is an attempt to revive a tourism industry crippled by the recent Ebola outbreak and high airport taxes (Kambell 2015).

¹⁵ Recently, Fatou Diome, Senegalese author of the 2003 novel *Le Ventre de l’Atlantique* (The Belly of the Atlantic), was featured on “Ce Soir ou Jamais,” a popular weekly French TV show in which scholars, writers and public intellectuals are invited to debate an issue. In response to the current exodus of migrants and refugees across the Mediterranean, the subject of the April 24, 2015 program was whether or not to allow such “misery” to find a new home in Europe. Diome pointed out the unequal power of passports in the following way: “[In the media] we see the Africans who come to Europe [via boat]. But we don’t see the movement of Europeans going to other countries, [because] this is the movement of the powerful, those who have money, those who have a ‘good’ passport. So you can go to Senegal, you can go to Mali, you can go to any country in the world... Everywhere I go, and I travel all the time, I cross paths with the French, Germans, the Dutch. I meet them *everywhere* on this planet because they have a ‘good’ passport... As for modern travel [within the context of] globalization, when the poor people come to [Europe], the mass response is, ‘We should block them [from entering].’ But with your passport and all the pretensions that it gives you—when you land in a third world country: there, you’re in a conquered land. So we see

person, such a double standard seemed deeply unfair and at variance with larger discourses on human rights, which guaranteed people the right to leave their country.¹⁶ Consequently, boat migration provided a viable, albeit dangerous, way to seek entry into the European zone.

Mobility was also framed as a religious right. For the young men I met, practicing one's faith was intimately tied to caring for kin because such caring was reflected in the example of the Prophet. For many Muslims, the importance of following the Prophet's *sunna* cannot be overstated.¹⁷ As Saba Mahmood points out, "Muhammad... is not simply a proper noun referring to a particular historical figure... he is a figure of immanence in his constant exemplariness... For many pious Muslims, [his] embodied practices and virtues provide the substrate through which one comes to acquire a devoted and pious disposition" (2009: 76-78). As God's "most perfect man" and one who quite literally embodied the Qur'an, the Prophet is a "model" for proper behavior (Ware 2014). Emulating the Prophet by caring for kin and community was thus crucial to young Senegalese people's commitment to Islam. Economic difficulties, however, rendered their ability to live up to the prophetic example and thus fulfill their obligation as Muslims increasingly problematic. As a solution, migration could provide a path to "right living." Young men described to me how God granted every Muslim the permission to leave a place that impeded his or her faithful practice by making *hijra*, or protective migration (Robinson 2013: 1

poor people who leave, but we don't see the wealthy who invade and take possession of our countries." Accessed April 29, 2015 <http://www.rewmi.com/video-le-coup-de-gueule-de-fatou-diome-sur-le-naufage-des-migrants.html>. See also Koutonin (2015) for a short piece on the difference between expats and immigrants.

¹⁶ Importantly, while Article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights indeed declares that "Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own," it is silent on the matter of where one has the right to go.

¹⁷ *Sunna* translates literally as "a path, a way, a manner of life," which exemplifies the Prophet's actions (Qazi 2000: 65). As an historically transmitted record, the *sunna* includes the Prophet's teachings, sayings and practices, which all Muslims ostensibly try to emulate (Esposito 2003: 305).

and 71-73).¹⁸ Thus, not only did they have a right to leave Senegal, where it had become impossible to provide adequate support for family members, they were morally obliged to do so.

While the prospect of risking one's life was appalling, it was both an economic and ontological necessity. As *refoulés* described it, the economic gains of working in Europe could potentially secure the future for entire families. And from an ontological perspective, being willing to sacrifice oneself is what made a moral existence possible. Like Cabeiri deBerg Robinson's Kashmiri *muhājirs* (refugees), whose migration was framed as an "intentional labor of reestablishing a proper domestic life [*hijarat*]," my participants sought out a "proper" life—that is, one that supported the family—through sacrifice (Robinson 2013: 205). "[The] concept of sacrifice for the family," Robinson points out, "... distinguished the moral status of individuals based on the extent to which a person had harnessed his or her desirous self and put it at the service of the family by caring for others" (ibid.). Likewise, migration provided a way for the young men I met to actualize their knowledge of and commitment to being a good Muslim—that is, as one who takes care of his family.

The psychological pain that *refoulés* experienced in watching their spouses, parents, siblings and children suffer was extraordinarily difficult to bear. In much of the literature on migration, young African men are figured seeking their fortunes elsewhere in order to come back as "big men" glowing with cosmopolitanism (MacGaffey and Bazenguissa-Ganga 2000; Newell 2012; Tall and Tandian 2010). But the young men I met explained such social prestige as the byproduct of honoring their obligations to support family members, not as independently valued markers of personal achievement. Reducing migration to individual desire and status misses the real emotional and existential pain that comes from witnessing, and more importantly not being able

¹⁸ For example, if Muslims live in a country where they are not allowed to pray, they have the right, sanctioned by God, to find and settle in a place where they can.

to ameliorate, the suffering of loved ones. In Chapter 2, I attend to some of the hardships young men endured in not being able to help their families, an inability which then prompted them to leave. For them, migration was motivated not by resistance to the “anomic” category of youth or the “excessive” demands of elders, but by the desire to support the people who populated and gave meaning to their social worlds.¹⁹

When migration was articulated as resistance, it was done so in reference to the state. Faith in the willingness and the ability of the Senegalese state to foster stability and development has been eroded to such an extent that most people today function by way of “social infrastructure” rather than making claims on the state (Simone 2004a). They do not call on government offices, even when those offices have ostensibly been established to assist them. They do not wait for the state to intervene in disasters, such as the monsoon-season floods that displace hundreds of families in Dakar’s poorest suburbs each year. Instead, people rely on their families, neighbors, civil society and religious community members to make ends meet (Simone 2004b; 2010a). Although promising slogans have been chanted at election time, over the last thirty years very little has materialized in the way of job creation, ensuring food security, improving infrastructure, creating a sound banking system, and the provision of basic services like electricity, water, sanitation, adequate health care and access to education. Facing what they called a “negligent state,” young men reasoned that they were under no obligation to respect a political regime that ignored them and left them to waste away hustling for a few CFAs a day on the streets of Dakar. The state was a space reserved for politically connected actors who spent their lives behind the tinted windows of Mercedes Benz SUVs, sheltered from the widespread misery by an impenetrable screen of power.

¹⁹ Henrik Vigh describes the category of youth as “an anomic condition defined by a schism between the culturally expected and the socially possible” (2010: 148).

As I thought through and struggled with the meanings embedded in *barça ou barzakh*, I came to see that on a more practical level, what this phrase could not account for in its elegant simplicity was the reality that many clandestine migrants did not end up in either Barcelona or the hereafter. For them, there was a third space: the space of forced return. Although a great many did succumb to a very real *barzakh*, others were marooned off the coast of North Africa and forced to return to Senegal by land. And of the thousands who did safely arrive in Tenerife or Las Palmas, many faced state-initiated repatriation back to West Africa. Importantly, the 2006 readmission agreement between Spain and Senegal stipulated the repatriation of thousands of *clandestins* back to the continent in exchange for €20 million in development aid, the putative aim of which was to create jobs in Senegal and thus reduce pressures to migrate clandestinely. The now classic story is that instead of job creation, migrants were given 10,000CFA (\$20) and a sandwich at the airport and told to go home. In addition to exploring the conditions of departure and transit, this dissertation also tries to understand what this third space looks like by attending to how forcibly returned migrants—those who did not successfully reach Barcelona—continue to remember, relive and try to move on from their failures.

In the foregoing, I have tried to explore some of the uneasiness with which I have approached the title of this dissertation. That I have struggled with it for so long probably says more about the researcher than it does about the subject at hand. I have retained *barça ou barzakh* not because it is unproblematic, but precisely because it troubles me. What appears at first to be a clean binary choice between Barcelona and death, suddenly fractures into multiple choices and possibilities when neither of those ends is achieved. Through its tantalizing simplicity, *barça ou barzakh* actually forces a more complicated reading of social life in Senegal. In order to unpack this social life, I draw on three conceptual frames throughout this dissertation.

Three Frames

In the many conversations I had with *refoulés* in Senegal, there were three words that came up again and again: hardness, risk and struggle. When I asked *refoulés* why they migrated, they would often reply because *la vie est dure* (life is hard). If I asked them to describe their journeys in the boat, they might begin by saying *risque le* (it's a risk). And when I asked them to describe their lives post-expulsion, they might again recall the hardness of life but follow up with *waaye il faut lutter* (but you have to struggle). Life is hard. It's a risk. But you have to struggle. Each of these phrases tells us something about social worlds of clandestine migration and the realities of forced return.

Hardness

“*La vie est dure.*” Life is hard. For many in West Africa, this phrase sums up their existence. In French, as in English, there are two similar words to describe challenging situations: difficult (*difficile*) and hard (*dur*). Though nearly interchangeable, the two words actually signify different things. Difficult (*difficile*) describes a situation requiring effort to overcome. It is demanding, inopportune, tiring. Hard is all those things, too, but it is also physically impenetrable. Hard is rock, steel and concrete; it is unyielding. In other words, to say *la vie est dure* is to say that life is not simply difficult, the way climbing a mountain might be, but that life has become impenetrable in some way. Instructively, none of the people I met in Senegal ever said, “*La vie est difficile.*” They always said, “*La vie est dure.*”

There was hardness in quotidian life. Most of the young men I interviewed came of age in the decades of structural adjustment in Senegal. As economic conditions worsened in the 1980s and 1990s and employment became increasingly scarce, families had to scramble even more

frantically just to survive. Prices for basic foodstuffs like rice and cooking oil rose steadily throughout the 2000s, while the availability of formal work declined precipitously. Having effectively retreated from the public sector, the state left its populations to fend for themselves amidst persistent economic crisis and increasing scarcity. “Where scarcity dominates,” writes Achille Mbembe, “the intensity of needs and the impossibility of their satisfaction [become] so acute that [it] ruptures... the way that social subjects experience desire, longing, and satisfaction” (2006: 308). On the one hand, this rupture is experienced as a temporal divide between past promises of postcolonial development and future imaginaries (Piot 2010). On the other hand, it restructures understandings of human action and consequence. When action no longer produces anticipated results, crisis itself becomes both unintelligible and prosaic. The experience of crisis, according to Achille Mbembe and Janet Roitman is “at once intimate and dramatic.”

[I]t gives rise to narratives that no longer locate the crisis... in a causal description of an event that develops over a relatively long period of time. The experience and the imaginary of time that results are of a condensed, compressed and abrupt nature. Because of this contraction, the transformations taking place are not necessarily correlated to precise factors and historical referents, even if one is aware that these elements do in fact exist. For lack of these referents, the crisis is exiled to the domain of the inexplicable (1995: 338).

At the same time, new forms of wealth began reshaping the urban landscape in cities like Dakar, Saint-Louis and Thiès where no small number of young men had migrated from the countryside to look for work. Large multi-story houses and compounds with running water, electricity, tiled entryways and tinted windows began dotting the landscape in Touba and Tivouane, the spiritual homelands of the Murid and Tijan brotherhoods, respectively. And grand mosques blossomed like devotional bouquets in Mbour and Kaolack. Cast against the backdrop of increasing precarity for most, what seemed unimaginable was actually materializing: *émigré* wealth generated by the men who had left Senegal to find employment in Europe was suddenly

everywhere. Everywhere and off limits. Everywhere and inaccessible. Between the world in which most people scraped by and the world of the successful transnational laborer or entrepreneur, there was a line, stark and impenetrable.²⁰

Roger Lancaster has suggested that when people say, “life is hard,” they are indexing how “the vagueness and abstraction of ‘life’ is set against the concreteness of ‘hard’” (1992: xvi). And yet, the young men I met in Senegal would not say that life was vague or abstract, nor that hardness existed somehow outside it. Rather, life and hardness were coterminous, mutually suggestive, made of the same stuff. Life was something that admitted only the few. Like a shell that couldn’t be cracked. After enduring passage and forced return, hardness continues to be a structural constraint and central theme for most. Being ejected from Europe constitutes only one dimension of being cast out more generally, unable to access the means of supporting family members appropriately in Senegal. Without the personal connections that provide access to narrowly channeled streams of capital, *refoulés* continue to stand on the outside of an economic world looking in.

And yet, hardness was not always avoided. As Ware shows in his research on Qur’anic education, young, predominantly male, *talibés* (students) in Senegal have understood that “learning the Qur’an was supposed to be hard... the revelation of the Qur’an was physically painful to the Prophet... From this perspective, hardships experienced while learning the Qur’an made sense” (2014: 45). Hardness was the price one paid to obtain higher knowledge that could only be acquired through sacrifice and suffering.

²⁰ Though Beth Anne Bugenhagen goes so far as to suggest that “[i]t was... new forms of wealth, rather than rising poverty and fiscal austerity, that drove so many... to endure a transatlantic voyage in wooden fishing vessels to the Canary Islands,” I would take a more measured approach and suggest that boat migration was motivated by a host of factors, of which *émigré* wealth was but one (Bugenhagen 2012: 62).

Risk

“*Risque le.*” It’s a risk. On one level, this Franco-Wolof hybrid indicates the extent to which young *clandestins* measured and understood the dangers of the journey before setting out.

Although it has become relatively common in media and policy reports to suggest that irregular migrants the world over are manipulated into departure by greedy and unscrupulous human smugglers who do not fully disclose the dangers of passage, and who take advantage of passive or gullible migrants, the majority of young men I met knew very well that they were risking their lives to leave. In fact, the risks of passage were often framed as a necessary investment in one’s future. Without risk, there was no (potential) reward. If life was impenetrable, then accessing its inner treasures required summoning an incredible force to breach its durable exterior. Such a force was not without risk, but as *refoulés* explained it to me, staying in Senegal with *les bras croisés*, or crossed arms, was equivalent to giving up before even trying (Fioratta 2015). Moreover, because the outcome of the journey was frequently articulated the result of divine will, embracing risk and putting oneself in God’s hands was framed as an act of faith.

On another level, the statement *risque le* says as much about the situation in Senegal as it does about the conditions of passage. Despite its potentially mortal consequences, departure in a wooden fishing boat was seen as no riskier than staying in Senegal. As basic survival became increasingly challenging, many *refoulés* could see the writing on the wall. Whatever savings they had accumulated were quickly dwindling as food became more expensive and rent prices escalated, particularly in and around urban centers. The various indices seemed clear: try to leave while you still can.

Such an understanding necessitated a radical hope that action might result in change, though the conclusion was anything but guaranteed. For many, gauging and engaging risk was simply

part of living, and calculating what was possible, in the postcolony (Makhulu et al. 2010: 9). Because futures were no longer underwritten by the post-independence dream, the “projection of catastrophe” was accompanied by a simultaneous “accommodation of it” (Morris 2008: 206). Risk was deferred through novel exchange economies in which bodies became commodities in their own right (Hoffman 2011; Mbembe and Roitman 1995; Roitman 1998).

As a political field, the body is, on the one hand, a vessel through which power is channeled and materialized in subjectivities (Foucault 1995: 25). But it is also a site of refusal, where “rational disciplines... fail to produce docile subjects” (Aretxaga 1995: 124). Mobilizing one’s body as the last vestige of control and leaving Senegal in search of *barça* entailed a commitment to the possibility of self-annihilation. Such sacrifice laid claim to a future as yet unwritten, one that was not necessarily determined by an historical past of victimization but that operated, as Mbembe says, “outside human jurisdiction... [where] decisions about life and death become entirely arbitrary, and everything [thus] becomes possible” (2002: 267). This “*zone of indistinction*” is characteristic not only of contemporary warsapes in Africa, but also of spaces where existential struggles open the possibility for multiple temporalities, futures and ancestries (258). Conjuring the rhetorics of war, such as frequently referring to themselves as *ay jambaaryi*, or warriors, *refoulés* in Senegal inscribed themselves into a narrative of African geography, which posited the territorial space of Africa as without hope or future, as a continent existing not just with no time left, but as one outside of time altogether.

For many Senegalese youth, Africa exists outside or in a peripheral relationship to histories of progress. Whereas the “rest of the world” seems to march forward, Africa languishes. Sometimes, this temporal stasis is explained as a result of Africa’s colonial past. At other times, it is seen as a function of contemporary international economic policies, which may have been

authorized by politicians, but have been borne in their structural gravity by everyday citizens.

James Ferguson's work on the disappointed futures of copper mining in Zambia reveals how "the circumstances of economic decline have affected not only national income figures... but also urban cultural forms, modes of social interaction, configurations of identity and solidarity, and even the very meanings people are able to give to their own lives and fortunes" (1999: 12). The resulting "crisis of meaning" produces new ways of understanding decline and the possibility of living with it in a dignified way (14).

The vast majority of people I met in Senegal blamed post-independence statesmen for what they saw as their alienation from the rest of the world. Conjuring a field of grass, one elderly man, who could still recall the promise of decolonization, put it to me this way: "*Ici, en Afrique, quand on grandit, on te coupe.* [Here, in Africa. When you start growing, they cut you back.]" This is why he had spent his professional life in Europe as a hotel concierge in Reims (France), he explained. In his telling, he never would have been able to succeed if he had stayed in Senegal because "in Africa because there [were] no rules. In Europe, when you agree on a contract, everyone respects it. It's the law. But here, we don't have laws."

It was in this frame of "lawlessness" that *refoulés* critiqued the Senegalese state. Chapter 6 explores how *refoulés* evaluated the actions of the Senegalese state with respect to clandestine migration. For them, the state "used" migration as a way to establish lucrative relations with European partners. Migration control had been written into partnership agreements between Senegal and European member states since at least 2003 when Switzerland became the first European country to demand the forced return of West African citizens to Senegal. Since then accords have been signed with France (2006 and 2008), Spain (2006 and 2007), and Italy (2008), which have stipulated the concerted management of migration flows, including the readmission

of Senegalese nationals, in exchange for development aid (Toma 2014).²¹ In this way, Senegal has, on some level, been able to deftly mobilize its skills as a “flexible gatekeeper” on the global stage in order to consolidate power at home (Cooper 2002: 180; see also Chou and Gibert 2010: 5). According to Frederick Cooper, a gatekeeper state “uses its own strategic location to provide opportunities to clients” (2002: 138). Whereas traditional gatekeeper states in Africa have controlled the flow of resources leaving the national territory, Senegal’s weak export economy (based chiefly on groundnuts, fish and phosphorous) has meant that its brand of prebendalism has been more precisely oriented toward the informal privatization of control over imports and inflows of capital (Blundo 2006; Hibou 1998). In regulating migration and accepting forced returns in exchange for development aid, the Senegalese state has been able “to sit astride the interface between [its] territory and the rest of the world, collecting and distributing resources that derived from the gate itself” (Cooper 2002: 157). Thus, according to my participants, by managing the circulation of its citizens, and the forms of economic procurement that accompanied their movement, the Senegalese state has extracted rents not as migrants *left* the gate, but as they *re-entered* through it. And yet, this strategy also came with risks. As I discuss in Chapters 6 and 7, vehement public disapproval of Senegal’s policy of accepting returned clandestine migrants resulted in the open contestation of the state’s legitimacy as a sovereign power.

Struggle

“*Il faut lutter.*” You have to struggle. To *lutter* in Senegal is to struggle for survival. For *refoulés* as well as others, struggle frequently entailed disengaging from and seeking autonomy outside

²¹ According to Sonia Lokku and Maria Herrgott, readmission agreements, which commonly stipulate the forced return of unwanted migrants back to third-countries in exchange for development aid, establish “a dangerous link” between migration control and development assistance (2009: 2).

the state. Both before their departure and after their forced return, young *refoulés* characterized the state as a zone of corruption, negligence, avarice and *gaspillage* (wasteful inefficiency). Rather than developing the nation, officials across the political hierarchy were seen as using their positions of power to cultivate and consolidate personal wealth. Faced with such a situation, *refoulés* argued that they were not beholden to stay in Senegal and “continue electing presidents” whose promises did not survive Election Day. Instead, these young men removed themselves from the state altogether.

If struggle entailed a clandestine withdrawal before departure, it turned to open hostility after forced return. As the *refoulés* in Chapters 6 and 7 make clear, their repatriations were understood as the machinations of an authoritarian, and thus democratically illegitimate, state. More precisely, *refoulés* explicitly accused then-president Abdoulaye Wade of being the architect and arbiter of their expulsions. In tacitly allowing or actively enabling deportations from North Africa and Spain, respectively, President Wade had shown his ultimate brutality. Although this led to mass demonstrations at the gates of the Presidential Palace in 2006, the promises made at the time by Wade to quell the unrest, once again, never materialized. Several years later, *refoulé* outrage once again fueled violent protests that rocked the capital in 2011 and 2012 prior to the contentious presidential elections.

If the state was a zone of moral corruption, then tangling with it should be approached with caution. Though they did periodically crowd the streets in protest, the more significant struggle for most of the *refoulés* I met was a spiritual one. As they articulated it, to *lutter* was to fight for survival and to oppose corruption, but it was also to strive in the way of God. As previously mentioned, struggling to provide for one’s family was considered tantamount to becoming a good Muslim, which suggests an active engagement with one’s conditions. At the same time,

struggle also meant reconciling oneself with the fundamental *impuissance* (powerlessness) of human effort by putting oneself in God's hands.

Chapter 3 explores some of the spiritual preparations undertaken before setting out, including consulting with religious guides, making sacrifices and prayers, washing with protective ablutions and procuring special *gris-gris* (talismans). Such preparations had the power to shield migrants from danger and ensure a safe passage. But they were also symbols of one's ultimate deference to God's will. In Chapter 4, *refoulés* recount how passage across the Atlantic required a spiritual fortitude in order to withstand the storms, visions, shape shifters and deaths without "cracking" psychologically. Such fortitude was explained as originating in the divine, not as the product of individual dispositions. Thus, as part of *la lutte*, the journey itself was morally and spiritually valuable in two ways. First, the somatic and mystical vagaries of passage catalyzed and gave physicality to the virtues of strength, courage and solidarity in the boat. And secondly, struggling through the hardship and suffering, both on land and at sea, was explained as part of a sophisticated system of exchanges and tabulations, which accrued value and blessings to be meted out in the afterlife. Importantly, these blessings did not accrue because of the individual qualities of a person; rather, they were proofs of the extent to which an individual had submitted to God.

In Senegal, *la lutte* is also the name of the national sport of wrestling, and has come to symbolize masculine courage in the face of adversity. A *lutte* match exemplifies the "hardness" of life. It is a space where physical and spiritual trials are actualized and where individuals, regardless of their background, are remade. After being conducted into the arena by his team of assistants, the *lutteur* and his entourage dance ceremoniously before meeting his opponent. Frequently, the *lutteur's* marabout(s) bathe him in various mystical ablutions (*safara*) and tie

strings of various *gris-gris* around his biceps, waist and thighs.²² Only after all this preparation is the *lutteur* ready to face his opponent with his bare hands. In contrast to the prolonged introduction, the match itself frequently lasts less than five minutes and ends when one *lutteur* throws the other to the ground (*terrasser*).

Inasmuch as *la lutte* is a performance of power it is also a confirmation of solidarity within a particular social field. As Chiekh Tidiane Wane comments, “Wrestling permits the *lutteur* to show his force, courage and ingenuity, but also to defend the honor of his village or community” (Wane 2014: 112). The force of a *lutteur* is considered a “public good,” belonging to and put in the service of the community (114). The qualities on display during a *lutte* match, such as *jom* (honor), *waruga* (commitment to community), *kersa* (restraint and modesty), *teranga* (hospitality), *mun* (patience), and *njambaar* (courage) all “constitute the humanity of a person” (106). Such attributes, or ethical dispositions, are highly valued in Senegalese society as markers of both bravery and self-control; in other words, to *lutter*, or struggle, is not simply a matter of force, but entails a commitment to moderation.

By offering oneself as material sacrifice in a battle for recognition as a man who supports his family at all costs, “one believes that in such a death is found the essence of life” (Mbembe 2002: 268). Such battles or “regimes of violence” intersect with powerful religious beliefs that reconstitute the arbitrary character of success (and failure) as a function of divine sovereignty. In other words, making it to *barça* or facing imminent *barzakh* was a matter of God’s will and operated within God’s actuarial domain, not as outcomes of weather, motor dysfunction, faulty GPS systems, or fuel supplies. The point was not to avoid one outcome or the other, but to open

²² Typically, these ablutions consist of water, juice, and coconut or animal milks which have been infused with Qur’anic verses transcribed by the marabout. These liquids are then ceremoniously poured over the *lutteur* for protection. *Gris-gris* are leather talismans enclosing (usually) verses from the Qur’an, which are then worn on the body.

oneself to their possibilities. In her exploration of the politics of religious disputation in Pakistan, Naveeda Khan has argued that aspiration “is not directed at achieving an ideal final form... but rather at sustaining the striving toward one” (2012: 9). Thus, the *value* of aspiring to submit oneself to God was not contingent on success or failure, but was embodied and accrued in the act of struggle and striving itself.

Desperate though it may have been, the attempt to escape, to cross the *barzakh* between here and there was articulated as that which suddenly made other futures *possible*. As this dissertation argues, such undertakings, risky though they may have been, intersected with and materialized broader ideas of struggle and striving, which were valued separately from the final outcome of the journey and continued to have value long after expulsion and forced return. Taking a dangerous chance to ameliorate their conditions through clandestine migration was thus neither an irrational nor an exceptional act. Rather, it formed part of a longstanding struggle to survive and care for loved ones. For the young men I met, to struggle was to understand that life was a stage upon which one performed and embodied spiritual striving toward a social good that extended beyond the individual.

And yet, they still stood outside life—the life that other *émigrés*, elites and politically connected entrepreneurs enjoyed—because the shell surrounding that life was too hard to breach. If migration was one way they attempted to crack its hard exterior by mobilizing and risking their spiritual, psychological and economic resources, then how then did they understand failure? Was failure, like youth, a truly anomic condition? Was it devoid of any meaning and, as such, utterly dehumanizing and alienating?

I argue that by re-evaluating migration as a struggle, *refoulés* attached a moral value to the act itself rather than to the outcome. Such a system of value allowed them to make sense of

suffering in the register of sacrifice, and not simply as a wasted effort. While most scholars characterize clandestine journeys as fundamentally motivated by desperation, Aminata Diaw offers a tempering perspective: “[Such a] gesture is not at all desperate and cannot be translated as an expression of nihilism; rather, it is more appropriately seen as a radical option for life... not in the sense of animal survival but of human life” (2013: 203). As such, the effort expended toward the attainment of this “life,” whether such effort was successful or not, contributed to a reformulation of honor, or perhaps more accurately a *reclaiming* of honor even in the face of *l'échec* (failure). Though one Guardia Civil official described boat migrants as “kamikaze terrorists... [with] nothing to lose” (Soudan 2007), their apparent fearlessness was not, in fact, suicidal (Hernández-Carretero and Carling 2012). Had their efforts been nihilistic and truly wasted, the young men I met would have been unable to explain their experiences as part of a larger universe in which suffering had moral weight (Weiss 2009). *Refoulés* would often tell me that everyone’s life—when a person was born, who they would marry, when they would die—had already been “written” by God. Thus all adversities and successes had already been foretold. Not only did this help to give rationality to a world which often did not make sense, it also suggested that their efforts were not in vain.

Shaping Social Worlds

All writing is surgical. It omits episodes that seem irrelevant, sometimes inserting them later. It takes moments out of time, out of context, and places them within new contexts. Writing is a curator’s job, as Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett might say, an “art of excision” (1998, 18). It is, above all, a heavy-handed enterprise. And my hand has been especially heavy in the chapters that follow. I say this because the shape of this dissertation does not acknowledge the ways in

which *refoulés* actually talked about their experiences. While I have adopted a structure that attends to three discrete “phases” of their migration history—departure, transit and return—my participants almost never spoke in such linear terms. Rather, wanting to care for their families, which was cited as the primary motivator in deciding to migrate, was wrapped up in their experiences of passage, which then referred back to the preparations they had undertaken before setting off, which also reflected their contemporary conditions after forcible return. Separating and extricating moments from the flow of their narratives and then piecing them together has felt a lot like trying to translate a three-dimensional sphere, where all points are inextricably connected, into a two-dimensional puzzle, where segments have been cut out and refitted together. As such, this dissertation has admittedly lost, or obscures, some of the crucial interconnectedness of the life stories within.

Bearing its shortcomings in mind, it was a conscious decision on my part to adopt such a narrative design because, at its most basic, the tripartite structure of departure—transit—return implies change. In its very architecture, it accounts for, even demands, the possibility of transformation. In this way, the structure itself goes to the heart of one of this dissertation’s central arguments, which is that these young men did not return as the same people, but were in fact transformed by their experiences of migration. Though they did not achieve what might be considered success, and were compelled to return to Senegal empty handed, they nevertheless returned with new knowledges and new subjectivities. The three “segments” also reveal how migrants moved through various geographies and temporalities during their journeys—between fragmented cities, village safe houses, tumultuous oceans, imagined futures and constricted presents. And by attending to the conditions of departure and transit, this dissertation contends that we cannot understand return without also exploring what preceded it.

Part I attends to the thematic of Departure. The *refoulés* in Chapter 2 describe the social, economic, political and spiritual conditions that prompted them to migrate via pirogue. Whereas the vast majority of policy literature and academic scholarship highlights poverty, and the resulting financial inability of young men to achieve individual social adulthood, as the primary motivator for clandestine migration, the young men in this chapter complicate such a dominant narrative by revealing the underlying sociality of economic relations. Though scarcity may well have been the catalyst, migration was more precisely a path to supporting kin rather than a strictly individual enterprise. The young men in this chapter also reveal the ways that migrating to and working in Europe was seen as a vector for spiritual striving. Inspired both by the doctrinal message of Cheikh Amadou Bamba and popular figures like the wrestler Tyson, who achieved success *à la sueur de son front* (by the sweat of his brow), *refoulés* articulated work as a mode of achieving *baraka* (blessings) on their own terms and by their own efforts.

Chapter 3 explores the spiritual and economic preparations that went into clandestine departures. If risk was endemic to departures, it also indexed the extent to which personal and family investments were liquidated, mobilized and devoted to the migration project. The young men in this chapter describe how boats, land, cars, and all manner of property were converted into liquid cash that mimicked, in some way, the unstable landscape of the ocean as they traversed it. As part of their moral grooming, clandestine migrants sought the advice, benedictions, and ultimately sanction from their marabouts. They also frequently undertook embodied rituals such as manufacturing and wearing *gris-gris*, performing sacrifice, and washing with specially prepared ablutions that were purported to shield them from the mystical dangers of passage. Such preparations underscore the value of spiritual protection and the central importance of the maraboutic relationship in Senegal, which continues to shape how failed

migrants manage their futures. If the dominant representations of boat migrants characterize them as spontaneously and erratically hustling into vessels, leaving family and nation hastily behind in an irrational rush to reach El Dorado, this chapter reveals that migration was actually the result of careful and often communal planning on the part of aspiring migrants and their families.

Part II explores Transit. Of the existing literature on sub-Saharan clandestine migration, most scholarship focuses on territorial modes of travel (Bensaâd 2005; Brachet 2009; Streiff-Fénart and Segatti 2012; Timéra 2001, 2009).²³ Some scholars examine transit itself as a protracted phenomenon as people's movements across land borders are obstructed by unforeseen challenges (Baldwin-Edwards 2006; Hamood 2006; Papadopoulou-Kourkoula 2008; Pian 2007; Sørensen 2006). Within this body of work, however, conditions of maritime transit are frequently overlooked.²⁴ Chapter 4 examines how Senegalese boat migrants experienced the phenomenon of passage across the Atlantic. As many *refoulés* recounted, the hardships of passage were both somatic and supernatural. Thirst, hunger and illness were accompanied by visions, visitations and otherworldly companions in the boat. As a form of seeking knowledge, traveling was both an embodied experience of spiritual struggle and a confirmation of one's commitment to see the signs (*ayat*) of God in all worldly creations.²⁵ The space of transit was also reflective of contemplative traditions in Islam whereby voluntary removal (*khalwa*) was linked to striving and transformation. Moreover, histories of religious prophets fleeing colonial control effectively and affectively linked local iterations of Sufi Islam with clandestine migration (Bowen 2004; Cruise

²³ In the US-Mexico context, see De León (2012, 2013, 2015); Singer and Massey (1998); Spener (2008, 2009).

²⁴ One notable exception is Hans Lucht's chapter on "The Mediterranean Passage" in his 2012 book, *Darkness Before Daybreak*.

²⁵ As William Chittick observes with respect to Sufi philosophy, "All creatures become manifest by displaying God's names and attributes. All are 'signs' (*ayat*) of God" (2005: 29). In other words, it is by embodying God's qualities that one comes to exist.

O'Brien 1975; Diouf 2000). Clandestine migration therefore also operated as an extension of religious traditions and discourses around mobility, invisibility, and the possession of divine gifts (Ebin 1996; Riccio 2005). In describing their journeys, *refoulés* often called on the theme of struggle to articulate transit as a meaningful social, spiritual and somatic space. In this chapter, they recount the practical and experiential dimensions of passage: the delays that were tolerated, the hardships that were endured, and the hopes that were sustained. This chapter argues that the experiences of struggle that migrants sustained during transit continue to shape the social worlds they have come to inhabit after return.

Temporary arrival in North Africa and Spain is the subject of Chapter 5. As a part of transit, interception and detention were stages through which migrants traveled before their eventual expulsion. This chapter explores both how clandestine migrants understood and tried to evade border controls, and, more broadly, how the technological and policy instruments deployed to capture them constituted a profitable industry for both European and African interests. If media representations were plentiful at the time of increased boat migration out of Senegal, they also worked alongside the securitized policy measures that were implemented to detect and intercept irregular migration flows. This chapter explores how clandestine migrants understood their place within such a global militarized and privatized commercial apparatus as alternately commodities, criminals or victims.

Return is the focus of Part III. Chapter 6 attends to the processes of expulsion from both North Africa and Spain. Remarkably, in the literature on West African migration, repatriation is largely overlooked. When discussed, return migration is often framed as an ambivalent phenomenon experienced by successful—which is to say successfully circulating—transnational migrants (Buggenhagen 2012; Cassarino 2004; Flahaux et al. 2011; Riccio 2005; Sinatti 2011).

But ethnographies of forced return in a West African context are surprisingly rare. Most scholarship examines what deportation means to the deporting state; that is, as a mechanism of sovereignty, citizenship and national security in Europe or the United States.²⁶ Because citizenship is defined, in part, through the exclusion of the “other,” deportation functions as a way to include through exclusion and is thus “*constitutive of citizenship*” (Walters 2002: 267; see also Suárez-Navaz 2004).²⁷ While such insights help us to understand what deportation means to the sovereignty of sending states, they do not reveal how deportation regimes might affect the sovereign legitimacy of receiving states like Senegal. When scholars do explore deportation ethnographically, the analytical scope is often limited to the moment of deportation, missing the ways in which non-voluntary return continues to shape future horizons for people long after the event is concluded.

Chapter 7 reveals how, after enduring such traumatic experiences, the shock of forced return was “enough to break a person’s spirit,” as people told me. Several of the men I met experienced a temporary period of “going crazy.” For at least one of them, a “spiritual re-entry” aided by a marabout was required in order to return psychologically. Forced return was certainly a “shock” and a “grave disappointment,” but it was also a means by which young men, having faced their own death, were able to return with fearlessness and honor. That such honor was sometimes kept secret or hidden from family and friends in Senegal did not make it any less socially meaningful. As Ibrahima, one of my principal participants, commented, “No one knows I made the voyage. Not my parents. Not my friends. But God knows.” Ibrahima’s comment reflects the idea that, rather than existing in a rarefied external sphere alienated from individuals on earth, God is

²⁶ The 2010 volume edited by Nicholas De Genova and Nathalie Peutz, which focuses on *The Deportation Regime*, is exemplary.

²⁷ A part of any state project seems to be the “moral evaluation of difference” (Fassin 2005: 366)—the deciding of who gets included in the polity and who remains on the outside.

actually an integral and intimate, perhaps the *most* intimate, member of peoples' social worlds in Senegal. Instead of describing return as a discrete moment that neatly tied up the loose ends of their peregrinations, the *refoulés* in this chapter reveal how return, and forced return in particular, was a process that continued to unfold long after the temporal conclusion of the event.

Despite being faced with significant challenges, the young men I met demonstrated a flexible ability to refashion their subjectivities, hedge their bets, and attempt to create enduring forms of value, however marginal, in times of volatility and crisis. Rather than sitting idly by, *refoulés* continue to create spaces of social, political, and economic possibility, suggesting that failure is not always a zone of negation, where an intended outcome is missing, but one in which novel strategies and flexible modes of self-creation can be tested, bargained over, and produced.

Each ethnographic chapter is preceded by what I call a Portrait of a single *refoulé*, or group of *refoulés*. My hope is that, with these portraits, readers might be able to appreciate more fully how *refoulés* talk about and make sense of their experiences. These portraits also situate me as a researcher. They show the hospitality I enjoyed, the generosity I could not repay, and sometimes the tensions that my presence produced. They provide background on the relationships I developed in Senegal, and in this way, help to give a more intimate sense of who *refoulés* are, where they live, and how they survive.

Everywhere... and Hidden

Before arriving in Senegal in 2012 to conduct yearlong fieldwork, I had a feeling that *refoulés* would be hard to find. Unlike doing research in hospitals, prisons, or government offices, where participants would be presumably easier to locate, trying to find people who necessarily blended

into the social landscape was challenging. In Senegal *refoulés* were both everywhere and strangely hidden at the same time.

Even though there is hardly an extended family in Senegal not affected by international migration, clandestine voyages and forced returns were frequently kept secret from family members and friends. *Refoulés* did not advertise their status, and, apart from the fact that some of them were informally and irregularly affiliated with local repatriate associations—which were, in themselves, notoriously difficult to track down—*refoulés* did not organize in any systematized ways.²⁸ For a short time, there was a national-level association (the National Association of Repatriates from Spain), which was founded by forcibly repatriated migrants and seemed to have the president’s ear when it came to advocating on behalf of *refoulés*. But true to assimilation politics in Senegal, this organization was coopted by the state shortly after its creation in 2007, and was soon rendered impotent (Pian 2010a).²⁹ Though the stories of *refoulés* circulated all over the city, the young men who had lived those stories were almost invisible.

The problem was not just in *finding refoulés*, but finding ones who would be willing to talk to me. After the surge in boat migration in 2006, a rush of media reporters and social scientists descended on Senegal, each with their agendas, questionnaires and publishing deadlines. I was often told that promises were made before interviews, such as offers to help *refoulés* start a business, establish partnerships with foreign NGOs, or seek funding with a European development agency. Unfortunately, such promises never materialized, and after people “went back to Europe,” they were never seen or heard from again. In a place like Senegal, where social

²⁸ For more on the untraceable nature of *refoulé* associations in Senegal, see Moustapha’s portrait and Chapter 7.

²⁹ See Chapter 7 for an exploration of this national association and the process by which it was assimilated by the state.

relations are profoundly important, and commitments to others are taken very seriously, such encounters were a source of painful disappointment and growing distrust of *tubaab* researchers.³⁰

Given the justifiable resentment and tension already inherent to the social field before I even arrived, I was quickly nonplussed as to why so many failed migrants did end up talking to me. Based on the pilot work I had conducted in 2011, my initial IRB application for fieldwork in 2012-2013 requested approval for a mere 40 respondents. That I ended up interviewing 170 *refoulés* was as much a surprise to me as it was to IRB Committee G with whom I had to file multiple modification forms as my “sample” kept growing.

On one level, as their numbers suggest, and their narratives later confirmed, *refoulés* saw me, by and large, as an avenue through which to access the broader world. Though some had already spoken to earlier scholars who had come to Senegal to study clandestine boat migration, many of my participants said they had never told a soul about their experiences before meeting me. The fact that the progressive “hardness” of life in Senegal had not abated since their return was enough to motivate some to break their silence. Maybe if they talked to me, they argued, someone in the wider world might be moved by their stories and find a way to help. But on another level, and perhaps more importantly, remembering and recounting their stories informed and was constitutive of a kind of immanent sociality for many of the *refoulés* I interviewed. Though some discussions were private, conducted only with a single participant, most of the interviews were communal, conducted in groups ranging from three to twenty people. In the portrait on Tëngéej, a suburb of Dakar, *refoulés* seemed at times more interested in sharing their stories with one another than with me. Disputation, bravado, laughter and camaraderie all sprouted up as a result of these group conversations as young men argued, shared and listened intently to one another.

³⁰ In Wolof, the most widely-spoken indigenous language in Senegal, *tubaab* means “white person.”

Thus, the dissertation that follows is above all an exercise in storytelling. It is also an exercise in remembering. For the young men I met, years had elapsed between their voyage in the boat and their retelling of it. As such, telling their stories involved remembering what had happened, which could be a painful prospect. Recalling the details of the voyage, the losses they had sustained and the force of shock, anger, and disappointment they had endured after forced return, was never easy. That they shared such intimate details of their lives with me was no small measure of their generosity and their desire to circulate in the wider world. Though they may have been forbidden from traveling the world, their stories were not.

Such a narrative setting goes to the heart of what it means to “perform” a kind of dramaturgy in Africa today (Comaroff and Comaroff 2006; Piot 2010). As Piot argues, “The hidden nature and indeterminacy of power and the spectral nature of contemporary wealth production... seem to demand rumoring and narration” (2010: 8-19). Dramaturgy, therefore, is the site through which everyday people explore and try to explain, or “narrativize,” that which is inexplicable (Hoffman and Lubkemann 2005; Mbembe and Roitman 1995). Telling stories helps us understand who we are and where we are going. The endeavor to narrate one’s life, as the young men in this dissertation show, becomes particularly salient when the future itself seems unintelligible.

There were other instances, or narrative instantiations, which seemed to have less to do with explaining the world and more to do with reconfiguring one’s place in it. For example, young men often claimed that after withstanding the traumas of passage across the Atlantic in a small fishing boat, they were “not afraid of death” anymore. My aim is to approach such comments seriously; I am less interested in evaluating their veracity. I am also disinclined to interpret such statements simply as gendered performances of masculinity. Rather, there is something more structural at work that may explain why young men undertake risky passage and then tell stories

about it. For me, such comments say less about what it means to be a man in Africa writ large and more about what it means to be a young man in Africa at this particular moment in time.

In Brad Weiss's compelling analysis of storytelling in Tanzanian barbershops, he argues that the performance of suffering itself has become socially meaningful (2009). For Arusha youth, the mutual overlapping of "street life" and barbershop sociality—which is embodied by the open doors, fluid visitors coming and going, and sidewalk benches—has become part of the performance of pain. As Weiss points out, the talking that takes place at barbershops isn't idle, nor is it purely an exchange of information (57). Rather, there is something existential about it. Because barbershops are seen as a place to ease one's mind, worries, or thoughts, the space itself becomes a conduit of imaginative articulations of suffering. And pain becomes "a social mode of consciousness" (120). Likewise, as Rosalind Morris argues, "the communicative force of an act... is determined by the ways in which the act is interpreted" (2006: 58). In other words, action derives its meaning by way of being interpreted by others. As *refoulés* talked about clandestine migration and forced return with each other, their stories became communal performances that articulated their suffering as a morally and socially valuable experience.

As the foregoing suggests, my research blossomed unexpectedly as a consequence of young men's desire to share their stories with a wider audience outside Senegal. But there are two other reasons why my research turned out the way it did. And their names are Seydou and Pape.

Social Vouching

I first met Seydou in Soumbédioune, the artisanal fish market in Dakar. A marine carpenter by trade, Seydou made his living fabricating custom fish holds for the working pirogues that set off from the coast each morning. His workshop consisted of a small storage shed whose walls are

pieced together with brightly painted plywood scraps (see photo). His phone number was painted next to the door. A rectangular wooden table, chinked and chewed by previous meetings with his chisel or handsaw, stood beneath a large overhang, which provided shelter from the sun.

Standing at the table looking out, a line of pirogues crowded the shoreline.



Seydou's Shack, Dakar, 2013

Not long after I met Seydou, he introduced me to Pape, who worked in the adjacent stall building pirogues from long planks of timber. Pape's workspace consisted of a wide covered sand pit where he carved heavy mahogany and acajou panels with an adze. Unlike most of my participants, both Pape and Seydou were skilled tradesmen. And because of their trades, they also had impressive connections in the fishing community, which, like any good social network, had connected boat owners, captains and passengers during the height of pirogue migration.

When I started working with them, Seydou and Pape both explained that I should sit back and let them “introduce” me to potential interviewees. The first time we conducted interviews together, Seydou began by talking to the group. By then I was proficient enough in Wolof to understand that he was not just introducing me but locating me in a field or constellation of other people. It was not sufficient to say that I was a university student from the United States studying migration in Senegal. Rather Seydou emphasized how he knew me, for how long, how I was “related” to him, and how he was related to Pape, who had put the call out for the *refoulés* to come to his compound that day. Because everyone there knew each other, and knew Pape, I was vetted by his authority. I doubt seriously if I would have been able to talk to anyone as a stranger by simply approaching them on the street. Legitimacy and trustworthiness in Senegal is defined by whom you know. A person without connections, without “a family,” is potentially dangerous because, if something goes wrong, you wouldn’t know who to go to for reparations. Because I was placed within the constellation of people that included Seydou and Pape, I was considered safe. And if any *refoulé* had a question for me, they would have to go through my “brothers” first.

At every turn, Seydou and Pape were tireless in their efforts, though such efforts were not without unforeseen challenges. As I recount in the portrait on *Tëngéej*, conducting individual interviews soon became an unrealizable goal when 70 *refoulés* showed up in a single day. Totally unprepared, I had to adjust on the fly and study up on group interviewing techniques when I got home that evening. I also developed a questionnaire that collected basic information, such as family size, education levels, occupation, the number of attempts to migrate clandestinely, where boats landed, how much people paid, and where and how long they remained in detention before being expelled. And our work did not end in Dakar or its suburbs.

Seydou had contacts and arranged interviews in Mbour, Joal, Diendère and Saint Louis, as well as other places we did not have time to visit.

Marine carpenters might make for improbable research assistants. But Seydou and Pape were uncompromisingly diligent. At the end of the portrait on *Tëngéej*, I describe the ride home in the taxi with Seydou. I was exhausted after a full day of interviewing, but Seydou was still hard at work, going through the questionnaires. I remember being amazed by his energy and dedication. Even more surprising, Seydou and Pape both consistently refused to accept any kind of monetary compensation from me, even though they took time off from their jobs to assist with the research. If I happened to sneak a handful of CFAs into their respective bags the last time I saw them, it was not because they ever would have expected or asked for it. At the time, I thought it was the “right” thing to do. I later realized that, for Seydou and Pape, participating in the project meant more than what they could gain from it as individuals. The fact that they already had steady work and steady income meant that, at least compared to others, they were in a position to help. As such, they were obliged. Whenever I thanked them, they always answered the same way, “*On est ensemble.*” We are together.

To me, this phrase was not immediately transparent. What did it mean to say, we are together? Now looking back on it, I think it meant a couple of things: First, they had decided to help simply because I asked them. Because I was their “sister,” I was family. In this context, saying no was unthinkable. The social community we created by being together, working, talking, visiting and sorting through problems, created attendant commitments to then sustain that community. We were together. Secondly, their participation confirmed their commitments to their larger communities in Senegal. Having witnessed what clandestine migration had done to their extended families and social networks, to their neighborhoods and to the country as a

whole, meant that they were responsible, in some way, for bringing their “brothers” out of the shadows. Not unlike the *refoulés* who had risked everything to sustain their social worlds, in some small way, both Seydou and Pape were similarly duty bound to try to ameliorate the conditions of those who populated and gave meaning to their communities.

PART I
Departure

IBRAHIMA



Ibrahima's Merchandise, Dakar 2011

I was introduced to Ibrahima in the summer of 2011, when I was in Senegal conducting pilot work. He was the first *refoulé* I'd met, and his life story would be echoed in the later stories I heard from forcibly returned migrants across Senegal. In fact, it was largely because of my serendipitous meeting with Ibrahima that I came to refocus my fieldwork research on failed migration. Though my initial intent was to study continuing patterns of clandestine migration to Europe, which flowed largely across the Sahara to departure points in North Africa, listening to Ibrahima alerted me to the fact that scores of young men just like him had gambled their savings and risked their lives to reach European shores only to be turned back with empty hands.

Ibrahima's tale was emblematic of a larger national narrative of desperation, calculated risks, traumatic passages, and memories of loss that had hardly left a single extended family in Senegal untouched.

Over the course of those first three months, I spent much of my time visiting and talking with Ibrahima. On almost a daily basis, I would make my way downtown to the *Place de l'Indépendance* to sit with him and his compatriots where they worked selling shoes, clothes, books and household items like light bulbs and extension cords on the sidewalk. Ibrahima's "section" of sidewalk occupied no more than five square feet of space: a row of Euro-American-style shirts (and, when religious holidays arrived, the occasional *boubou*) hung from a rope around a column, and stacks of Western jeans towered on empty fruit crates below. The foot traffic was steady in this busy downtown location. Not far from the popular *Marché Sandaga*, the *Place de l'Indépendance* accommodated travel agencies, car rental offices, airline ticket outlets, insurance bureaus, 1970s-era high-rise apartments, as well as several government ministries like the Chamber of Commerce and the Supreme Court.³¹ But, like many things in Dakar, *la Place* was rundown and decrepit, its grandeur faded and crumbling. Most of the buildings, as well as the central plaza, were built immediately following independence and had been left to degrade under the relentless Sahelian sun. The fountain in the middle of the *Place* looked as if it hadn't flowed with water since 1973. Not far away, the derelict Hôtel de Ville still waved the Senegalese flag outside its limestone entryway, and behind the grand façade of the now-defunct national railway station, corroded steel tracks reaching all the way to Bamako were slowly being swallowed by the oncoming sand.

The corridor where Ibrahima and his cohort of vendors peddled their wares was a pedestrian thoroughfare connecting the port of the lower plateau to the government buildings, embassies

³¹ Sandaga is an historic and popular open-air market in central Dakar, which attracts both tourists and locals.

and banks of the upper plateau. Tucked into the corner between a café and a pharmacy the *banj*, or wooden bench, where we sat was a transient eddy around which flowing populations gravitated and were sometimes momentarily caught, stopping to sit for a moment in the calm, and then being released back into the current of moving bodies. The collection of visitors was always something of a cosmopolitan mix: expat Dakarois students who studied economics in Moscow or Beijing and were home for the summer, established businessmen who worked for multinational mining companies in Kédougou, young religious men from Diourbel whose presence incited a series of reverential handshakes (*suu jot*), itinerant laborers from Casamance who slept in the doorways at night, various *hommes de parking* who washed the cars of building residents, pious beggars bound to their wheelchairs by childhood polio, matronly women in their grand *boubous* who inadvertently swept the dirty sidewalks with their excessive fabric, junior bureaucrats taking a break from the doldrums at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, village boys from Kaolack selling café Touba from portable cookers. And the bench was a good place to rest, conduct business, make a phone call, or simply watch the hustle of Dakar stream past.

Ibrahima had started out selling on the street at a young age, first as a *marchand ambulant*, or mobile merchant, and then as a stationary vendor with a parcel of sidewalk for which he paid the building manager monthly dues. Being in one place meant that he no longer had to walk the streets with heavy armloads of merchandise, trying to attract the attention of busy passersby. Now, he just had to wait for them to cross his path. If a person paused at his “shop” for even so much as a half second, Ibrahima would jump up from the bench and stride over easily and begin to “cultivate the customer.”

I was born into a family without means. There are seven children, and I am the eldest. I had to leave my studies when I was still very young because my father had grown ill and lost his job. He also had other [junior] wives and children that he needed to support, so I became the breadwinner for my mother’s house. She is

his first wife. I wanted to stay in school. I dreamed of going to university and becoming an academic like you. And I still have books. Not many, but I read them over and over. One is about the invention of trains. The other is about how to make friends and be successful.

Ibrahima explained that this second book actually helped him conduct his sidewalk business. Self-described as preternaturally shy, he was able to overcome his timidity by using the “tactics” in the book to win people’s confidence. “Now I have customers who come back to me when they’re looking for something,” he said. “Even if I don’t have it here, I can find whatever they’re looking for. And I get a small commission.”

When, on occasion, a repeat customer did stop by, Ibrahima would playfully chide him for having “forgotten” their friendship. “*Géj naa la gis,*” he would say. “It’s been a long time since I last saw you. How is the family? How is work? Ah, thank God. Look here, these are nice jeans for the weekend.” Ibrahima “cultivated” his clients by complimenting their wardrobe, asking after their children, and remembering their pant size. And although these clients were of an entirely different *salariaé* class, Ibrahima explained, when it came to *waxaalé* (bargaining) the playing field was “*égal,*” or level.

Many of his customers were refined businessmen in pressed suits and shiny loafers who strode past talking authoritatively into their smartphones while looking cool and clean as they briefly transited the hot polluted walkway, on their way from one air-conditioned office to the next. “*Sont des diplômés,*” Ibrahima said. “They have their university degrees. And their *parents* also work in these buildings.³² Some of them trained in Europe. For them, a visa is nothing [it’s easy to come by]. These people come from good families. They have connections. Here in Senegal, if you don’t have connections, you go nowhere.”

³² In French, *un parent* is not necessarily a biological mother or father, but can be a relative or family member of distant relation.

Without “connections” that would have enabled him to achieve some social and financial security, Ibrahima was left with limited options. If he wanted to “exit the abyss,” as he put it, he would have to risk everything.

I didn’t want to leave. But I made the trip [on the pirogue] with the sole aim of helping my family. It wasn’t for anything else. As my family is in a bad situation, I asked myself, ‘Why not try my luck?’ Because life in Dakar is hard. And it only gets worse. Before, I was able to send my brothers to school. I paid all their school fees with my *petit commerce* [small business]. And when they were ready to apprentice, I paid for that, too. I may not have a *métier* [skilled vocation], but all my brothers do. The youngest is a cook, another is a tailor, and Ousmane is a mechanic. They all know how to *do* something.

Ibrahima’s *petit commerce*, or small business, did not allow him to build up the necessary funds to invest in a shop of his own, or “*avancer* [get ahead]” more generally. But it did allow him to spare his siblings from the same fate. It would still be hard for them, Ibrahima explained, because work was so scarce, but it would be better than selling T-shirts on the street.

Before I left in 2006, things were really hard. Food was getting more expensive. Rents became unaffordable, and what I made doing this small business didn’t cover expenses like it used to. My younger brothers have their own lives now, and they help a little bit, but it’s my job as the eldest to take care of my family... My mother carried me inside her for a good nine months before she brought me into this world. I owe her my life.

Funding his brothers’ education and helping his family more generally was made possible, at least for a time, by the fact that he used to supplement his street vending by offering his services as an informal tour guide to European vacationers who came to Senegal on holiday.

There were a lot of Europeans who came to Dakar for vacation in the early 2000s. As I know how to speak French, I worked as a guide, taking them to places like Lac Rose, Popenguine, Sine Saloum, Toubab Diallo, Saly. *Tubaabs* [white people] like beaches. And I was young, a *rastaman*, you know? But even when we went to bars and discothèques, I never drank alcohol. I was a good guide because I kept my mind clear. Sometimes, the chauffeurs would see *tubaabs* and augment the price, but I knew how much everything should cost. And the Europeans appreciated me. Sometimes, they paid me 25,000CFA [\$50] a week! But more often it was 10,000CFA [\$20]. And it wasn’t every week, only sometimes, but I didn’t complain. Today, I’m lucky if I make 25,000CFA a

month. When you're young, you like to go around the town, see different places. But now, I'm older: when I'm done at work, I go straight home. On Sundays, I stay in my room, watching football.

Although being thirty-two-years-old did not make him “old” by Western standards, because life expectancy in Senegal is roughly sixty years for men, he was solidly in his mid-life when I met him.³³ According to Ibrahima, he should have been married already with children. Though even that seemed out of reach. “How could I support a wife on what I make?” he asked.

Worries over the future weighed heavily on Ibrahima. He explained that putting his brothers through school, which was possible for him only a few years ago, would now be unfeasible. For one thing, his lucrative work as a tourist guide effectively dried up as new destinations moved to Tambacounda in the east and Cap Skirring in the south. But the cost of living in Senegal was also on the rise. “Alhamdulillah, I was able to support my siblings during that time, but if I had to do it today, I swear it would be impossible.” He explained that in 2000, at the time of the political *alternance* when Abdoulaye Wade’s successful election put an end to forty years of socialist party rule, a kilo of rice cost roughly \$0.18. Seven years later, when Abdoulaye Wade was up for reelection, that price had tripled to \$0.53 per kilo. By 2012, it had doubled again to 500CFA, or \$1. The same pattern was evident in prices for other basic essentials like sugar, oil, milk and gas.³⁴ In fact, between 2000 and 2012, the going rate for butane, a popular cooking gas in the cities, rose from 1,295CFA (\$1.78) per six kilograms to 4,100CFA (almost \$8), and was often exacerbated by shortages that could last for months (Look 2010).

If earlier years had been financially easier, they also allowed Ibrahima to save the necessary funds for clandestine passage in 2006. Seeing the financial belt begin to tighten as prices continued to rise and his tourist work diminished, he took the savings he had accumulated and

³³ <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.LE00.MA.IN/countries/SN?display=graph>.

³⁴ See also, “Sénégal: Tableau comparatif des prix de 2000 à 2012,” *SeneNews Actu*, February 11, 2012 http://www.senenews.com/2012/02/11/senegal-tableau-comparatif-des-prix-de-2000-a-2012_22566.html.

invested in what seemed, at the time, like a better bet. Though the journey itself was not without significant dangers, staying in Senegal and waiting for things to get better was equally uncertain and not necessarily safer.

Ibrahima said that he was well aware beforehand of how treacherous boat passage would be.

People say that *les clandestins* don't know the risks, that's why they go on these 'adventures.' Because maybe we're stupid or something like that. But that's not true. Maybe someone coming from deep in the bush, a real *villageois*, who's never seen the ocean, maybe for him it's like a fantasy. He has no idea. But I'm telling you, in my boat? We all knew it would be hard. We all knew we might die.

While underscoring the potentially mortal consequences of passage, Ibrahima was also careful to point out that though clandestine migration may have been risky, the final outcome was not in his, or anyone's, hands. According to him, having a real sense of the possibility of death did not make undertaking the journey a suicide.

I read the newspapers, and I heard the journalists talking on the radio. The European ministers, too, they were all saying the same thing. They said that *clandestins* were either stupid or crazy. They said we were 'kamikaze.' But a kamikaze *knows* he will die. It's what he *wants*. It is assured. And in fact, if he doesn't die, he's done something wrong. He has failed. That's suicide, and the Qur'an strictly forbids it. But we did not know what would happen. That was up to God. Only God can decide if you will live or die in the boat. But you have to try to improve your family's condition, no matter what. You cannot sit and wait. You have to *do* something, even if you don't succeed. Clandestine migration is a risk, but then so is life.

Ibrahima did not "want" to die; therefore, his attempt to reach the Canary Islands via pirogue was not "suicidal," as some had suggested. Rather, he was putting his life, on the most fundamental level, in the hands of providence to see what might unfold. To stay in Senegal, to "sit and wait" was not necessarily safer because, as he said, life itself was getting riskier.

As Ibrahima described it, his decision to leave was also prompted by the very real danger of not being able to support his family in the years to come. He had accumulated a small savings of 450,000CFA [\$900] thanks to his sidewalk commerce and tour guide activities, but this amount

was insufficient to structurally and definitively ameliorate his family's condition. As expenses continued to rise and work became more tenuous, Ibrahima could envision his savings slowly diminish over the coming months. "It's already hard enough to watch your family suffer. When your mother is sick, and you cannot help her, what do you do?" He described the house that his



*Bokk Gis Gis and Goat, 2012*³⁵

father rented in Thiaroye, which was surrounded by standing water all year long. Like many Dakar suburbs, Thiaroye had persistent flooding issues that were directly related to changing rainfall patterns, poor urban planning and a general lack of basic infrastructure (Maheu 2012). As a consequence, living *sous les eaux*, or underwater, was a common condition for many. Standing water was dangerous on multiple levels: it acted as a vector for disease pathogens, such as cholera and polio; it encouraged mosquito reproduction and thus led to higher rates of malaria;

³⁵ *Bokk Gis Gis* is the name of a political coalition in Senegal. The Wolof translates roughly as "Sharing the Same Vision/Point of View."

and, when decomposing organic material was present, the methane gas produced by these tepid pools could pose serious health risks.

The neighborhood is very dirty. When someone gets sick, when my mother gets sick, you take her to the hospital or the pharmacy, and they give you medicine. She takes the little pills and she feels better, but she keeps getting sick because of where she lives. And my father, too. And all the children. Every rainy season, someone gets malaria. It's not a good place. Too many mosquitoes and too much filth. This last cannot last. They need a better home in a clean neighborhood. That's why I left. Because I had the small money to pay for the malaria pills, but not enough for a better house. That's why I left. Because I had to. *C'était ma seule chance* [It was my only chance].

For Ibrahima, witnessing the suffering of his family was “hard” to endure; not doing anything to alleviate it was unthinkable.

Over the course of several weeks and many afternoons spent on the wooden bench, watching people pass by, Ibrahima revealed the details of his journey. Not surprisingly, the bench where the world of Dakar seemed to congregate at one moment or another was the very spot where Ibrahima had learned about a boat leaving. The *passeur*, or handler, who was an acquaintance, stopped by *la Place* one day to chat with him. “He told me he was recruiting for a boat. I told him, ‘Let me think about it.’”

After that, I went to see my colleague (we both do the same business) and we agreed we should make the voyage together. It's best not to travel alone. The handler had left me his contact information, and so we called him to discuss the price until we all agreed on 400,000CFA [\$800] each. The next day, my friend and I got the money together and, around 1PM, we joined the captain of the boat in Mbour along the *petite côte*, more precisely in a village called Nguékhokh. Once we arrived, we were face-to-face in long negotiations. He confirmed that he was *Lébou*, a fisherman, and he knew the ocean very well. He was habituated to the sea. The pirogue, according to him, was ready to depart. We just needed to wait for the passengers to show up. Even before meeting him, I'd already prepared my bags because I had such a strong presentiment that I would leave this country. I had this conviction only for the purposes of helping my family.

Like many of the stories I would come to hear, Ibrahima's experience of passage was harrowing. He described sickness and death, burying bodies at sea, hallucinations and madness,

waves that were more than four meters high, and nights spent among the phantom swells under a moonless sky.

You couldn't see in front of you, it was so dark. But the waves kept coming. Over and over, we went up and down, climbing up one side and then falling down the other. And you never knew if one might crash over you and take you to the bottom of the ocean. At any moment, it could be the end. At any moment, you could die.

On the third day, the storm ended and we knew we had passed Mauritania, which meant that we were halfway to the Canary Islands. But the captain said the fuel was finished. We had used it all fighting the waves in the storm. We tried everything to restart the motor, but nothing worked. We tried using the paddles we had on board, but we could neither advance nor retreat because the current was so strong. The captain said we needed to find a way to get close to land. Everyone was obliged to paddle one after another, no exceptions...

Eventually, their boat ground ashore in the Southern Provinces of the Western Sahara, a territory that was officially administered by the Moroccan state. The police were waiting for them.³⁶

Ibrahima and the 130 other passengers were taken to a detention center, where they were strip searched for money or drugs, and then detained for several days awaiting transport to the Mauritanian border.³⁷

Luckily for Ibrahima, he had hidden some emergency money “just in case” inside his jeans before leaving Dakar. “I ripped the stitching at the belt loop and hid 25,000CFA there, and then sewed it back up,” he said. “The police didn't find it. But other *clandestins* only hid their money in their pockets, and when the police found it, they confiscated all of it.”

They repatriated us in convoys of thirty people each. My colleague and I were among the first group to go. They loaded us into a military truck and drove us to the border where they left us on the road with no water and no directions. There was a customs house, but no one inside. Some people talked about trying to walk to Nouadhibou, which was not far, to make another attempt. But I told my friend, as this voyage was wasted, we lost our money, and the damage had already been done, the best thing for us was to go home with what we had left...

³⁶ At that time local authorities were often alerted to the presence of a clandestine vessels offshore, most likely by the Spanish Guardia Civil whose remote sensing technology had become highly sophisticated. See Chapter 5.

³⁷ See Chapter 6.

Arriving at the house as if nothing had happened, my family asked me where had I been? I told them I was in Mbour with French tourists, as I was in the habit of doing this work. And they believed me. That night, I had too many troubling thoughts in my head. I was perturbed by nightmares. But the following day, I pulled myself together and went back to work. For a long time afterward, I had these black holes, lost memories, whole days I couldn't recall.

The last time I saw Ibrahima in 2011, it was on a Sunday. Over the course of many afternoons spent sitting with him and his cohort of sidewalk merchants at *la Place*, I had gotten to know something of him and something of the contemporary lives of *refoulés* in Senegal. Though I would be back the following summer for yearlong fieldwork, neither of us knew this at the time. When we met, our greeting was somber. Because it was Sunday, his one day off, we decided that we would walk to a nearby beach along the *corniche* (coastal road) where we could sit. It was the end of Ramadan, and everyone was tired and ready for Korité, the festival which marks the breaking of the fast.

As we approached the shore, the sky melted into the horizon, bleached by the afternoon sun, barely distinguishable from the brilliant water. I had become accustomed to the whiteness of the Sahelian sky at midday. It blazed in uniform and ubiquitous radiance, penetrating spaces from every angle. It chased people indoors. It was, in a way, too bright, blinding even, like a hostile canopy from which there was no escape. Ibrahima and I retreated to the shade of a defunct refrigerator that stood on a cement platform just up from shore. Behind us, the *corniche* was quiet, as only a few taxis carried passengers to and from downtown. To the north, the fish market at Soumbédioune lay almost vacant.

Several young boys on the beach were wrestling in pairs, imitating their favorite legends of *la lutte*, or *laamb* in Wolof. *La lutte*, or Senegalese wrestling, dates back to the fifteenth century

when it was performed as part of warrior training, funerary ceremonies, or harvest festivals at the end of the growing season. Today it is a sport of the poor; it requires nothing more than a sand pit and broad shoulders. And though it has a long history, its relatively recent popularity marks it as something of a modern interpretation of physical strength and spiritual virtue in Senegal. But it has also come to symbolize newfound strategies for commercial marketing and self-promotion. Though *la lutte* has traditionally been a sport based on caste and religious descent, today some of the most famous Senegalese *lutteurs* come from underprivileged working class backgrounds.³⁸ Perhaps there is no more exemplary figure than Tyson (aka Mohammed Ndao) who rose up from poverty to nationwide stardom as the *roi des arènes* (king of the arenas). *Lutteurs* like Tyson serve as prime examples of what one can accomplish with nothing.

Famous *lutteurs* garner national attention and secure lucrative contracts with private sponsors who pay substantial sums to have these mega-men endorse their products. It is hard to find a street or a *rond point* in Dakar that does not have the face of Tyson, Balla 2 or Yékeni plastered on a billboard, endorsing everything from cell phones to margarine to fruit juice.³⁹ Today, *lutte* matches attract large crowds and have come to symbolize regional, and even neighborhood, pride in Senegal. It is no inconsequential matter that Balla 2 grew up in the poor suburb of Guédiawaye. It was there that he struggled first as an unremarkable student, then as a car mechanic before becoming a *lion de la lutte*, which, in 2012, paid him \$300,000 for a single match.

Watching the young boys, I asked Ibrahima what he thought of the sport. “*La lutte* is not supposed to be easy,” he said. “It takes nerve. You are out there alone with your opponent and all

³⁸ See Chapter 2.

³⁹ These are all nationally popular *lutteurs* in Senegal. In 2012, Balla 2’s publicity contract with Tampico juice earned him a record 15 million CFA (\$30,000).

eyes are on you. These boys like to *lutter* because they hope to be Balla 2 or Tyson one day. Only God knows who will succeed. But everyone must struggle.”

Ibrahima’s phrase reflects a manifold conception of human action in Senegal. On the one hand, God is the prime mover and arbiter of all human endeavors. Every end, it seems, is but a completion of divine resolve, so much so that any articulation of intent is punctuated by the phrase *insha’Allah* (God willing).⁴⁰ Taken at face value, this suggests that humans are not in the business of directing their own lives and must relinquish outcomes to the higher authority. Ibrahima explained that *tawhid*, which is a concept central to Islamic doctrine, asserts the transcendental oneness of God, which thus sustains and is at the root of everything. As such humans are *subjects* of divine will. Social hierarchies are seen as human inventions that have little bearing on the world God directs. Therefore, there is little point in forcing one’s position; rather, it is better to wait for God’s dispensation with patience.

On the other hand, struggle is requisite to success, whether spiritual, economic, or social. “Struggle is the key that opens the door,” Ibrahima said. Actively seeking one’s destiny was something of a necessity. One could not wait for it, Ibrahima explained, because it was “not a gift.” Sitting on the beach that day, he suggested that without undertaking the struggle, destiny was foreclosed; nothing of worth could be gained; the door remained locked. Even the Prophet Mohammed had to make *jihad*, he said.⁴¹ In fact, it was in this register of spiritual striving that Ibrahima articulated not only his intention to migrate but his experiences of transit. Like many clandestine migrants, Ibrahima told no one of his imminent departure, only an old roommate who was now in Holland. “My friend told me not to take the chance. He did everything to discourage

⁴⁰ So “I will see you tomorrow,” becomes “I will see you tomorrow, *insha’Allah*.”

⁴¹ According to Muhammad Asad, *jihad* “denotes ‘striving in the cause of God’ in the widest sense... [I]t applies not merely to physical warfare (*qitāl*) but to any righteous struggle in the moral sense as well” (Asad 2003, 141 fn. 122). See also Robinson (2013).

me. But I'd already made up my mind. I told him, 'If I die during the voyage, know that it's a *jihad* I'm undertaking.'"

II. MAKING THE DECISION



Soumbédioune_1, Dakar, 2013

“If you wait for the state, you die.”

(Maodo)

Introduction

Between 2005 and 2008, tens of thousands of clandestine boat migrants from West Africa landed on the shores of the Canary Islands. After having spent as many as ten days at sea crowded in wooden fishing pirogues with upwards of 100 other passengers, many of these travellers suffered from dysentery, dehydration, malnutrition, and severe psychological trauma when they finally arrived at the ports in Tenerife and Las Palmas. Less fortunate migrants never made it, as many boats routinely succumbed to Atlantic storms, ran out of fuel, or got irretrievably lost at sea. Though various West African nationalities were represented in the boats, the vast majority of these migrants were young men from Senegal. And although 2006 represented a highpoint for boat arrivals in Spain, when upwards of 40,000 migrants arrived, it was not the first year, nor would it be the last, that Senegalese migrants would take to the ocean.⁴²

This chapter begins with the question *why?* Why did so many young Senegalese men attempt to reach the Canary Islands in fishing pirogues in the mid-2000s? Often, population movements of this scale are responses to disaster: fires or floods, earthquakes or drought, violence or persecution. But, apart from its home in a semi-arid stretch of the Sahel where agriculture can be a fickle enterprise, Senegal's climate has enjoyed relatively favorable conditions since the 1980s. And, though situated in a region marked by periodic violence, Senegal is something of a bastion of peace and stability. In fact, it is one of the few African countries never to have experienced a coup. If these young men were not fleeing war, famine, or political unrest, then why were they risking their lives in this way?

At the time, media reporters and policy analysts blamed overwhelming poverty as the trigger. They argued that these young men would not be undertaking such dangerous journeys if they were not propelled to do so by entrenched, inescapable deprivation. And such an interpretation

⁴² See Chapter 1 for a discussion of the variability of arrival estimates.

fit well both with the prevailing image of Africa as a place of economic despondency and with the dominant theories of migration that located causal factors in economic indicators. Since the late nineteenth century, when E.G. Ravenstein famously theorized labor migration as an individualized and rational response to economic conditions, migration theorists have been pursuing “push-pull” models to explain why people leave their homes (Ravenstein 1885, 1889).⁴³

More recently, classical push-pull migration models of the mid-twentieth century explain such mobilizations as the consequence of individual actors making rational cost-benefit calculations when deciding whether or not to leave (Lee 1966; Portes and Böröcz 1989). Though similar in theoretical disposition, neoclassical macro-economists argue that labor migration is also undertaken because it improves economic development in sending countries (Harris and Todaro 1970; Lewis 1954; Ranis and Fei 1961). And for micro-economic theorists, behavioral models explain migrant decision-making as a function of weighing present costs against future returns (Sjaastad 1962; Todaro 1969).

Despite the dominance of cost-benefit calculations in much of the migration theory, there have been dissenting voices. Taking issue with the rational economic approach, historical-structuralists have insisted that rather than being “pulled” by opportunities to maximize individual outcomes, migrants have instead been “pushed” by unequal job markets and core-periphery dynamics (Castles and Kosak 1972; Fassman and Münz 1992; Ghosh 1992; Meillassoux 1981; Piore 1979). When the New Economics of Labor Migration (NELM) models came along, scholars began attending to the social qualities of migration by defining it as a household strategy (De Haas 2010; Stark 1984; Stark and Bloom 1985).⁴⁴ Other, more systems-

⁴³ In his seminal essay, titled “The Laws of Migration,” Ravenstein concluded, “[W]hen we inquire into the motives which have led these migrants to leave their homes... [in] most instances, it will be found that they did so in search of work of a more remunerative or attractive kind than that afforded by the places of their birth” (1885: 181).

⁴⁴ For a critical overview of NELM, see Abreu (2010).

oriented approaches, attempted to reconcile the social and the economic, the individual and the family, the global and the local by arguing that “places [were] linked by flows and counter flows of people, goods, services, and information” (Schoorl et al. 2000: 6; see also Bilborrow and Zlotnik 1995; Fawcett 1989; Moulrier Boutang and Papademetriou 1994; Zlotnik 1992). And yet, even as they argued against neo-classical models that privileged rational choice, world systems theorists still saw the driver of migration as economic, even if it was *unequal* economics.

Historically, the vast majority of migration models have chiefly been designed to explain legal or “regular” mobility (Poeze 2013: 50). This is partly a result of “irregularity” itself being a relatively recent political construction (De Genova 2002). In the French context, worker recruitment programs, which actively courted Senegalese laborers throughout the post-war period, were not disabled until the mid-1970s (Guiraudon 2001). And prior to 1986 when France began requiring entry visas for Senegalese nationals (Vickstrom 2014: 1067), “irregular” Senegalese migration was practically and conceptually “non-existent” (Beauchemin et al 2014: 23). More recently, as immigration policies in developed countries have become increasingly restricted and irregular migration has become a more pressing concern, scholars have explored migration as a mode of transfer, exchange, and accumulation of social capital within migrant networks, though most of these scholars have focused on migration in the US-Mexico context (Massey et al. 1987; Massey 1988; Massey and Capoferro 2004; Singer and Massey 1998; Spener 2009).⁴⁵

That said, economic theory continues to dominate the conversation when crafting migration management policies in receiving or host countries. In an effort to understand, and thus better control, the surge in trans-Atlantic migration out of West Africa in the mid- to late 2000s, policy

⁴⁵ For an examination of how migration policies exert a profound effect on bilateral migration rates, see Bertoli and Moraga (2013).

makers at the level of the EU and the UN routinely argued that poverty was at the heart of the exodus (Commission of the European Communities 2006: 4; UNODC 2006: 19). The French government also articulated a link between poverty and migration first in its *Partnership Framework Document*, an economic development plan for Senegal whose purpose was to mitigate irregular migration flows (AFD 2006). Later, its bilateral accords with Senegal more aggressively tied migration management to development aid (Accord France—Senegal 2006: Article 6). Media reports reinforced this assessment by circulating a host of dramatic images and sensational rhetoric, which represented West African men fleeing in “waves,” attempting clandestine passage in rickety boats in order to escape a life of consummate deprivation.⁴⁶ As mentioned, while this narrative reified the idea of Africa as economically destitute, at its most obvious, it also begged the question of how so many young Senegalese men were able to afford the average 500,000CFA (roughly \$1,000USD) for passage in the context of such assumed penury. Strikingly, these journeys were frequently repeated after an initial failure. Of the 170 *refoulés*, or forcibly returned migrants, I interviewed in Senegal, roughly one-third attempted passage more than once.

How do we explain such decisions? Why did young men spend so much money on journeys whose outcome was anything but assured? If poverty was so entrenched, why didn't they save their money, rather than spending it on high-risk ventures like clandestine migration? How do we understand migration if poverty is not the main driver? And what does such unexpected decision-making tell us about social relationships in Senegal?

Privileging, and therefore normalizing, poverty as the root cause of clandestine migration restricts the field of analysis. For one thing, the young *refoulés* I met were not the poorest of the

⁴⁶ Stephanie Maher, “Interrogating the Wave: Media Representations of African Migrant Youth,” *Youth Circulations*, <http://www.youthcirculations.com/blog/> (February 10, 2015). In point of fact, the majority of migrants entered Europe by plane and not by boat (Vickstrom 2014).

poor. Indeed, as Chapter 3 reveals, savings were depleted and resources were liquidated in order to pay the pirogue fare, which suggests that these working class young men had access to resources, something that cannot be said of less fortunate Senegalese youth. Not only does this disrupt the notion of boat migrants as impoverished at the time of departure, it also suggests that clandestine migrants made decisions based on a variety of factors other than need.

While resource scarcity is a common challenge for many living in Senegal, using absolute indicators, such as average earnings per day, to explain irregular migration is unrevealing for a number of reasons. First, in treating the economy as a discrete motivator, such representations do not, in the words of Penda Mbow, appreciate how “the economic weaves together social relations” (2008: 17). In the words of Ibrahima, “Money buys more than rice.” It creates and sustains social worlds of reciprocity, exchange, and obligation. In this way, the migrant “sows and guarantees the social and economic stability of his relatives” by seeking work elsewhere (Uberti 2014: 89). Further, when we say “poverty,” we often implicitly mean the lack of material resources that would presumably provide for biological sustenance, such as satiating bodily hunger, providing shelter, and avoiding disease. But scarcity is experienced beyond the biological level of the body; it can also be an unfulfilled “hunger for a better life” (Citrin 2012: 30).

This chapter argues that poverty-centric explanations do not adequately capture the confluence of political, social, and spiritual factors involved in decision-making practices with respect to clandestine migration out of Senegal in the mid-2000s. Importantly, in their effort to locate causal relationships in economic conditions, such explanations do not account for how those conditions are dialectically engaged in the production of subjectivities. In other words, people are not always and forever victims of their conditions; rather, they can and do reformulate

their ideas of what might be possible, what they might be capable of, based on those conditions. Drawing on Gilles Deleuze's theories of "becoming," João Biehl and Peter Locke argue that a subject is not merely discursively constituted in and by a field of power relations; rather, there is also room for the "potentials of desire... [which] can break open alternative pathways" (Biehl and Locke 2010: 318). For Ibrahima, and many others, migration was not a response to desperate poverty, but was linked to spiritual aspirations and the compelling desire to care for kin and community. Both in the context of clandestine departure and forced return, *refoulés* consistently described their struggles as an integral part of becoming a "good" Muslim. Thus, the factors inspiring young men to depart were not merely tied to economic hardship, but were in fact linked to social and spiritual striving.

Deciding to leave was also framed as a critique of the postcolonial state in Senegal. Faced with increasingly restricted opportunities for formal employment and escalating costs for basic foodstuffs, the young men I met articulated their decision to depart as a result of corruption in the halls of the government. They openly accused the state of pursuing economic policies that benefited the elite few and left youth to waste away socially and spiritually. For them, the liberalization policies of the 1980s only exacerbated rent-seeking logics at play within ministerial offices. And government agencies tasked with assisting youth were suspected, often justifiably so, of corruption and embezzlement. As Maodo's epigraph suggests, waiting for the state to improve conditions for its citizens was futile. In fact, whereas clandestine migrants had been portrayed as "kamikazes" in media and policy circles, the *refoulés* in this chapter argue that the real danger was not in leaving Senegal but in *staying*.

Importantly, *refoulés* described the ennui that resulted from the many hours they spent sitting around the *attaya* kettle watching the *nouveau riche* cruise past in their shiny SUVs, or greeting

neighborhood migrants who returned home with all the trappings of success.⁴⁷ The young men I met calculated their decisions to migrate against the backdrop of waiting for work to materialize, feeling the pressures to support family members, and aspiring to spiritual freedom.

This chapter is divided into four sections: Kinship, Political Economy, Labor, and Mobility. I first explore kinship obligations as a way to disrupt the dominant representations of migrants as atomized economic actors. While recognizing that economic success is elusive for most, the young men in this chapter reveal how wealth is not necessarily tied to personal enrichment but to spiritual modes of supporting kin in need. I then briefly trace the development of Senegal's postcolonial economic arrangements, which has inspired many youth today to characterize the state as "self-interested" and "negligent" when it comes to improving access to a dignified living conditions. The paucity of employment has often been cited as the single most important structural feature in the rise of clandestine migration. However, as my interlocutors suggest, the desire to work is not merely economic, but spiritual as well. I therefore look at the ways in which young migrants conceive of achieving *baraka* (or blessings) through labor. I then turn to mobility to analyze gendered modes of social reproduction, the spiritual dimensions inherent in mobility, and the religious obligation to travel that many young men cited as primary inspirations to move.

In order to understand how *refoulés* negotiate their futures in Senegal today, it is important to go back to the beginning, to the moments of decision-making that led to departure. It is in these moments that we can begin to appreciate who these young men were and why they decided to leave. It is also in these moments that we begin to see how youth in Senegal resist state power. In

⁴⁷ A strong, sweet green tea brewed on propane tanks just about everywhere throughout the city, *attaya* is often an index of laziness and inefficiency. Among urban youth in Dakar, who perform the making of *attaya* with an aesthetic and athletic style, this beverage has become a novel way to generate value in the context of rampant underemployment, fiscal austerity and political anomie. See Ralph (2008).

Chapter 1, I broadly outlined some features of Senegal's economic history that are most often blamed for irregular migration. Here, I pick up that history again by exploring the factors that influenced young men's decisions to migrate.

Kinship

For the majority of young men with whom I spoke, supporting their mothers' wellbeing was the single most important motivator for them to attempt clandestine passage. This obligation is even more poignant for first-born sons. As I sat with Ibrahima at *La Place* one day, he pointed to the clothes stacked on the empty fruit crates on the ground. "*Je me suis sacrifié,*" he said. I sacrificed myself.

When my father got sick, I had to support my mom and little brothers and sisters. *Man maay taaw* [I am the eldest], so it's my duty to help my family. All my younger siblings had the chance to go to school because I paid their fees and bought their books. I am disappointed I couldn't continue my studies, but it was God's will.

For this sacrifice, Ibrahima earned his mother's blessing, a source of great spiritual compensation. Lacking concrete developments that might suggest economic success in this life, Ibrahima was able to take consolation in his filial duty, which assured his success in the next.

Like many of my participants, Ibrahima was fond of telling me that the Prophet Muhammad urged those seeking entrance to heaven to do right by their mothers in this world. This command comes from a famous hadith, which tells the story of a man who wants to join a military expedition, but is cautioned instead by the Prophet to stay with his mother because "Paradise is beneath her feet."⁴⁸ For Ibrahima, easing the financial burdens of his family, and particularly his mother, was a personal and religious obligation. To meet this obligation, he liquidated his

⁴⁸ See Sunan An-Nasâ'i, Volume 4, Chapter 6, n°. 3106. Ironically, this hadith instructs adherents *not* to leave, even though the commentary suggests: "'Paradise is beneath her feet': Meaning by serving her, you will gain Paradise" (An-Nasâ'i 2007: 27).

savings and spent \$800 for passage on a pirogue that would become marooned off the coast of Morocco. From there, he would make his way back to Senegal by land, telling his mother he was “in Mbour with tourists” when he returned. Along with roughly one-third of my participants, he never told her of his attempt to migrate because, he said, he didn’t want her to “have those visions in her head.”

Most youth in Senegal have a keen sense of how precarious their mothers’ lives are. Often residing in crowded households, their mothers must compete with other co-wives for shrinking financial support from their husbands. It is common knowledge across classes that the daily allocations given to women by their husbands are typically insufficient for household provisions. Many poor women must seek petty trade outside of their domestic duties, such as selling groundnuts or cooked *beignets* (sweet fritters) on the side of the street, or small agricultural products in the market to be able to provide enough food for their children. Young men will say that such work is exhausting, minimally compensated, and degrading.⁴⁹

In addition, mothers are also seen as having put their physical wellbeing at risk to bring their children into the world. Pregnancy and childbirth are widely perceived as dangerous conditions for women. Despite high fertility rates, childbirth is still a relatively hazardous undertaking for most women in Senegal, particularly in rural and periurban locations. As of 2004, there were only eight health centers offering caesarean section procedures in all of Senegal (PNDS 2004: 20). According to the World Health Organization, one in 21 women in Senegal will be at risk during their lifetime of dying as a result of pregnancy and childbirth (WHO 2005: 26). While bearing children is risky for women across the globe, in sub-Saharan Africa, pregnancy and childbirth are made all the more dangerous due to lack of access to adequate health care,

⁴⁹ Though women also see these modes of commercial activity as avenues for autonomy and emancipation from dependence on their husbands. See Perry (2005).

malnutrition, co-morbid factors like malaria and helminthes, and post-partum hemorrhaging, which accounts for nearly 440 maternal deaths in sub-Saharan Africa each day (Mpemba et al. 2013: 774).

Like many young men in Senegal, Ibrahima was aware of the risks associated with pregnancy and childbirth, and thus often reflected, “My mother carried me inside her for a good nine months before she brought me into this world. I owe her my life.” Witnessing and not being able to fundamentally improve his mother’s living conditions, who lived in a house that effectively made her sick, was extraordinarily painful for Ibrahima. As he recounted in his portrait, her periodic bouts of malaria were directly linked to the neighborhood where she lived.

When I returned to Senegal in 2012, Ibrahima and I visited his family in Thiaroye, a suburb of Dakar, for Korité, or *Eid al-Fitr*, which marks the end of Ramadan. After exiting the taxi on the main road, we walked down the sandy path to his family’s door. Outside, across the path, a vacant field was cluttered with garbage and standing pools of fetid water. Inside the compound, his mother, who was a small and gracious woman, spoke softly and busied herself with the last of the meal preparations before it was time to go to mosque for prayer. Several hours later, after eating an abundant feast of mutton, fried potatoes, macédoine with boiled eggs, cucumber and green mango salad, and couscous, we sat on the foam beds in one of the bedrooms chatting unhurriedly while Ibrahima’s brother made *attaya*.

Despite all the signs of a successful visit, including the welcomed dispensations of sugar, rice, eggs and canned soda that I had purchased as gifts for the house, Ibrahima was visibly upset in the taxi ride back to Dakar that evening. He described his father as a “good man” but one who was more concerned with acquiring wives than taking care of them.

You see how my mother lives. That place is not comfortable. The beds are worn, and there’s only *one* light bulb! And the neighborhood itself is horrible with so

many mosquitoes. It's not right. But he has three other wives! They all live like this renting places that do not belong to them, struggling to feed the children. Instead of marrying so many women, he should have bought land. At least then they could live somewhere that was their own.

Ibrahima echoed many other young men I met with respect to changing attitudes toward polygyny among youth in Senegal. "The Qur'an says you can marry up to four women," Ibrahima explained. "But *only* if you can support them. How does my father support them with his ailing health?" Seen as a practice that made it all the more difficult for mothers to live in a dignified way, polygyny, and by extension elder males' quest for status, was increasingly characterized as an antiquated mode of social reproduction.

As *refoulés* frequently explained to me, supporting mothers, and other family members more generally, was critical to fulfilling religious obligations. "Every Muslim must care for his family," Ibrahima explained. "Because that is what the Prophet did." For Ibrahima, modeling himself after the Prophet was crucial to his identity as a Muslim. Importantly, this identity was not discrete; it did not exist apart from other aspects of his life. Rather, his approach to everything—work, family, love, diet, leisure and comportment—was fundamentally guided by his faith. He abstained from raising his voice, for example, because the Prophet was known to be soft-spoken. "God does not bless those who yell," Ibrahima said.⁵⁰ Though it may seem trivial, Ibrahima's attitude with respect to yelling revealed the extent to which his faith guided his actions. If yelling, a bothersome but petty social behavior, was so repudiated, we might come to see why caring for the people who gave his social world moral and emotional meaning was so important for Ibrahima.

⁵⁰ In fact, the 49th Surah explicitly admonishes those who speak too loudly. "Do not raise your voices above the voice of the Prophet... Behold, they who lower their voices in the presence of God's Apostle—it is they whose hearts God has tested [and opened] to consciousness of Himself; [and] theirs shall be forgiveness and a reward supreme" (Qur'an 49: 1-3).

If living up to the Prophetic example seemed out of reach in Senegal, the visibility of new wealth generated by remittances reaffirmed the idea that the only way to support families was to leave. Even if a young man would never contemplate boat migration to Europe, he would nevertheless be keenly aware of the importance of remittances to Senegalese families. In 2009, the International Organization for Migration reported that close to 70% of all Senegalese households had at least one migrant abroad (Some 2009: 130). That most of those migrants send money home is a fact that should not be underestimated. As Papa Demba Fall points out, “For the vast majority of migrants, there is no greater endeavor than to nourish/sustain/support the members of one’s extended family or to contribute to the development of one’s natal village” (2010: 32). In 1997, the IMF estimated that formal transfers to Senegal (\$92.5 million) accounted for 10% of GDP. More recently, that number has hovered between \$1.2 and 1.6 billion annually (ANSD 2013: 57; Watkins and Quattri 2014: 11; UNCTAD 2011: 18 World Bank 2011).⁵¹ Having said that, the World Bank, IMF, and the African Development Bank all estimate that *informal* transfers could reasonably be expected to exceed the formal by a significant but ultimately immeasurable margin. The African Development Bank reported that total remittances in 2005, which included official data collected by the BCEAO (Central Bank of West African States) as well as estimates of informal transfers, accounted for close to 20% of GDP (ADB 2008: 11), with close to half of total remittances coming by way of informal transfers (ANSD 2013: 58). Indeed, some studies show that remittances reached \$20 million annually from New York City alone (Babou 2000).

Such transfers are important for development because they have the merit of reaching “un bon port,” or the right hands, which cannot always be said of official development funds (Tall

⁵¹ For country-specific data, see the World Bank’s Migration and Remittances Fact Book 2011, <http://go.worldbank.org/092X1CHHD0>.

2002: 563).⁵² Importantly, despite economists' fears that the global recession would negatively affect financial transfers, remittances continued to grow during the 2008 crisis. As the wife of one *refoulé* told me, "One person in Europe can support 20 or 30 people here. That's why, if you see a family that eats every day, you know they have someone abroad."⁵³

In the wake of structural adjustment, the state could no longer afford to invest in social development. And yet, people continued to require hospital care and transportation services and schools. As Flore Gubert points out in a 2005 OECD report, "Migrant associations in host countries... help to improve the living standards of those who stay behind by playing an active role in setting up and financing development projects in the villages back home... [T]here are reported to be 1,000 [such associations] in France, one-third of them from countries in the Senegal River Valley" (Gubert 2005: 52). Much of the social infrastructure was, and continues to be, maintained and improved by economic migrants, who send substantial remittances home, a fact not lost on *refoulé* and aspiring migrants in Senegal today. As Mamadou Diouf argues, "The financial disengagement of the state from local institutions [in the 1980s] placed the management of public space in the hands of citizens" (2002: 162). As such, the markers of social success in Senegal are increasingly seen as linked to emigration to developed countries (Mbow 2008: 15). Whereas the adulation of the government functionary preoccupied the social imaginary during the post-independence moment, now, it is the emigrant who commands respect.

Structural adjustment, currency devaluation in 1994, and shrinking state budgets have contributed to a pauperization of the middle class and a disruption of the local elite. By contrast, *émigrés* have been able to consolidate and distribute their wealth in currencies more stable than

⁵² While Senegal receives substantial Official Direct Assistance (ODA) through foreign channels, the UN reported that official remittances exceeded both ODA and FDI (foreign direct investment) inflows by 50% between 2008 and 2009 (UNCTAD 2011: 18).

⁵³ In Dakar, as well as other urban centers, there is a 95% income gap between households with remittances and those without (Some 2009: 97, 138).

local exchanges. In fact, after devaluation, US and European currencies could buy *twice* as much in Senegal. As Serigne Mansour Tall argues, “Through the allocation of and investment in property, the Senegalese emigrant was able to regain his national identity, as well as his social and familial legitimacy... The migrant’s house is a symbol of his migratory success” (2002: 567). *Refoulés*, and youth in general are savvy readers of their built environment. As Ibrahima put it, “Here, beautiful houses come to Senegal *through* Europe.” In this way, “Europe... represents a sort of ‘life preserver’ that [migrants] attempted to cling to when life in Senegal became one without a horizon” (Pian 2010b: 93). By sending money home, which often paid for the construction of new houses, successful migrants were able to make their mark on the Senegalese landscape, and thus reclaim their status as citizens and transcend the class into which many of them were born.

The stratification of class in Senegal is nowhere more apparent than in the capital city where, from one neighborhood to the next, luxury villas stand in stark contrast to overcrowded compounds, and paved streets mock the rutted alleys. The disparities can be startling: it is not uncommon to see a flutter of shiny CFA coins come tumbling out of a limited-edition tinted-window Hummer and fall into a beggar’s palm or collection jar at a traffic light. Globetrotting merchants mingle with high-ranking bank officials over cocktails at the Radisson Blu, one of the new five-star luxury hotels hugging the rocky cliffs above the Atlantic, where rooms start at \$250 and go up to over \$1,000 per night, while across the *corniche* young men sell phone cards from morning till night for pennies of profit. As the regional hub for international development organizations, Dakar is populated as much by foreign NGO expats as by a burgeoning class of Senegalese *nouveau riche* who often live, directly or obliquely, by the grace of their political

connections and by virtue of the enormous amounts of capital coming into and circulating through the city.

For Ibrahima, quotidian living had become a serious “*casse-tête*” (conundrum). Daily expenses for food and transportation, to say nothing of supporting his mother and younger siblings, weighed heavily on him. When Land Rovers cruised by the bench where he sat waiting for clients at *La Place*, he began to think maybe he, too, could achieve something better. Like many, he saw the signs of sudden wealth, and heard the rumors of boat passage to Europe. From there it was only “a small step to imagine a similar fate” for himself.

But if wealth and remittances are significant in Senegal, it should not be inferred that these young men were seeking strictly *personal* wealth or capital accumulation. Rather, wealth in Senegal is “closely tied to Wolof normative ideas about honor and birth, since one with a high birth would demonstrate the qualities of honor, including generosity” (Buggenhagen 2012: 49). Importantly, to generate value, Beth Anne Buggenhagen says, “wealth must not stagnate... it must circulate” (ibid.: 89-90). It must, in other words, render visible structures of social rank by attracting dependents through exchange (ibid.: 49-51). The most salient feature of the gift economy in Senegal is not its accumulative potential, but its circulatory, transactional quality, and the extent to which it marks people within social orders. Such circulation frequently centers around the domestic unit and is at least one reason why young men in Senegal have attempted to migrate elsewhere for work. Being able to contribute openly and visibly to the family is of paramount importance because, as Jane Guyer has observed, “[M]oney ranks people on a scale corresponding to profiles of achievement and good fortune... rather than structural ascription... [T]his is not a model of ‘sharing.’ It reflects a political economy of recognition” (Guyer 2004: 147). As such, not being able to circulate one’s assets through the kin network creates problems

for those who want to be “recognized” in terms of establishing gendered authority, status, and social mobility.⁵⁴

As Ibrahima revealed in his portrait, the decision to depart was motivated as much by his desire to support his kin as it was the result of coming to understand that life in Senegal was getting harder by the year. In short order, what resources he did have would be fully exhausted. While the availability of formal work declined, and his tourists moved to new destinations, prices for basic foodstuffs like rice and cooking oil continued to rise steadily throughout the 2000s. Like many *refoulés*, Ibrahima could see that circumstances in Senegal were only getting “harder.” He reasoned that whatever scant resources he did have saved up from his *petit commerce* should be invested in an attempt to reconfigure his possibilities altogether. But he had to go while he still had the chance (Beauchemin et al. 2014: 20).

Political Economy

In the late 1990s, a fishing pirogue lost its way and got swept out to sea. When they landed a week later on Tenerife [Canary Islands], everyone was shocked. Up to that point, no one even *imagined* you could reach Europe by fishing boat. That’s when it all started. (Abdoulaye)

Though it may be surprising, the surge in boat migration from Senegal to Spain in the mid-2000s was intimately related to the most unlikely of suspects: fish. In my interview with Abdoulaye, a fisherman, boat captain, and *refoulé* from 2006, he explained that the “first boat” had traveled far from shore looking for fish because the waters off Senegal had been so depleted.⁵⁵ “They had to travel very far to find anything to catch,” he said. “That’s when they got swept up in a storm.” In Abdoulaye’s recounting of it, the realization that traditional Senegalese fishing pirogues might be a viable mode of transport to the Canary Islands was fundamentally serendipitous, accidental

⁵⁴ See Mansour’s portrait.

⁵⁵ See Abdoulaye’s portrait.

even. Though it also told a larger story that was inextricably connected to the political economy of Senegal in the late twentieth century.

Broadly speaking, Senegal's economy has been characterized by a weakness of "productive capital" (Boone 1994). What this means is that the political class does not invest in activities that actually *produce* capital, or that "create surplus value through the on-going combination of capital and wage labour, such as industry or capitalist agriculture" (Boone 1990: 426). Rather than establishing economic policies to encourage productive industries, which would foster the emergence of an indigenous industrial class and, theoretically, improve terms of trade by creating a viable export sector, the state in Senegal is primarily oriented toward collecting rents in the form of import taxes from commercial circuits. With one of the largest ports in West Africa, and with an economy that today imports three times what it exports, generating income from the trade passing through the port is seen as a political exigency (Chalfin 2010).

At the time of independence in 1960, the Senegalese state was in the lucrative position of being able to rely chiefly on France for foreign aid while maintaining trade barriers that protected Senegalese producers, many of them small-scale, from being outcompeted by cheap foreign imports. This allowed the state accomplish several inter-related goals: regulating prices on basic foodstuffs like sugar and rice kept prices low for consumers; controlling import licenses helped distribute resources to a strategic political elite; and cultivating clientelistic networks helped to quell opposition within and outside the ruling party.

But, with the economic crisis of the 1970s, energy costs soared and commodity prices for raw materials plummeted. A little more than a decade on from independence, when the rallying cries had celebrated decolonization, Senegal's national budget was suddenly caught in the middle of a global recession. In addition to loan packages from the World Bank and IMF, which

often spelled the rapid privatization of industry, conventions with European donor states also stipulated the denationalization of local markets in exchange for preferential trade agreements, and financial and technical assistance. Specifically, Article 13 of the Third ACP-EEC Convention, otherwise known as Lomé III, required the liberalization of national fisheries.⁵⁶

Under the provisions of the third Lomé Accord of 1984, West African states were obliged to open their coastal fisheries to industrial fishing trawlers from Europe. In exchange, states like Senegal were given hard currency in the form of license fees, which then trickled through the distributional networks already in place. In the beginning, it seemed like a mutually beneficial arrangement: cash-poor regimes like Senegal needed hard currency, the waters off West Africa were full of fish that consumers in London and Berlin were willing to buy, and European fishermen, who had been put out of work because of overexploiting fish stocks in the North Atlantic and Mediterranean, were eager for jobs. Additionally, the argument was that compensating developing countries for access to their fisheries would help them establish research expertise and protocols to better monitor, evaluate and manage those natural resources in sustainable ways (Lomé III, Title II, Articles 50-54: 19).

Since the signing of Lomé III, however, the monitoring and evaluation protocols have rarely, if ever, been instituted. West African nations like Senegal lack the infrastructure, such as boats, helicopters, and satellite systems that would ostensibly supervise European vessels offshore. But more importantly, there has been little incentive to regulate the catch quotas of those vessels because, according to François Bellec, the fisheries Accords in Lomé III “are commercial, rather

⁵⁶ Although “Associated” African-Caribbean-Pacific (ACP) states had been conducting partnership agreements with European countries as early as 1957, when the Treaty of Rome established the European Economic Community, it was not until 1975 that the ACP group was formally established under the Georgetown Agreement. Partnerships with European states under the rubric of the European Development Fund (EDF) were later codified with the signing of the Cotonou Agreement, or ACP-EC Partnership Agreement, in 2000, which effectively and formally bound ACP states to Europe. Interestingly, Cotonou was the first agreement since the establishment of the EDF in 1959 to include language on migration control, including repatriation (Cotonou Agreement, Part I, Chapter 2, Article 13: 26-28).

than development agreements” (Bellec 1991: 3). In other words, the Accords are chiefly designed to benefit the European fishing industry and the governments of ACP states. As a result, rampant overexploitation of fish stocks by purse seiners and high-tech trawlers, which can catch and process in one day what fifty local artisanal fishermen catch in a year, has depleted West Africa’s maritime resources to the point of collapse.⁵⁷

Over the years, foreign industrial overfishing has prompted local artisanal fishermen in Senegal to go farther and farther afield to find viable fishing grounds. This is why the “first pirogue” got lost. “They were looking for fish, but they ended up in Tenerife,” Abdoulaye said. From there, word spread and the exodus began. The story of “the first pirogue” was one I heard over and over during fieldwork in Senegal. When I returned to the US, a colleague asked me if there really was a first pirogue that got lost at sea and ended up on the Canary Islands. I don’t know, but what seems more important is that young repatriated migrants continually link the beginning of the phenomenon with international agreements that adversely affected local livelihoods, and, in the case of Lomé III, crippled local economies.

Like Abdoulaye, Moustapha was also a fisherman and *refoulé* from 2006. In a 2013 conversation we had, he argued that if Spain was allowed to come to Senegal to fish, then unemployed Senegalese fishermen should be allowed to go to Spain to work. “Do you know? It’s Africa that feeds Europe,” he said.

The fishing accords signed by Senegal and Europe: do you know how many tons Europe catches? If they sign a fishing agreement for ten thousand tons, they [European trawlers] will fish almost thirty. With their technology, it’s easy to catch everything. And what will be left [for us]? Now, you have to go at least fifteen or twenty kilometers to find any fish. Thus, we’ve sidelined. We cannot compete with them.

⁵⁷ See the documentary, *The End of the Line* (2009, directed by Rupert Murray).

Distressing though it may be, the story of Senegal's fishing industry is unremarkable. In fact, the liberalization of its maritime resources is exemplary of Senegal's approach to its national economy: that is, resources are largely seen as property of the state and not as the patrimony of citizens. Though the fisheries accords of Lomé III would strike a significant blow to the fishing industry in the decades after its signing, it was a necessary part of the fiscal gamble that helped the political class maintain control at home while cultivating good relations with foreign partners abroad. One of the unintended consequences of Lomé III was the disenfranchisement of a generation of fishermen who, like Abdoulaye and Moustapha, would come to be captains of boats that were no longer in the business of fishing, but in the transport of people.

Labor

Though the most of the *refoulés* I met were not formally educated, they had a savvy appreciation for how politics worked in Senegal.⁵⁸ The state was frequently referred to as corrupt, wasteful, and self-interested. For that reason, clandestine migration was frequently articulated as a way to escape the state altogether. "If the state ignores us," Iran, a *refoulé* from 2007, said, "then we are not obligated to recognize the state. Here in Senegal, there are no jobs. But a man must work. He must work to support his family, to have a dignified life. But the state does nothing. If any money comes in, the state eats it. So we left in the boats. Of course! Why not? When there's no choice. When you have to help your family." For Iran, a dignified life meant working to support his kin. His ability to achieve that life in 2007, however, was severely circumscribed by widespread unemployment in Senegal.

⁵⁸ The majority (67%) of participants had not progressed past the US equivalent of the sixth grade, and of those, close to 35% had not attended school at all. This is consistent with a 2000 report on international migration, which found that more than seventy percent of Senegalese migrants had not completed secondary education (Schoorl et al. 2000: 65).

Despite being championed during presidential stump speeches, job creation has not materialized in Senegal. The unemployment rate for those under age thirty is over sixty percent (Dia 2015). When Abdoulaye Wade came to power in 2000, and later won a second term in 2007, he ran on promises to employ the youth, who were largely responsible for his successful elections. Most Senegalese citizens believe that the state should prioritize youth employment above other social interventions such as access to health centers or childhood education (DSRP II 2006: 11). That youth employment is such a pressing issue is not surprising when we consider that nearly 67% of the population in Senegal is under 25 (SNDES 2012: 39).

According to the *Stratégie Nationale de Développement Economique et Social* (National Strategy for Economic and Social Development), the population “bonus” resulting from rapid demographic changes in Senegal could just as easily, without proper political action, become “*une bombe démographique,*” or a demographic bomb (SNDES 2012: 39). Senegal Police Commissioner and Director of Territorial Surveillance at the Ministry of Interior, Abou Diop, would agree. In a 2013 conversation we had on the history of clandestine migration, he said the number one destabilizing force on Senegal’s horizon was youth unemployment.

Even if we [the state] have 5,000 job offers, there are more than 200,000 applicants [annually]. Employment contracts are becoming more and more precarious. Today, you’re no longer going to work in an office for years. Now, contracts are good for three or six months, maybe a year if you’re lucky. And after that, what are you supposed to do? Look for work again... Here [in Senegal] there is no money left, there are no jobs left. This situation *will* explode. And the administration doesn’t have any solutions.⁵⁹

Shortly after Abdoulaye Wade came to office in 2000, he created various government agencies to deal with the problem of youth unemployment. I spoke with the Deputy Director of one such agency, the *Agence Nationale pour l’Emploi des Jeunes* (National Agency for Youth Employment), or ANEJ, in 2013. Affable and chatty, Mr. Babou Faye explained how domestic

⁵⁹ Personal interview, April 12, 2013.

spending on issues such as youth employment was deeply inadequate. Despite being created in 2001 by the newly-elected president as a way to help the *jeunes* (youth) of Senegal who had ostensibly brought him to power through their political support, the financial backing for ANEJ never materialized. Out of a 9 billion CFA (\$18.5 million) program portfolio, the Senegalese budget allocated only 100 million CFA (\$206,000) to the agency in 2001. “We have programs, but no budgets,” Mr. Faye said.⁶⁰ “So now, we partner with European states and international NGOs to fund our programs.” That a national agency teamed up with European interests to fix Senegalese problems was not troubling for Mr. Faye; in fact, it was “a strategic mutation” required in a climate of economic recession and government decentralization.

In other cases, when the money has shown up, it often disappears. The *Fonds National de Promotion de la Jeunesse* (National Fund for Youth Promotion), or FNPJ, was a sister organization to ANEJ. The principal objective of FNPJ, according to Mariame Ba Niang, Director of Communications, was “to finance projects of Senegalese youth aged 18 to 35 years through various forms of loans.”⁶¹ And yet, FNPJ was also reported to have “eaten” close to 11 billion CFA (\$22.6 million) since its inception in 2001 through the financing of fictive projects (Foafana and Ndiaye 2012). And despite the fact that an independent commission was set up in 2007 to investigate claims of malfeasance and found a “pernicious impunity” reigning at the FNPJ, little was done to restructure the operation (Diarra 2007).⁶²

Most of my participants would never think of going to the ANEJ or FNPJ offices, despite the fact that those programs were presumably instituted to help them find work. In a conversation I had with Ibrahima and his friend, Mansour, a struggling carpenter and *refoulé* from 2007, they

⁶⁰ Personal interview, June 5, 2013.

⁶¹ Personal interview, March 18, 2013.

⁶² See Chapter 8 for more recent developments on the fate of ANEJ and FNPJ, which were dissolved in December of 2013 in favor of a centralized authority overseeing youth projects. Replacing the previous constellation of youth agencies today is the ANPEJ (*Agence Nationale Pour la Promotion de l'Emploi des Jeunes*).

both admitted knowing of FNPJ, but neither would dare knock on their door. Why not? I asked them. “Because,” Ibrahima started, “we don’t know anyone who works there.” You can make an appointment, I suggested. They both laughed. “They would take one look at me,” Mansour said, gesturing to his tattered, wood-dusty clothes, “and say, *Boy, loo beugg, yow? Baay ma waay!* [Boy, what do you want? Get out of here!].” Both Ibrahima’s and Mansour’s access to the resources offered by the state was circumscribed by their lack of personal connections to patrons who could vouch for them in the face of bureaucratic strangers. Giorgio Blundo’s work on street-level bureaucracies in Senegal is instructive. Looking at the personalization strategies used by people when approaching the administration, Blundo says, “Before addressing the civil servant behind the counter, the user will look for any real or fictitious bonds that can be evoked” (2006: 809). Moreover, given that the “principal beneficiaries of FNPJ support are university graduates, in particular doctors, pharmacists, lawyers and performing artists” few of my participants would have been attractive protégés (Fall 2010: 42).

Having been to FNPJ myself, I could easily imagine Ibrahima and Mansour being rebuffed by the terse security guard at the gate. Only two weeks earlier, this same guard, dressed in a mock-military uniform, had kept me sitting on a plastic chair while he first fiddled with the black office phone, pushing buttons and trying to get someone on the line, and then resorted to his personal cell phone because, like many pieces of office equipment in Senegal, the phones didn’t work. My difficulties didn’t stop with gaining entrance, because then finding the actual person with whom I had an appointment resulted in me being shuffled indifferently from one dingy office to the next for over thirty minutes. “Those people are already getting paid,” Mansour added later. “Why would they want to give their money to me?” This comment reflects a

common assumption in Senegal that agency funds are at the personal disposal of those who manage them, which is not altogether wrong.⁶³

Young men like Ibrahima and Mansour were thus required to mobilize and re-shuffle ad hoc arrangements of personal connections, techniques, and charismatic “tactics” in order to acquire basic daily provisions. Importantly, however, it was not merely the acquisition of goods, but the act of laboring itself that was so critical to aspiring migrants’ subjectivities and to the logic that compelled them to leave. If the political economic factors motivating young men to migrate centered, however improbably, on fish, labor factors were inextricably bound up with *la lutte*. In French, to *lutter* is to struggle. Broadly speaking, it can mean physical combat, warfare, or confronting difficult situations with the aim of somehow mastering them. But, as discussed in Chapter 1, *lutte* is also traditional wrestling in Senegal.

Historically, each major ethnic group in Senegal had established wrestling traditions that predated colonialism by several centuries. *Lutte* matches were performed as part of annual harvest festivals among the Serer of the Sine-Saloum region. In central and coastal Senegal, where the Wolof dominated, wrestling was used as a way to train young warriors for battle. It constituted a form of social education and integration in Toucouleur societies in the Senegal River valley, and codified social hierarchies among the Diola of Casamance. Broadly speaking, *la lutte* was a way for young men to defend the honor of their villages or communities (Sow 1994: 18). The figure of the *lutteur* incarnates “force, power, virility and determination” through his imposing size and muscled physique (ibid.: 17). In order to be successful in a match, he must possess “agility, resistance, audacity, self-mastery [and] flexibility,” which frequently requires a strict regimen of special diets, exhaustive training, and abstention from sexual relations (Faye

⁶³ According to Blundo, “The [1999] report on public services and good governance [in Senegal] exposes ‘how the means of the Administration [cars, fuel, budget allocations, etc.] are diverted to the profit of the party in power...’” (Blundo 2006: 804, fn. 8).

2002: 315). But it also requires spiritual fortitude. For that reason, successful *lutteurs* frequently issued from prominent religious families whose marabouts could help protect them with mystical ablutions and *gris-gris*.

Ousseynou Faye argues that in the nineteenth century, wrestling was one way for elder patriarchs to regulate the movements of village youth by establishing a controlled space for physical violence. In an approach that echoes the work of Max Gluckman, Faye argues that wrestling was a rational way for village societies to stave off internal disruption by providing a platform for the enactment of socially sanctioned violence. Such a platform “materialized the drive to dedramatize violence and to enclose it within acceptable limits” (Faye 2002: 315). “The champion of the lutte is he who capitalizes on the attributes [intelligence, courage, agility] which mark the masculine subject as the principal actor in and animator of social life” (ibid.: 316).

As a colonial spectacle, *la lutte* became a viable way for young men to market their masculinity. Select trainees were inducted into powerful gyms often by way of family or maraboutic connections. Matches catered to and were primarily sponsored by powerful *evolué* families and French *colons* in cities like Dakar. Though village contests did still occur to commemorate the end of harvests and ceremonial gatherings, the money involved in urban wrestling transformed *la lutte* into a commercial enterprise.

By the mid-1990s, *la lutte* had become a truly public spectacle. There are at least two reasons for this. First, wrestling clubs multiplied in the expanding suburbs, giving young unemployed men an activity that promised to establish their manhood through physical exertion. Second, the *bul faalé* movement gave voice to a generation of youth born after independence for whom politics in Senegal was as ineffectual as it was elitist. Though it is hard to translate directly, *bul faalé* means “don’t bother/don’t care/be indifferent.” The primary figure of this movement was

Mohammed Ndao, aka Tyson, who was a national heavyweight champion of *la lutte* and hero to thousands of young men across Senegal from 1995 to 2002. Born in Kaolack, Tyson's family moved to Pikine, a poor suburb of Dakar, where he trained not in the elite *écuries* (wrestling gyms) of his privileged competitors, but alone with makeshift barbells that he constructed out of tin cans, steel rods and cement (Havard 2001: 67).

Like many of the *refoulés* who would come to follow and idolize him, Tyson came from a working class family and lacked the political and social connections that typically attended successful athletes in Senegal. And yet he was an exceptionally skillful *lutteur*. He achieved his notoriety not through connections and family prestige, but through *ligéey rekk*, work only. He was, in a phrase, a self-made man. Tyson modernized and popularized what was seen among Senegalese spectators as a largely traditional and elitist sport. He inserted new moves into the *bàkk* (dances that preempt the match), and rejected the mystical performances that often preceded matches and could last for hours.⁶⁴ He also appropriated and re-wrote the colonial tradition of draping the “champion” in the French flag by wearing his signature boubou made of an enormous American flag into the arena.

By attaching himself in name and apparel to the United States, Tyson materialized a growing distrust of metropolitan connections and gerontocratic power among Senegalese youth. And he did it while adopting the stance of *un guerrier*, a warrior. Tyson used his body to articulate a double message: both a youthful “revenge against the cultural productions that were destined for the bourgeoisie and their venues of leisure... [and] a refusal to be politicized” (Faye 2002: 348).

In successfully marketing himself as a savvy businessman and reinvigorating the sport of

⁶⁴ In a match with Manga II in 1999, Tyson provoked his opponent, who was getting drenched in all manner of mystical ablutions from his marabout, by pointing to his watch and saying, “*Luy, jot jotna!*” which translates roughly as, “Whatever is supposed to happen will happen [with or without the protection of your marabout].” (Havard 2001: 68).

wrestling into a new form of entertainment that appealed to the lower classes, Tyson typified what it meant to succeed on one's own merit. "He worked hard to be the image of a young man having succeeded alone and without worrying about the prejudicial opinions of his elders. This represented a strong message for youth who aspired to liberate themselves from constraints in order to express their thirst for autonomy and their right to speak" (Havard 2001: 67).

In a 2005 interview with Afrik.com, Tyson described *bul faalé* as a "social phenomenon of the *self made man*. We came from nothing and because of hard work and thanks to God we were able to advance from the shadows to the summits."⁶⁵ Tyson's ability to succeed on his own challenged the restricted nature of *la lutte*, which was traditionally structured around internal rules that reified caste distinctions and notions of inherited religious authority. And he rejected the idea that *la lutte* should follow the traditional educational model, which was largely controlled by elders. "It was no longer a question of who was dominant or dominated in reference to age or caste," Jérôme Havard observes. "Here, the best man is one who could valorize his physical qualities, win his combat and, according to a widely accepted opinion, show that he is the hardest worker" (ibid.: 69). Like migration then, *la lutte* was one way young underemployed men could generate wealth and status in the face of political disenfranchisement and economic uncertainty.

The ethos of *ligeey rekk* (work only) was embraced by young men who aspired, like Tyson, to effect change with their laboring bodies. "I want to live by the sweat of my brow," it was often said to me, frequently while performing the ubiquitous gesture of moving one's index finger across the forehead and then shaking off the imaginary perspiration. More than a result of physical exertion, the sweat itself was a sign of spiritual effort. It was a condensation of sacrifice and selflessness achieved through bodily practice and engagement, and was, in this way,

⁶⁵ <http://www.afrik.com/article8475.html>.

symbolic of piety. Indeed, many of my participants suggested that there was something more to steady work than just receiving a steady paycheck. While they didn't deny the desire for consumer delights, such as cars and houses, the significance of work in and of itself was paramount because it was seen as a vector to achieving a state of *baraka*, or grace. If these young men wanted to leave, it was at least in part because jobs in Europe promised the immaterial compensation of God's favor.

Local evaluations of labor are deeply influenced by the history and doctrinal message of Cheikh Amadou Bamba (1853-1927). As the founder of the Murid brotherhood, the only indigenous *confrérie* in Senegal, Bamba stressed labor as crucial to spiritual education.⁶⁶ His message came out of a desire for egalitarianism and solidarity among Muslims in Senegal at a time when they were fragmented by caste, ethnicity, and colonial interventions. Historically, in Senegal, caste systems reproduced divisions of labor and separated people roughly according to occupation.⁶⁷ For Bamba, the disruption of caste distinctions required the reevaluation of all types work as divinely oriented. As Laura Cochrane observes, "This redefined labor as a form of devotion, not a caste differentiation" (2012: 7).

For the Baay Fall, an order within the Murid brotherhood, work is especially important. The initiator of this order, Cheikh Ibrahim Fall (1858-1930), was Bamba's closest and most devoted disciple. While Bamba's other followers concentrated on the balance between spiritual and physical work, Fall focused exclusively on labor (Cochrane 2012). In a story of their first meeting, Ibra Fall declared to Amadou Bamba that he sought God not through the meditative mind, but through bodily action (*jëff*) (Pezeril 2008b: 794). His physical strength and inclination

⁶⁶ In Arabic, *murid* means a seeker or novice who has devoted himself to a *tariqa* or spiritual path.

⁶⁷ Though, as Judith Irvine points out in her seminal and comprehensive work on Wolof kinship systems, social position, and not vocation, determines caste. Importantly, caste is a mode of social *relations* (1973: 62).

to manual labor, particularly in agriculture, led Bamba to declare that Ibra Fall would show his devotion to God through work.

Today, Baay Falls are easily recognized by their trademark dreadlocks (*ndiange*, or “strong hair”) and patchwork clothes. Such attire signifies spiritual asceticism and a disinterest in worldly comforts, or what Allen and Mary Roberts call an “anti-fashion” (2002: 70). And yet, asceticism for the Baay Fall does not indicate a disinterest in worldly *work*. Departing from many Islamic traditions, including the *Muridiyya*, which focus on orthopraxy, or the Law (*sharia*) as revealed by God in the Qur’an, Baay Fall instead focus on spiritual perfection through submission to God and their *shaykhs* (spiritual guides), often manifested through physical labor. Many Baay Fall do not observe basic Islamic obligations, such as praying five times a day, and instead claim that work is their prayer. During the Grand Magal—a yearly pilgrimage to Touba, which attracts as many as three million Murid adherents from across the globe to the heart of Senegal’s peanut basin—the Baay Fall descend on their master’s mausoleum and spin his name into endless chanting invocations of God. The Baay Fall I met there during Magal 2012 assured me that they had come from the fields that day only to sing in Ibra Fall’s “house” and would be returning promptly to the *champs* (fields) at daybreak.

The Baay Fall operate at an interesting point of tension within the *Muridiyya*. On the one hand, they are criticized for their strange habits (i.e. not praying; begging for alms; not abiding the cultural norms of personal hygiene). On the other hand, they are revered for their asceticism and devotion to their *shaykhs*, for whom they work without pay and without complaint. Young men in Dakar, who look surprisingly clean-cut, often claim to be Baay Fall, and in this way mark themselves as embodying the true ethic of a disciple: the love of labor.

Several *refoulés* I knew were fond of proudly affirming, “*Moi, j’suis Baay Fall. Je m’occupe pas de ce monde là. J’aime que le bon Dieu* [Me, I’m Baay Fall. I don’t care about this world. I only love God].” One afternoon sitting at *La Place*, I asked Serigne, a fellow merchant and friend of Ibrahima’s, what the Baay Fall meant to him. Serigne’s birth name was Mamadou, but he mostly went by Serigne, which indicates someone of an elevated spiritual status, or Dolé, which roughly translates as strong or courageous. He explained that Baay Fall are dedicated to God’s will alone. “A real Baay Fall? *Dafa jambaar* [He is a soldier]. He doesn’t care about this world. He only works in it.” Serigne’s comment reflects three conceptions of the Baay Fall, which help to explain why they are so esteemed as good disciples. First, they are courageous warriors committed to work. They also remain detached from the material preoccupations of the world in which they work. And they are disciplined enough to submit their lives to their marabouts and God.

Baay Fall have also come to represent the valorization of marginality as a sign of divine election. Charlotte Pezeril argues that more than a mere “offshoot” of the larger Murid order, the Baay Fall constitute their own distinct brotherhood, which came about as part of gradual historical processes (2008a). As a figure who was already a bit “outside the norm” himself, Cheikh Ibra Fall set the tone for the order that would follow (Pezeril 2008b: 793). “Though situated at the margins, the Baay Fall are also seen as keepers of the Murid truth and practitioners of its highest form” (ibid.). Interestingly, many of the young men I spoke with saw marginality as necessary to moral purity. Like the Baay Fall, young men like Serigne and Ibrahima live on the peripheries of social and economic worlds. But because men of wealth in Senegal—ministers, state functionaries, or trading magnates—were presumably involved in unscrupulous practices that would be strictly at odds with Islam, then wealth itself became a marker of dubious

character. This reworked and reframed existing class divisions in such a way that the disenfranchised—the young, underemployed *refoulé*, like the Baay Fall—actually came to be more morally righteous than those in positions of wealth and power. Thus, for the young men I met, their marginality actually came to represent an elevated spiritual status.

Within Islam more broadly, discourses on the religious value of labor are widespread.⁶⁸ Not only is work seen as a marker of belief, it is also the means by which one embodies a relationship with God (Mukhlis 2009). Work, in other words, *is* worship. As Ibrahima put it:

God tells us [in the Qur'an] that we must work. He didn't make this world for us to sit by and watch, but to *do* something. It's the same with faith. You cannot wait for it to come to you; you must work for it, by praying, fasting, giving charity, and working every day... It's a job. When you die, God does not care about what you felt or what you wanted or how you dreamed. He cares about what you *did*. If you did not work, what will you show him?... Look at me here, waiting for customers. When they come, I work, but the rest of the time I sit. But I want to live by the sweat of my brow. I could have done that in Spain by working in construction, agriculture, washing cars. I don't care. I'm not proud.

As Ibrahima's comment makes clear, his desire to work was inspired not just by fiscal motives, but by a real existential exigency to fulfill his obligations as a Muslim and thus be recognized by God. Since Islam is necessarily concerned with the praxis of belief, as catalyzed by performing the five pillars, labor then becomes one way of manifesting one's faith (Esposito 1980). In his examination of the ethics of development in Indonesian business practices, Daromir Rudnyckyj concludes, “[D]rawing on the principle of *tawhid*, or the unity of and faith in God, Islam should animate all of one's worldly activity, from interactions with one's family to everyday work in the world” (2009a: S190). By situating work at the heart of a pious life, Rudnyckyj argues, Islamic philosophy inspires “spiritual economies,” which “entail not so much the abstraction of labor,

⁶⁸ The Qur'an goes to some lengths to define a good work ethic: in its 114 *sūrahs* (chapters), the concept of *'amal* (work) is mentioned 360 times, and *fi'l* (also translated as work) is mentioned an additional 109 times. The 103rd *sūrah* states, “Verily, man is bound to lose himself unless he be of those who attain to faith, and do good works [*'amilus-sālihāti*]” (103:1-3). In his excellent translation of the Qur'an, Muhammad Asad, explains *amr* (action) as being necessarily *purposeful* as it stresses divine revelation, “and, consequently, man's faith in it” (2003: 868, n. 15).

but making it more concrete... by treating it as religious worship” (Rudnycky 2009b: 115). For Ibrahima, whose *petit commerce* was far from what he would call true “labor,” the inability to obey the command to work was a great source of spiritual pain. Being unskilled and uneducated, and because jobs in Senegal were so few, he had little choice but to sit at *La Place* and wait for customers, or take his chances on boat passage to Spain.

Mobility

Above and beyond privileging poverty or citing personal enrichment as explanations for clandestine migration, another misconception of clandestine migrants is that, in putting their lives at risk, they were embracing a kind of “recklessness” that contradicts rational logic (Streiff-Fénart 2011). This chapter has so far illustrated that rather than behaving “irrationally,” these young men were in fact strategically weighing their options and obligations in the process of making the decision to leave. In this final section, I explore how migration, which promised employment, virtue, and kinship status, was also a vector of social mobility, masculine heroism, and religious fulfillment.

Rather than being simply a reaction to contemporary economic uncertainty, mobility has actually been a salient feature of life-cycle development in Senegal across time (Irvine 1973). The history of selective colonial citizenship and postcolonial emigration to the *métropole* was not lost on many of the *refoulés* with whom I spoke (Manchuelle 1997; Mann 2006). In fact, it was not so long ago that Senegalese fathers and grandfathers supported their families by rebuilding post-war Europe. Those who emigrated in the 1970s were, however, the last generation to profit from circular labor migration to Europe. On return trips home, prosperous

migrants embody success through their dispensations to family and community. Such performances of return frequently circulate through folk tales, music, literature, and film.

Prompted by the rise of international mobility, migration fiction has become a verifiable literary genre.⁶⁹ In his acclaimed debut novel, *Bleu, blanc, rouge* (1998), which received the prestigious *Grand prix littéraire d'Afrique noire* in France, Congolese author Alain Mabanckou captures the return of a successful migrant and *sapeur*, Charles Moki.⁷⁰ Nicknamed The Parisian and bathed in the aura of European elegance, Moki inspires both envy among his rural peers and pride among his elders. His return is a seasonal event that sustains the attention of the entire natal village as Moki holds forth night after night in his father's courtyard, describing a life of opulence in the City of Lights, and condemning the backward ways of village existence. As Dominic Thomas points out, "In a symbolic reversal of the performative dimension of the *exposition coloniale* held in Paris, the returning 'native' informer is now on exhibit for his fellow Africans to observe his 'Frenchness'" (Thomas 2003: 966-967).

The novel's narrator, Massala-Massala, whom we do not meet directly but only through reference to The Parisian, sees himself as ontologically inferior. In an early passage, Massala-Massala reflects on his subordinate position:

And what if I was only his shadow? And what if I was only his double?... we didn't look anything alike physically, Moki and me. I lived like his shadow. I was behind him. Especially during the days preceding my journey. I was only a

⁶⁹ The list of francophone novels whose central focus is migration from Africa to Europe is too long to cite here, but some seminal works include Ousmane Sembène's *Le Docker noire* (1956), Ake Loba's *Kocoumbo* (1960), Cheikh Hamidou Kane's *L'aventure ambiguë* (1961), and Yambo Ouologuem's *Devoir de la violence* (1968). More recent examples include Calixthe Beyala's *Maman a un amant* (1993), Sandrine Bessora's *53cm* (1999), Samy Tchak's *Place des fêtes* (2001), and Fatou Diome's *Le ventre de l'Atlantique* (2003). See Catherine Mazaucic's 2012 *Mobilités d'Afrique en Europe* (African Mobilities in Europe), which is an authoritative literary analysis of some of the most influential works of fiction written about African migration to Europe. See also Manbenga-Ylagou (2005).

⁷⁰ "La Sape designates the *Société des Ambianceurs et Personnes Élégantes* (Society for Ambieners and Persons of Elegance), whose membership was/is essentially constituted by young men from Brazzaville... and Kinshasa... The migrant impulse for the *sapeurs* consists in travel to France in order to acquire designer clothes as part of a broader identitarian agenda associated with the shifting cultural, political, and social coordinates of the colony and postcolony" (Thomas 2003: 949). See also Janet MacGaffey and Rémy Bazenguissa-Ganga (2000).

shadow. The shadow is nothing in itself. To exist, it must have a presence, an unblemished surface upon which to imprint its contours. Eventually, the shadow will want to wander, to take initiative, but he does so at his own risk. I was Moki's shadow. He made me. In his image. He assured my dreams with his way of being. A way of being I will not forget... (Mabanckou 1998: 39).

Despite the fact that Massala-Massala does eventually travel to France, he is ultimately caught in suspension between actually arriving in Paris, where he is arrested for selling fraudulent metro tickets, and, like Moki, performing a successful *descente* (or return to the village), once he is deported from France. He remains, at the novel's end, resolutely invisible.

Much like Massala-Massala, invisibility was something many of my participants felt acutely. Recalling Buggenhagen's observation that social rank is manifested in the demonstrable circulation of wealth within Senegalese society, visibility then becomes a key index of someone's status. As I got to know Ibrahima over two years, he shared his conflicted feelings about his invisibility. One day, he explained that he deliberately wore his own merchandise—Western polo shirts, stylish jeans, leather shoes or Converse sneakers—as a marketing strategy to attract customers. “But when people see me with these clothes, they think, ‘Oh, this boy has something. *Mungi noss* [He's living the good life].’ But no one knows how I live.”

Of the social markers indexing a person's status, marriage is critical to social reproduction and achieving adulthood in Senegal. For many youth today, marriage is out of reach due to fiscal restrictions, and the difficulties associated with attracting a marriageable partner (Honwana 2012). First, their personal resources may not allow for the paying of bride wealth or the establishment of a functional household. Additionally, they must now compete with global merchant-migrants who return home with European and American wealth.

In the vernacular of street life in Dakar, it has become common for young women to rate their suitors according to types of local fish. The *thiof* is an expensive medium-sized fish prized

for its meaty flesh and easily removed skeleton. The *yaboy* (sardine), by contrast, is small, cheap, and full of tiny bones that often get stuck in one's teeth or throat. Francis Nyamnjoh observes: "The class of '*grand/super*' *thiof* comprises the cream of the local elite... [including] *les venants* (disaporic Senegalese who visit home from time to time...)" (Nyamnjoh 2005: 307). The *yaboy* indicates someone who can offer no more sustenance to a young woman than a mouthful of prickly bones. The return of successful migrants thus creates an atmosphere of intense competition whereby young working class Senegalese men are effectively disqualified from pursuing matrimony because they cannot, according to Serigne, "buy things like phones, jewelry, and phone credit" for their girlfriends. At the same time, successful migrants also exemplify how futures can be fundamentally altered by mobility, which can open up new avenues of affiliation and attachment. In the context of economic reform, clandestine migrants appealed to the vocabulary of the risk-taking entrepreneur whose honor is manifested in his willingness to brave the unknown.

"Destiny is not a gift. It does not come to you without effort. You must actively seek it out. That's what makes you a man." This is how Ibrahima characterized his attempt to migrate in 2006 to me. As scholars have argued, migration is often articulated as a way to achieve the status of *un Grand*, or socially mature man (MacGaffey and Bazenguissa-Ganga 2000; Schmitz 2008; Tall and Tandian 2010). Because clandestine boat migration is so risky, it is considered a marker of masculine bravery. Mansour Tall and Aly Tandian point out:

[Migration] is not only synonymous with access to steady work and consistent earnings, but it symbolizes the path by which fortunes are made and social prestige in the eyes of one's peers is won. In the popular imaginary, the possibility of such an ascension justifies opening oneself to the enormous risks involved in embarking on such a desperate course (2010: 6).

Of the *refoulés* I met, most were well aware of the risks before setting off. And yet, in spite of the dangers, they felt compelled to try their luck. Caroline Melly observes that “active and voluntary engagement with risk shapes both self and community” (Melly 2011: 370). Having no guarantee that life in Senegal would afford them social mobility, young men embraced uncertainty through their decision to migrate territorially. “Here, there is no assurance,” Ibrahima said. “There [in the open ocean] it’s the same. So, I asked myself, *Why not?*”

If migration is a maker of men in Senegal, then clandestine migration all the more poignantly evokes values surrounding spiritual resistance and piety. For one thing, movement is a fundamental feature of Islam.⁷¹ As Cheikh Anta Babou, author of an influential history on Cheikh Amadou Bamba (2007), explained to me in 2012, “In the history of Islam, mobility often carries a spiritual dimension.”⁷² Prophetic sayings also support the practice of travel. The Prophet Muhammad himself urged his fellow countrymen to search the world for knowledge: “Seek it, even as far as China,” he said (Chodkiewicz 1996: 71).⁷³ It is therefore not uncommon for young men to express their desire to travel as a spiritual pursuit.

God says in the Qur’an, “Know me before you worship me.” You have to know what God created in order to know Him. How do you know? Through experience. Through seeing things and living things yourself. If you just stand there and pray without knowing, it’s empty. And it doesn’t bring God’s favor.

⁷¹ Pilgrimage (*hajj*), which commemorates the Prophet’s flight from Mecca to Medina in 622 CE, is one of the five pillars performed by the faithful.

⁷² Email communication with Cheikh Anta Babou, April 12, 2012.

⁷³ Hadith 78 of *Sahîh al-Bukhâri* tells the story of Moses, who travels far and wide to meet the immortal sage al-Khidr (*Sahîh al-Bukhâri*, Volume 1, 1997: 102). After claiming to be the wisest of men, Moses is rebuked by God and sent to find al-Khidr at the “junction of the two seas” (Qur’an 18:60). Muhammad Asad reflects that such a “junction” is symbolic of the “two sources or streams of knowledge—the one obtainable through the observation and intellectual coordination of outward phenomena (*‘ilm az-zahir*), and the other through intuitive, mystic insight (*‘ilm al-batin*) (2003: ??). With respect to al-Khidr, which means “the Green One,” Asad notes that “his wisdom was ever-fresh (‘green’) and imperishable... symbolizing the utmost depth of mystic insight inaccessible to man” (ibid.: ??). Islamic scholar, Martin Lings, suggests that the meeting of Moses and al-Khidr “is parallel to the symbolism of the meeting of the two seas. The salt sea of this world represents, like Moses, exoteric knowledge, whereas the Waters of Life are personified by Al-Khidr” (1968).

Ibrahima said this while explaining his motivations to seek a future in Europe. Such an outcome would allow him to experience something outside Africa, something of the wider world that God created. To undertake a voyage is to perform an ontological quintessence of being because, as part of God's creation, having knowledge of that creation in some way represents a deeper connection to Him. As the influential 11th-century mystic and scholar, Ibn al-'Arabi wrote: "Existence begins with movement" (quoted in Chodkiewicz 1996: 73). Ibn al-'Arabi went to great lengths to transcribe detailed descriptions and modalities of the voyage in his prolific writings. While travel for Ibn al-'Arabi was primarily a spiritual undertaking, a mode through which Muslims could approach the divine, he nevertheless drew on traditions of physical mobility built into Islamic history and practice.⁷⁴

For young men in Senegal, the life histories of saints can also exert a powerful influence on the decision to migrate. For one thing, migration represents not only a physical separation requisite to spiritual knowledge (*khalwa*) but also a kind of claiming of descent from marabouts or *shaykhs*, who, whether through forced exile (e.g. Amadou Bamba) or voluntary retreat (e.g. Ahmad al-Tijani), endured physical seclusion as part of their religious education. A deceased saint (or *shaykh*) is revered as the holder of *baraka*, which "can be passed down to their descendants or close disciples" (Austen 2010: 89). As Victoria Ebin and Mamadou Diouf have argued, it is this transmission of *baraka* that has influenced some young men in West Africa to attempt clandestine migration (Ebin 1996; Diouf 2000).

Himself mimicking the life of the Prophet, Cheikh Amadou Bamba's path seemed to be one of increasing peregrination, punctuated by different flights: first, his pilgrimage across Senegal at age thirty, then his move back to Baol in 1883, his founding of Daarou Salaam two years later, followed by his founding of Touba in 1888, his move to Jolof in 1895, and then the series of

⁷⁴ For example, the various peregrinations and flights of prophets outlined in the Qur'an.

deportations and exiles commanded by the French colonial authorities that would keep him out of Senegal for decades. Beginning with exile to Gabon in 1895, Bamba's personal history is marked by movement and ends with his house arrest in Diourbel in 1912. Rather than disabling his power, however, the exile and return of Bamba only made his persona more magnetic. He left Senegal a *shaykh* and returned a "*wali Allah* (friend of God), a martyr, and a miracle worker" (Babou 2007: 140).

During his exile, Bamba's poetic writings and stories of his miraculous evasion of French torture "confirmed... [his] status as a saint" (Ebin 1996: 94). Such stories include Bamba escaping from iron chains, praying on a rug floating above the water, sleeping with lions, and drinking tea with the Prophet after being thrown into a furnace. These miracle stories continue to circulate widely in Senegal. Most of the young men with whom I spoke were familiar with and even invoked these tales when recounting their migration narratives to me. Bamba's exile continues to influence conceptions of mobility, sacrifice, cunning, and spiritual protection for many Senegalese migrants and *refoulés* (Diouf 2000: 686; Riccio 2005: 110). As Victoria Ebin argues, "Travel has become an almost sacred activity for Mourides... By also becoming travelers, Mourides emphasize their ties with their founding saint" (Ebin 1996: 98). In this sense, clandestine migration operates as an extension of religious traditions and discourses around mobility, invisibility, and the possession of divine gifts. As we will see, in Chapter 4, passage itself was articulated as a way to manifest one's spiritual courage in the face of extreme hardship.

Additionally, for the young men I met, stories of Bamba fleeing colonial control affectively infuse clandestine migration with the aura of religious sanction (Bowen 2004; Cruise O'Brien 1975). Sitting at *La Place* one day with Ibrahima and Serigne, Iran interrupted his daily recitations of Amadou Bamba's poetry and said definitively, "Listen, even Serigne Touba was

forced into exile by the French *colons*.⁷⁵ Today, it's not so different for us. We are forced to leave, too. And it is by God's grace that we survive." Like Iran and Ibrahima, the vast majority of young men I met did not want to leave. Instead, the compelling desire to care for kin at a particular moment in Senegal's political economic history meant that they would be "forced" to seek a dignified life, and to strive in the way of God, elsewhere. As Cabeiri deBerg Robinson points out with respect to Kashmiri refugee mujahids, "the concept of sacrifice for the family... distinguished the moral status of individuals based on the extent to which a person had harnessed his or her desirous self and put it at the service of the family by caring for others" (2013: 205). Mobility was thus framed as a religious right. Though they may have failed in reaching their intended destination, undertaking the struggle to depart reconfigured their sense of self after they returned. Being willing to "sacrifice" themselves opened up new possibilities. As Ibrahima said in his portrait, "Struggle is the key that opens the door."

Conclusion

This chapter began by suggesting that poverty-centric explanations for clandestine migration are inadequate because, in reducing migrants to individual economic actors, they ignore the social relations and spiritual obligations that inspired many of my participants to leave. For the *refoulés* I met, their identities were not strictly individualized; rather, they were constructed within a political economic context that made the fulfillment of social and religious duties, and thus the attainment of a dignified life, unreachable. Economic opportunity in Senegal was limited, but as this chapter has shown, the desire to work was motivated by a moral landscape that privileged labor as a vector for achieving spiritual grace. Wealth was important to many of my participants,

⁷⁵ Serigne Touba, which translates as Master of Touba, is one of many devotional names attached to Cheikh Amadou Bamba.

but to understand it in terms of personal enrichment is to overlook the social and spiritual dimensions of fulfilling kinship obligations. Furthermore, for my participants, knowing the wider world was tantamount to knowing God. Clandestine travel was therefore a mode of performing piety as well as claiming masculine courage in the face of adversity.

In much of the literature on clandestine migration out of West Africa, the desire for economic independence, social adulthood and status is seen as the primary motivators for departure. While not altogether wrong, such an analytical frame misses the sociality of economic relations; that is, how economic relations are fundamentally social relations, and how families and communities in Senegal are tied together through circuits of exchange and reciprocity. In other words, to suggest that migration, and the financial benefit that it potentially affords, is important because “first and foremost [it is] about unleashing one’s individual potential” is misleading (Hernández-Carretero and Carling 2012: 411). As my participants would argue, migration is more precisely a path to supporting kin rather than a strictly individual enterprise. As it became increasingly difficult to support family members and fulfill religious aspirations in Senegal, scores of young men sought out alternatives elsewhere.

While not disputing the economic argument entirely, because in fact economics *did* factor into why so many men were leaving, I would like to suggest that a more nuanced reading of the situation might reveal how a young man’s desire to work can be tied to his faith and not simply to putting food on his table. In addition to providing the means for supporting one’s kin, labor was conceptualized as a mode of spiritual striving that cut across historical divisions of caste. I would also like to suggest that when we see the first signs of clandestine boat migration out of Senegal in the early 2000s, we also see the rise of the *bul faale* movement, which is most quintessentially illustrated in the figure of Tyson, the Senegalese wrestler who came from

nothing and made his fortune through *ligeey rekk*, work only. Faced with an economic horizon that could not afford them the chance to perform the a pious endeavor of labor, young men were strategically making the decision to take the risk, to “do something” rather than wait for the situation in Senegal to change (Fioratta 2015).

In a 2011 conversation I had with Cheikh Moustapha Niasse, a prominent marabout with the Tijani (Niassène) *tariqa*, he described nations as houses, with walls and windows and places where people worked and rested. “Now, if Senegal is a house, then it is one without doors,” he said. For the many *refoulés* I met, the state not only ignored them, but it created the conditions requiring their exodus. Increasing immigration restrictions from abroad as well as a declining economy at home turned their *patrie* into a prison from which most could not legally depart. No wonder then that thousands of young men would seek to take their chances, take the gamble, and risk their lives in a world in which doing anything less seemed positively unthinkable. As neoliberal logic makes clear, “fortunes [and futures] are governed largely by chance” (Comaroff and Comaroff 2001: 5). Rather than seeing clandestine migrants as irrational escapees reacting to brute poverty, this chapter has sought to reframe them as young men who calculated complicated decisions in the murky waters of persistent uncertainty, restricted opportunity, social and religious pressures, and the desire for freedom as a future possibility. Their decisions to migrate were articulated as an aspiration to social mobility, and a pious resistance to the neglect they suffered at the hands of an indifferent state.

This chapter has explored some of the social, economic and spiritual experiences that came to bear on how clandestine boat migrants decided to make their way across the Atlantic in the mid-2000s. The legacies of such mobility continue to influence *refoulés*’ strategies of return. Migration is not simply resistance to economic uncertainty; nor is it purely a product of cultural

institutions or historical continuities. For *refoulés*, their clandestine journeys were not solely a response to but a producer of material consequences and subjectivities. The chapters that follow will illustrate how these conditions of departure shaped the conditions of transit, and continue to shape the conditions of return.

ABDOULAYE



Abdoulaye and Mama, 2013

The room where we sat was tucked deep within the interior of the compound, far from roaming eyes and ears. With no windows and only a single 10-watt LED bulb overhead, the atmosphere inside was murky, as if a mist or veil shrouded both the faces and the objects within. Tattered suitcases filled with clothes lined the perimeter. A blue bucket of water decorated with dolphins sat in the corner with a steel cup on its lid. Next to it, a plastic shelf was stacked with glasses and a metal carafe. In the opposite corner a plastic plant sent forth its tropical green fronds underneath a wall shelf from which hung a variety of women's purses. Every foot of the small room seemed occupied by something, which made the four young men sitting inside look painfully crowded. Three of them sported soccer jerseys from different clubs—Barcelona, Arsenal, Roma. The fourth man wore a white boubou with a silver *ta'wiz* (amulet) hanging around his neck. This was Abdoulaye, the first to volunteer his tale and the last to wrap up the daylong interviews.

In the two years since that first meeting, I've had many more times to talk with Abdoulaye. It has been my good fortune to enjoy the hospitality of his family, and to spend unhurried afternoons at his house drinking *attaya*, playing with his youngest daughter, Mama, and chatting about everything from politics to religion to how to catch a swordfish. Though always dressed in a boubou when I saw him, Abdoulaye was a fisherman.

Of my mother's sons, I'm the only one who went to school. My younger brothers only went to *daara* to learn the Qur'an. I did that too in the evenings and during summer holiday, but I also went to school. I sacrificed myself for my mother. She wanted me to become a teacher. And I was a good student. Even my teacher came to my house one day and told me, "Abdoulaye, please don't abandon your studies. You must continue!" But my father, who was also a fisherman and was just then entering retirement, said, "No, it's time for you to work." And that's why I left my studies at such a young age [sixteen-years-old].

Abdoulaye explained that it was his duty to help his family. As his mother's eldest son, he was obliged to step into the role of provider when his father retired. His uncle, who was still actively fishing along the Petit Côte, taught Abdoulaye how to operate the pirogue and cast the gillnets they would use to catch *thiof* (grouper), *jaabaar* (red snapper), *yaaboóy* (gilt sardine), and *waxandor* (yellowfin tuna/albacore).

After my apprenticeship, I started captaining at age twenty. My father gave me his pirogue, and I took my brothers on as crewmates. I taught each of them how to fish. But my mother, she didn't approve. When I started fishing, she ignored me for three years. If I went to work and I came back with money, I tried to give some to her, but she refused me. My father wanted me to learn fishing quickly so that I could help them survive. But my mother, if I brought her something, she would say, "I don't want this money. I wanted money from a professor."

During his first few years as captain, Abdoulaye realized that fishing alone would not provide sufficient income for his family. "Whatever I caught, we portioned out and shared as a family, but sometimes it was only enough for us to eat. And it's too expensive to buy the fuel if you can't catch enough to sell." He started taking his pirogue to The Gambia to buy provisions such as rice, powdered milk, and sugar, which were significantly cheaper in Banjul. He would then

bring them back to Senegal to sell. He did this at night to avoid being detected by customs officials, but when rumors started circulating about him, and other smuggling boats began getting caught, his father told him to stop. “He came to me one day and said, ‘People are noticing you Abdoulaye. Be careful.’”

Fishing alone was insufficient because, according to Abdoulaye, the government’s promise to support the local small-scale fishing industry was woefully unrealized. Instead, small pirogues like his had to compete with large industrial fishing trawlers from Europe, Russia and Japan, which overexploited Senegal’s once-abundant maritime resources and left artisanal fishermen with few remaining fish to catch. In fact, that was the reason, Abdoulaye said, that clandestine boat migration started.

As we walked along the beach one day just outside his front door, he pointed to the horizon where three distant trawlers could be seen. “Since the early 1980s,” he said, “these boats have been coming into our waters and taking all the fish. They’re not supposed to come that close to shore, but who is going to stop them?” He paused, counting the boats: *un, deux, trois*. “That’s the reason we started leaving. Because we have to go farther and farther out to sea to find any fish at all. In the late 1990s, a fishing pirogue lost its way and got swept out to sea. When they landed a week later on Tenerife [Canary Islands], everyone was shocked. Up to that point, no one even *imagined* you could reach Europe by fishing boat. That’s when it all started.”

When his father told him to stop smuggling food into Senegal, Abdoulaye decided to emigrate clandestinely. It was 2006, the year his second child, Anta, was born.

No one knew beforehand. I told only my marabout and my wife. She was pregnant at the time. She didn’t want me to go, but what choice did I have? I had to leave because I am a man and I had to do something to help her and to help my family. There were people who had made it to Europe, and when they came back, they were financially set. Seeing this kind of person, it makes you wish you could be in his place. But because we didn’t have the means of getting to Europe

legally, people were obliged to use the pirogues. We're fishermen, and we understand the sea, so we said to ourselves why not? It opened up a new avenue for making a living.

A boat owner who lived in a nearby village and who, like other investors, saw a quick way to make money in the clandestine migration industry had approached Abdoulaye about captaining his vessel. The proprietor charged on average 500,000CFA (\$1,000) per passenger and filled the boat manifest with over 100 names. After subtracting his initial investment of four million CFA (about \$8000) to purchase a twenty-meter pirogue, as well as the food and fuel that would be required to transit the Atlantic, the owner could still retain a net profit of \$92,000. Regardless of whether people arrived safely, were drowned at sea, or were forcibly returned to Senegal—due to bad weather, broken motors, GPS failure, or state-initiated repatriation—the fare was non-refundable.

In the weeks leading up to departure, Abdoulaye undertook several essential preparations. He traveled to Nouadhibou in Mauritania to buy the chart plotters that would be used to program the two GPS devices, which would ensure that they maintained a true course across the ocean. He also sold his fishing pirogue, motor, and nets, as well as a small house, in order to provide his family with some means of surviving while he was gone. “I sold everything,” he said, “so that they would have all they needed until my return.” In all, it amounted to 2 million CFA (\$4,000). Without revealing that he'd sold his pirogue and gear, he left one of his brothers in charge of the funds and explained that he was going south to Guinea to fish.⁷⁶

Abdoulaye also consulted with his marabout, who told him to beware of the dangers of traveling across the sea. “Here in Senegal, before doing anything, you have to ask your marabout. He can see things you cannot, and will tell you what the best decision is. My *mara*

⁷⁶ This did not raise any suspicions because Abdoulaye had already organized these kinds of long-distance fishing expeditions before. Because of the depleted fish stocks in Senegalese waters, it became increasingly common for boats to seek out better waters off the coast of other West African nations.

told me to expect strange things in the boat, but, he told me, ‘You have to risk it in order to pass the threshold.’” The first time I met Abdoulaye in that dimly lit overcrowded room in 2013, he explained:

Because we are Senegalese, we believe in mystic things. It’s possible to see everything in the ocean, things you cannot even imagine. For that reason, I paid the marabouts a lot of money to perform sacrifices for us so that we would arrive safely without issue and to ensure that the passengers would be kept safe and sound. If I hadn’t taken this precaution, something bad could have happened. I was the captain, and if anything happened to the pirogue I would have suffered the consequences [in the afterlife]. I used all the means at my disposal to ensure it was a sound boat in good condition and that it would not encounter any trouble along the route.

A year later, while we sat in his house drinking *attaya*, Abdoulaye explained that the journey was dangerous not simply because of the practical conditions of being in a small open-hulled boat in the middle of the Atlantic. It was also, and perhaps even more, dangerous because the ocean had mystical properties that were difficult to estimate. The sea, he said, was dangerous precisely because it was not just a mirror image of life on land, but because it was the *vertical* mirror of life on land. It was terrestrial life *exponentialized*.

Everything is in the sea. God made two of everything: one on land, the other in the sea. If you see a rooster on land, there is a rooster in the sea. If you see a cow on land, there is a cow in the sea.⁷⁷ In fact, if you took all the animals and plants that God put in the sea and reduced it by three, it would still be more than what you would find on land. When you are in the boat, the surface of the sea looks a lot like land. It is a plane of sight, but the depth is hidden. You cannot see what is underneath you, and it extends down and down thousands of meters. You cannot imagine what is down there. It’s for this reason that *géej dafa dee wor* [the ocean is deceptive].

Abdoulaye took precautions by abiding his marabout’s counsel. He bought and sacrificed a male sheep and gave the meat to his poorer neighbors. He washed with a special ablution made of milk and plant leaves that his marabout concocted for him. And he carefully wrapped his upper

⁷⁷ Both the roosterfish and cowfish do actually exist.

arms and waist with the leather talismans that his marabout had prepared to protect him from the *jinn*s in the ocean and other malevolent forces in the boat.

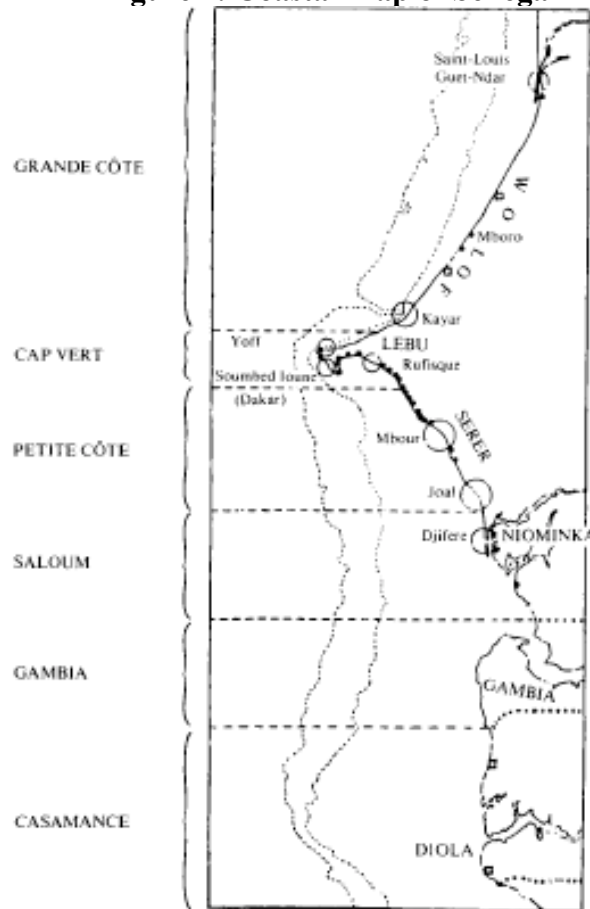
On the day of his departure, Abdoulaye's mother could sense something was afoot. It was the time of day after lunch when households go quiet as people sleep off the warmest part of the afternoon. But she heard rustling and whispers in his bedroom. Rising from bed, she found her daughter-in-law, Aissatou, weeping in the doorway. "*Ana Abdoulaye?*" she asked (Where is Abdoulaye?). When Aissatou couldn't answer, the mother rushed out of the compound and ran after him along the sandy path. When she reached him, she demanded in a loud whisper, "*Fooy dem?*" (Where are you going?). Abdoulaye tried to calm her, explaining that he was her first-born son, and it was his duty to improve her living conditions. But she knew the risks he would encounter. "You are exposing yourself," she pleaded. "You must not go." In the end, he begged for her blessing; without it, he would not have been able to leave.

The point of departure was changed at the last minute "because of too many coastal patrols," Abdoulaye explained. "The police were waiting all along the Petite Côte." For that reason, both Abdoulaye and the boat owner agreed that they should embark from a different location along the Grande Côte (see Figure 3). Abdoulaye left at four in the afternoon and conducted the grand pirogue around the Cap Vert peninsula to Kayar where the passengers were waiting.

When we were in Kayar, I told the boat owner that I wouldn't stay for long because even there on the Grande Côte there were a lot of patrols. Morning and night, there were patrols to discourage migrants from leaving. I told him that we needed to leave no later than two in the morning. If not, I would be going home. We loaded the pirogue from around eight in the evening until midnight. From there, once everyone was on board, we cast off the lines at around one in the morning.

Normally, as boat captain, Abdoulaye would have been paid, but he negotiated the free passage of his brothers instead. They had been fishing together for many years already at that

Figure 2: Coastal Map of Senegal



Source: Chaveau and Samba 1989

point, and Abdoulaye trusted them. At the time, he argued with the proprietor that he needed them to maintain security during the voyage because, he explained, “You’re in the boat a long time, and you never know what can happen.” What seemed overly cautious in the beginning was actually prescient in the end as Abdoulaye’s brothers would be instrumental in ensuring that everyone arrived safely.

There were people who cried and howled, and behaved badly. But we would hold them down, like this [with his arms]. We would take the cord, and tie them up until dawn when the sun began to rise. During the night, some of them changed. There was one old man from Tamba [Tambacounda in the east]. The day after our first night in the pirogue, in the morning, he refused his breakfast. “No,” he said. “Me? I’m not eating this because there is meat in this boat.” My brother approached me and whispered in my ear, “Abdoulaye, did you hear what the old man just said? He refused his *mouhamssa* [porridge] because he said he’s waiting to eat the beef. When I asked him, ‘But, where is this beef you speak of?’ he

pointed to the passengers around him. ‘There, there, and there. Everywhere, there is meat!’ He even grabbed the woman and said, ‘Eh! I’m going to eat you later!’ He’s going to wait until night to start eating ‘the beef.’” After my brother finished talking, I walked up to the old man, and I said, “Eh, *ton ton* [colloquial for uncle], did you really say that?” He denied it, saying he hadn’t spoken a word. But I told him, “Listen, just know that I brought *gris gris* on this boat and there’s nothing you can do. You need to stay calm. Otherwise, you will end badly.”

He went to sleep until about four o’clock in the evening. When he woke up he asked me for a coat because his was wet. I told myself, ‘This is an old man. He has brought a Qur’an with him, and he is always reading it when he’s awake.’ So I gave him my jacket. We continued on our way, and right about six o’clock, the hour of *timis* [evening] prayer, he stood up and jumped into the water! He was still wearing my coat, but my other brother, who was sitting close to the gunnel, reached out and grabbed him. I told him to hold on, and together, we pulled the old man back in the boat. I tied him with rope that time. In the end, he died...

We threw the old man overboard because it wasn’t sanitary to have a body in the boat like that. He also had two brothers who were travelling with him. When we tied up the old man, one brother got angry, telling us to leave him alone. He, too, jumped in the ocean during the night, and we never saw him again... After the old man was gone, the boat was normal, and the weather was totally calm.

He wanted to kill me. That’s why he asked to wear my coat. If we hadn’t retrieved him, I would have also fallen in because he was wearing my clothes. He wanted it. Do you understand? It was a technique. But my *mara* told me something like this would happen. The old man’s clothes weren’t wet. He was a *dëm* [shape shifter who consumes human flesh]. He wanted to kill me so that the boat wouldn’t arrive in Spain. That way, he would have been able to eat the passengers in peace. Before he died, he told me, “At night, I go back to Tamba, to my village, and then I return here in the morning.” Can a human being do that? No. But a *dëm* can. Plus, when everyone else paid 500,000CFA, he paid 800,000CFA. You see? Why would he do that? A man of sixty years with white hair! [Abdoulaye clapped his hands once for punctuation.] He wanted me dead because he knew that I was the only one who could make sure that the boat would arrive. Without a captain, the pirogue is doomed.

I asked Abdoulaye if he ever thought about the old man anymore.

Sometimes, yes. Because when you see those kinds of things, those kinds of deaths, it’s hard. It shakes you... When I returned to Senegal, I was bothered for a long time because my head was too, too... The memories were too difficult. If I slept, I saw everything again.

When I came back, everyone looked at me. My mother asked me, “Is that you?” I said, “Yes, it’s me.” And she replied, “No, it’s not you. You’ve changed. What’s

the matter?" I was dark. *Sama yaram doonuma jámm* [I was not at peace in my body]. I stayed the whole day in my room, watching television and sleeping. I couldn't even eat. But then I went to see my *mara*. And I made *laars* [talismans]. I stayed there for several days.

Abdoulaye's psychological and spiritual condition upon his return was compounded by total physical exhaustion. From their departure point in Kayar, they had traveled 1,647 kilometers over nine days to reach Tenerife. Had they not encountered some bad conditions in the beginning, which Abdoulaye attributed to the *dëm* being on board, they would have arrived sooner. For most of that time, Abdoulaye had personally steered the pirogue, taking only small breaks for food and rest. As captain, he was not only responsible for 110 souls arriving safely on Tenerife, he also had to maintain peace in the boat. The tight quarters meant that, at times, people jostled one another for space. "We set up a canvas enclosure at the stern of the pirogue," Abdoulaye said. "That's where the food was kept and where the cooking was done. But at night, when it was cold, people fought to get inside where it was warm. Once someone got in there, he refused to leave, so I had to step in. There were fights morning and night." Some nights, he said, people didn't sleep because of all the arguing.

We are fishermen. We've been out there [at sea] for a long time. We figure things out as we go because we're used to it. For example, if we need to use the bathroom, we know what to do. But for many *clandestins*, they had no sense. We had to give them a bucket and show them how to empty it when they were done... Even then, the people were crammed together like sardines. When we arrived, some of them couldn't stand because they'd been sitting in the same spot for so long.

At around half past eleven on the morning of the ninth day, Abdoulaye spotted a vessel from the Red Cross approaching his pirogue. "We were five kilometers from shore. They came to help us, Alhamdulillah," he recalled. The medical team and volunteers escorted each person off the pirogue and onto the larger boat and began administering blankets and water. Back on land, the

passengers were taken to the Red Cross center where they received food, medical attention, and clean, dry clothes.

After that, they took us to the police station, where we stayed for three days. During that whole time, I didn't eat, I only slept because I was so tired. Then, after three days, we were taken to the courthouse for interviews, and finally we ended up in the detention camp where we spent the rest of our time, twenty-five days. One afternoon, the Spanish authorities called us. Each *clandestin* had been given a number, which was registered on his shirt. I was number seventeen. They lined us up and called out one through sixteen. When they got to seventeen, they stopped, telling us that they would call us later, the next time. They took the sixteen people and sent them to Valencia.

Another day, they came back, but this time they put us on a bus. They didn't say anything. And besides, we didn't speak Spanish so we couldn't have understood anyway. We watched them, but we didn't know what was happening. The bus took everyone to an airport, and from there they put us on a plane, direction Porte 23, the policemen said.⁷⁸ We stayed there for three additional days. And people were talking, worried about what would happen. One day, there were two people who, after having taken their lunch, tried to escape through an open door. One of them fell down when he tried to jump through and broke his leg. After they were both captured, the guards put us in a different room with doors that locked. The next morning, they woke us at seven and attached us with a long chain that went from man to man. It was at that moment that I knew we were trapped and would be sent back to Senegal.

Still, they didn't say anything. They just put us on a plane. We didn't know where we were going. But, as soon as they handcuffed us, I knew it would end badly. The plane landed at the military camp Dakar/Bango, which is outside Saint-Louis, around ten in the morning. Once we arrived, they gave us a sandwich. Soon after, the soldiers arrived en masse and ordered each person to take his sack and line up by the buses. Everyone went home very quietly because there were so many soldiers. That was 2006, two days after Korité [festival commemorating the end of Ramadan].

The Spanish guards on the chartered flight home had given each *refoulé* fifty Euros. Stopping in

Thiès on the way home, Abdoulaye used some of this money to buy Korité gifts for his sisters

⁷⁸ I often heard *refoulés* refer to Porte 23 (Door 23), which at first I thought was an actual door. As I found out later, most of them couldn't read either the signs on buses or on building placards. Thus, when policemen, detention officers, or other Spanish officials said, "Fuerteventura," which is another of the Canary Islands, the *clandestins* heard "Porte 23." I have often reflected on the strange poetic symbolism of a door with the number 23 on it, a passage from which there is, ostensibly, no return.

and nephews. Though disappointed, his wife and mother—the only two family members who knew—were grateful that he was safe.

After being gone for thirty-seven days, only \$500 remained of the initial \$4,000 that Abdoulaye had left with his family. When I asked him what happened to the money, during our first interview in 2012, he answered almost defensively at first.

This did not hurt me because I was obliged to do it. I am the supporter of my family and I have never shirked that role. Before I left, I had a pirogue and I was going to fish all the time. And we shared everything I caught. I could not leave without giving my family some means of surviving because they had no one else but me. I had to make sure they wouldn't encounter any difficulties while I was absent. You know as well as I do, a family needs to eat and drink each day. Sometimes the children get sick, or the mother needs some medicine. And there are so many other unforeseen mishaps. I was always the one who provided, even when I wasn't there. I was gone for thirty-seven days, and when I returned, only 250,000CFA remained. I lost everything. Since then, I have neither a pirogue nor a motor. Now I am alone with my problems.

During a later visit, his tone was more measured. Though he was not speaking specifically about the money that was “eaten” during his voyage, he nevertheless reflected on the spirit of generosity invoked in the Qur'an, which allowed him to critique how family could ultimately be selfish:

God said, “If you give to others, I will give you more. But if I give to you and you keep it for yourself, I will stop. If you have money, and you eat every evening, you must count ten houses to the left and ten houses to the right. If you know someone who has nothing to eat and you stay in your house with your money, then what you have eaten is blood.” God wanted *dimbalante* [solidarity] among people... But in Africa, your brother—of the same mother and father—he may have money and meanwhile you don't have food. He eats, and he throws the rest outside or gives it to animals even though he knows you're hungry. God said, if you have your meal and you leave it in the house until the next day, He will make it go rotten.

Having no pirogue and no materials, Abdoulaye was compelled to make do with whatever limited means remained at his disposal. He returned to work not as captain, but as a handyman and sometimes crewmate. Every day he went back and forth to the beach in the hopes of

performing some small labor for someone. When he was lucky, he was able to save the money to buy fuel and then borrow someone's pirogue to go fishing. This was, he explained, not a sustainable way of getting by because part of his catch went to the owner who'd loaned him the pirogue, and the rest went to feed his family. If there was any left over, he sold it for cash to buy rice and sugar for the house.

In the winter of 2014, I visited Abdoulaye again and we spent the afternoon and evening talking. As usual, Aissatou prepared heaping platters of *thiebu jënn* [rice with fish] and *mbassé* [couscous with beans and smoked fish], each followed by rounds of *attaya*. Whatever discomfort I felt in partaking of the essential food that fed this family, I knew that it would have been more uncomfortable if had I refused their generosity altogether. Conversations with Abdoulaye that day revolved around God and the Qur'an and the life of the Prophet because, as with many people I met in Senegal, religion was at the heart of his social life. It was, in other words, something one discussed openly and publicly with friends.

God said everything in the Qur'an. Which is to say, before you pray to Him, you have to know Him. I learned the Qur'an and so I know what it says. God appreciates a man who travels to discover the world. Wherever you go to make a living, to support your family, God welcomes this. He said so in the Qur'an. He appreciates a man who leaves his home, makes money, and returns to his country to support his family. This is part of Islam. A good Muslim goes abroad, makes a living, and returns to his natal country to feed his family, and to support his father and mother. Each prophet was a traveler. God made them leave their homes and sent this one to Egypt, the other to Iraq, and the other to Israel. Even the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, was born in Mecca, but he traveled to Medina. Every day, he made trips between Mecca and Medina.

God especially appreciates a man who takes to the sea to discover the world. One of his prophets was a fisherman, but one day there was a very big fish, and he swallowed the prophet. Afterwards, the fish spit him out in another country, telling him, "You must stay here," because God wrote this in the Qur'an before his birth. We say that every fisherman is a descendant of this prophet.

III. PREPARATION



Magal, Touba 2012

“I paid the marabouts a lot of money to perform sacrifices for us so that we would arrive safely without issue... I was the captain, and if anything happened to the pirogue I would have suffered the consequences [in the afterlife].”

(Abdoulaye)

Introduction

The preceding chapter argued that while financial economies did play a role in the exodus of boat migration out of West Africa in the early to mid-2000s, they were not the only factors motivating young men to attempt passage. Kinship obligations, gendered modes of social reproduction, and the religious importance of travel also played a critical role in shaping how and why young men decided to leave Senegal. This chapter is, in some sense, a continued exploration of the same central argument. It critiques the assumption that poverty was a major driver for clandestine migration by highlighting how the vast majority of these young men were not categorically and uniformly impoverished. Rather, as this chapter shows, they often had access to personal and family resources that were mobilized to pay for migration. Clandestine migrants were, on the whole, not the poorest of the poor, but came mostly from lower working class families and neighborhoods (De Haas 2007; Tall 2002: 559).

One of the problems with the economic focus is that if we assume that clandestine migrants were penniless at the time of departure then we might also assume that their failure had only a marginal effect on their contemporary circumstances. The prevailing, if tacit, idea is that they were presumably poor when they set out, and thus similarly poor upon return. What actually happened was that young men returned to their families not with the same meager financial assets but *with less* (Pian 2010b: 93). If policy discourses privilege economic motivators above all others, they also, ironically, do not account for how failed clandestine migration has actually contributed to a growing underclass in Senegal today. In order to understand migrants' reintegration strategies in a post-failure context, which I will take up in more detail in Part III, we must first attend to the financial and spiritual economies that contributed to the phenomenon of boat migration out of Senegal.

Although it has become relatively common in media and policy reports to suggest that irregular migrants the world over are manipulated into departure by greedy and unscrupulous human smugglers who do not fully disclose the dangers of passage, and who take advantage of passive or gullible migrants (UNODC 2006), the majority of young men I met knew very well that they were risking their lives to leave. Furthermore, if dominant representations of boat migrants characterize them as spontaneously and erratically hustling into vessels, leaving family and nation hastily behind in an irrational rush to reach El Dorado, then such representations also leave untold the stories of conscious and painstaking preparations that preceded departure. Clandestine migration didn't happen overnight. It was the result of careful and often communal planning on the part of aspiring migrants and their families. Taking account of this dimension reveals how young migrants, and the *refoulés*, they would go on to become, were intimately involved in the social process of negotiating their futures.

In this chapter, I explore some of the practical arrangements that preceded departure. Similar to the foregoing analysis of decision-making, the goal here is to re-situate migrants and their aspirations as part of a complex social nexus that involved parents and siblings, spouses and friends, marabouts and neighbors. Such an attention to social registers dispels the common media and policy stereotypes that represented migrants as either risk-seeking criminals on the one hand or passive victims on the other. Importantly, such stereotypes were not neutral. They informed and legitimized border control measures that most of my informants faced head on, as we will see in Chapter 5.

This chapter is divided into two sections: Economic Arrangements and Spiritual Provisions. In Economic Arrangements, I discuss some of the financial investments that individuals and families assumed, which often included the liquidation of domestic assets as a way to pay for

clandestine journeys. This section disrupts the idea that clandestine migration was directly caused by overwhelming poverty and suggests that researchers have paid scant attention to the sheer amount of capital circulating through Senegal as a result of clandestine migration. Moreover, such processes frequently reshuffled household hierarchies and left many families even more destitute. I then look to *Spiritual Provisions*, which explores some of the ways that young men morally groomed themselves for departure. This often included seeking advice, benedictions, and ultimately sanction from their marabouts. Migrants also frequently undertook embodied rituals such as manufacturing and wearing *gris-gris*, reciting special prayers, performing sacrifice, and washing with specially prepared ablutions that were purported to shield them from the paranormal dangers of passage. Such preparations underscore the value of spiritual protection and the central importance of the maraboutic relationship in Senegal, which continues to shape how failed migrants manage their futures. Such an analytical frame not only accounts for the critical preparations undertaken as a precursor to departure, which are necessarily part of the migration story, it also helps to reveal the extent to which failed migration has modified social relations and access to resources in Senegal.

As I have argued, going back to the beginning is important for providing context into the social conditions that influenced the phenomenon of clandestine migration out of Senegal. It is also important if we want to appreciate how those social conditions continue to figure prominently in managing the consequences of forced return. It is here, in the beginning, that we find the financial and spiritual investments that are often left out of popular migration narratives, but that continue to have enduring value in Senegalese society today.

Economic Arrangements

Imagine toi: ta mère elle vient près de chez toi en te disant, “Ndary, regarde moi. Regarde cette condition dans laquelle je suis obligée de vivre. Je n’ai pas une belle maison, ni une voiture comme mes voisines. Elles ont tous les fils en Europe. Ils gagnent de l’argent et ils leur en donnent chaque mois. J’ai vendu tous mes bijoux pour que tu puisse aller en Espagne. C’est la seule manière qui nous permettra d’avancer.” Qu’est-ce que tu vas lui dire? Non? Désolé maman? Jamais! Tu vas dire oui. Tu es obligé. Cette une obligation de respecter les vœux de ta mère!

[Just imagine: your mother comes to you and says, “Ndary, look at me. Look at my living condition. I have neither a beautiful house nor a car like my [female] neighbors do. They all have sons in Europe who make money and send it home each month. I sold my jewelry so you can go to Spain. It’s the only way we will be able to get ahead in life.” What will you say to her? No? Sorry Mom? Never! You will say yes. You are obliged. It’s an obligation to respect your mother’s wishes!]

This is how Ndary, a *refoulé* from 2006, characterized the pressure sometimes felt by sons to emigrate. As pointed out in Chapter 2, the filial obligation to support maternal kin in Senegal is a powerful one. It is linked both to the domestic economies of polygynous households, wherein mothers must often compete with other co-wives for limited resources, and to religious narratives that prioritize a mother’s well being as a guarantor of spiritual protection in the afterlife.

As scholars have pointed out, mothers often played a pivotal role in sending their sons to Europe via pirogue (Ba and Ndiaye 2008; Bouilly 2008; Cessou 2010). According to Yayi Bayam Diouf, founder of the *Collectif des Femmes pour la Lutte Contre l’Immigration Clandestine* (Women’s Collective Fighting Against Clandestine Immigration, or COFLEC), women faced social stigma if they didn’t send their sons to Europe. “They said that only the ‘best’ women would have sons who arrived safely, no matter the conditions of the journey.”⁷⁹ Migration, then, became an ontological reflection of a woman’s value. The popular perception was that careless mothers were “punished by a bad twist of fate” (Cessou 2010). For many,

⁷⁹ “La voix des femmes: Yayi Bayam Diouf.” TEDx Sandaga, Institut Français, Dakar, May 28, 2013.

selling their jewelry or other property, or participating in *tontines*, helped them to generate the funds necessary to pay the fare.⁸⁰ “It was *valorisant* [socially enhancive] to send a son to Spain or Italy,” Diouf says.

And yet not all mothers were equally concerned with the social status that came with being related to a successful *émigré*. For some, migration was articulated as the only way for a young man to make a decent life for himself in a world of limited options. I spoke with several women who did not see their sons’ departure as a vector of social “enhancement,” as Diouf puts it. Rather, for them, watching their sons struggle to get ahead generated feelings of concern and suffering which overrode whatever sentiments they may have had regarding social promotion. During one of my visits to Mansour’s family compound in Médina, his mother, Seynabou, expressed a fatalistic orientation with respect to Mansour’s future. “*Dinga bëre ba tey. Dafa beugg ligeey bes bu nekk, waaye ligeey amul fii. Dafa metti torop. Moom, xalé ku baax. Moo ma jàppalé. Sama taaw mbër mu tal le.* [Life will always be a struggle for him in Senegal. He wants to work, but there are no jobs. It’s too painful.⁸¹ He’s such a good son. He helps me. My first born is a strong fighter.]” She said this while gazing down at Mansour, who was chiseling a piece of woodwork on the ground. Although he hadn’t told her about his plan before he left, nor about the money he borrowed to make the journey, a debt which continued to haunt him, she supported his decision in retrospect. Unlike Mansour’s other family members who shunned him upon his return, Seynabou understood why he had attempted to leave.⁸² It seemed a logical

⁸⁰ Tontines in Africa are collective investment arrangements in which members, largely women, consistently contribute periodic amounts of money, and each month, the bulk of the fund is distributed in revolving fashion to one, or more, of the members.

⁸¹ The Wolof word Seynabou uses, *metti*, is common when referring to difficult situations. To say *dafa metti*, is to indicate that a situation is frustrating and lacks an easy or straightforward resolution. But *metti* also refers more particularly to pain (ex. *sama bopp dafa metti*, I have a headache). I translate *metti* here as “painful” because it conveys both the sense that the circumstances are practically challenging *and* emotionally troubling at the same time.

⁸² See Mansour’s portrait.

solution to a resolutely illogical set of circumstances: even though he was a hard worker, Mansour would never *avancer*. Perhaps because of her lack of formal education, Seynabou did not speak to the historical conditions that made her son's fate a foregone conclusion. Nor did she align herself with mothers who, as Diouf describes, used their sons to achieve upward social mobility in the domestic sphere. Instead, she suffered with and on behalf of him.

Fathers, and elder men more generally, were also not immune to witnessing the struggles of youth in Senegal. In a 2011 conversation I had with El-Hajj Malik Ndiaye, a retired middle-class father in Parcelles Assainies, the subject of future prospects for *les jeunes* came up in a roundabout way. Standing on his rooftop terrace one morning, we inspected the pools of water that had collected from the rain the night before. "The builders didn't do a very good job with the sloping," El-Hajj observed. I asked him how long it took to build, and he shrugged, saying houses take a long time in Senegal. "I bought the *terre nue* [empty land] many years ago, but it was my children who paid for the construction." He began his professional career in 1956 working for Sonatel, the French telecommunications company, and then went on to become a modestly successful bureaucrat after independence. Thanks to his consistent employment, he was able to send all but one of his six children to Europe for their university education. "Today it is impossible for youth to get ahead in Senegal. That's why I sent my children abroad. But I was lucky. I had a good job most of my life. I see the young men here in the neighborhood, at the mosque, and in the streets. I worry. What's to become of our country if they cannot work?"

Several weeks later, I accompanied two friends, Laye and Moussa, as they drove around Dakar over the course of a Saturday afternoon. Moussa, who lived in France full time, had come back to Senegal for a periodic visit and, as a result, was making the rounds to various family members for the perfunctory handshake and obligatory distribution of CFAs. As part of the

ritual, we were required to linger at each house for at least forty minutes, even if no one really spoke during that time and we watched TV instead. One of the kin we called on was Moussa's uncle, Daouda, an older retired man who lived in the working-class neighborhood of Médina. Without a television or a parlor appropriate for entertaining guests, we sat on plastic chairs outside in the courtyard and talked, while a crowing rooster paraded on top of the adjacent tin roof. "When I was a *jeune*," Daouda said, "I raised sheep and other animals, and that was enough to get me started. But it's so hard today. My youngest son finished his BAC three years ago, but he couldn't get into university because it's too crowded. He struggles to make a few CFAs here and there doing odd jobs for neighbors. *Et l'état? Du deff dara!* [And the state? They don't do anything!]" As it stood, his son had no *métier*, no university degree, and no options for a formal career. Instead, he would spend his adult life struggling just to eat. Gazing up at the rooster with eyes that were cloudy from cataracts, Daouda said this was why so many went to Europe on the pirogues. "They don't want to leave. They want to stay here in Senegal with their families. But what choice do they have when there is no work? I've heard it's dangerous, but if I had the money I'd give it to him so he could go." In this way, migration was articulated as the only way for a young man to make a dignified life (*la vie digne*) for himself in a world of limited options. And yet, in the case of Daouda's son, his poverty, or lack of adequate resources, did not catalyze departure but actually precluded it.

Though there seems to be some disagreement in the literature over who was "responsible" for sending so many young men in the boats, fundraising was frequently a communal effort. Like Ndary, some scholars suggest that it was mothers who sold their belongings to fund their sons' departures (Ba and Ndiaye 2008; Bouilly 2008). Others, like Professor Fatou Sow Sarr, director of the Gender Laboratory at IFAN, would vehemently disagree. "[F]athers participate more than

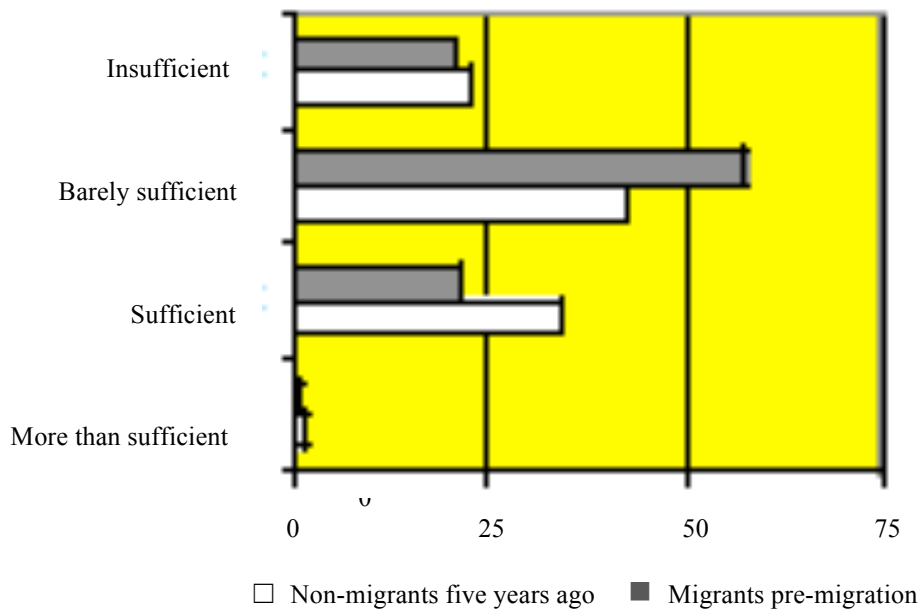
mothers in the financing of migrant voyages,” she says (APS 2009; see also Sarr et al 2009). Most of my participants mobilized a bevy of resources to pay the pirogue fare, including liquidating personal assets, calling on family members, and assuming debt. 15% reported receiving some money from family members, such as brothers, uncles, and sisters. In two cases, relatives abroad aided their aspiring kin in Senegal: Ibrahima received funds from his nephew in the United Kingdom, and Diabare was assisted by family members in Italy. In Khadim’s case, a friend in Senegal gave him the 400,000CFA (\$800) for passage. Further, while family reserves were the sole source of funding for 33% of my respondents, personal savings alone contributed almost in equal measure (30%). These data suggest that investments in boat migration were not the exclusive purview of one group; rather, they were undertaken, sometimes simultaneously, by multiple actors within the varied social networks of aspiring migrants.

According to Senegal’s Second Household Study there is a “close correlation between the decision making of the traveler and the management of costs associated with the voyage” (ESAM II 2004: 243). In cases where the migrant is the primary decision maker, he assumes most (74%) of the financial responsibility (ibid.: 244). And yet, preparations frequently involved more than just the migrant himself, even when he was the primary decision maker. As Hein de Haas points out, “Migration within and from West Africa to Europe is generally a deliberate choice and an investment by reasonably prosperous households and families to enhance their livelihoods. Household savings are often mobilised and assets such as land [are] sold to be able to pay for the migration of one family member” (2007: 27). This observation indicates more generally the extent to which families are able to mobilize funds on behalf of their migrant kin. When the decision to send someone abroad is the result of a concerted family effort, the household and extended family manage the majority (88%) of the expenses associated with

migration (ESAM II 2004: 244). Sometimes, whole villages are mobilized to come up with the pirogue fare. Sabine Cessou reports, for example, on a village in Kolda selling their communal herd of cattle in order to finance the migration of young men to Europe via pirogue (2010).

Perceptions of household resources also directly influence peoples’ aspirations to depart. While the prevailing logic suggests that those with fewer resources are more likely to migrate, the opposite is actually true. Figure 2 below indicates that well over fifty percent of pre-departure migrants in Senegal said that their household resources were “barely sufficient” for survival. By contrast, less than one quarter of pre-departure migrants said their household resources were wholly “insufficient.” What this suggests is that migration was less of an option for those whose resources were “insufficient,” which challenges the theory that poverty drives migration. Instead,

Figure 3: Perceptions of Household Resources in Senegal



Source: Schoorl et al. 2000: 69

the majority of migrants, whose household economies were reported as “barely sufficient,” had some means at their disposal to pay for passage. If clandestine migration was in fact the result of

la misère absolue (Schmitz 2008: 9), or total economic misery, then what follows could never have happened.

In Diendère, a village 70 kilometers northeast of Dakar, I met a group of 23 *refoulés*, most of whom shared stories of selling family land, automobiles, and scooters in order to come up with the funds. A predominantly agricultural community, Diendère is populated chiefly by farmers and thus holds most of its communal wealth in land. Ndoye, a farmer who made the trip twice in 2006, paying first 600,000CFA (\$1200) and then 300,000CFA (\$600), sold the land where he had previously cultivated onions for market. Another farmer, Modou, also made the trip twice in 2006, paying 800,000CFA (\$1600) each time. To pay for his fares, he first sold his car, then his land. Malik, a married farmer with four children, also sold his farm to pay for two trips—one in 2006, which cost him 400,000CFA (\$800), and one in 2007, which cost him another 350,000CFA (\$700). Ibrahim, the eldest of ten, with a wife and five children to support, also made the trip twice between 2006 and 2007, selling his farm to pay a total of 950,000CFA, or nearly \$2,000 for both attempts to reach Europe.

In the city, or periurban locations, vocational profiles are more diverse, though landholdings are still significant. Assane, a mason living in Rufisque, a suburb of Dakar, sold his land for 1.5 million CFA (\$3,000) and spent half of this sum on his single failed pirogue fare in 2006. Sekia, an electrician also living in Rufisque, sold his land for 800,000CFA (\$1,600) also in 2006 and spent nearly all of it on his fare that same year. And it was another Ibrahim's mother who sold her personal land for her son's 950,000CFA (\$1,900) 2006 journey. That same year, Mamadou, a mason living in Yembeul, exchanged his land for passage, and Ama, a married father of three and building technician from Rufisque, also sold his land, then his car, for two trips each costing \$1,000.

In other locations, assets look different despite similar fund-raising strategies. In Joal, for example, which sits 100 km south of Dakar along the *petite côte*, fishing is the prime local industry. As Abdoulaye recounted in his portrait, his profession dictated the assets he would discharge in order to prepare for the trip. Though he was hired as a captain and thus not required to pay a fare, he nevertheless felt the need to provide for his family while he was away.

Before my departure, I assembled all my belongings and sold them. Because I was the captain of the pirogue, I didn't have to pay a fare, but I had to raise money for my family to live on while I was away. I didn't know when I'd be able to start sending them money, or when I would return. I sold my pirogue, the motor, even a small house my mother had given to me. I sold everything for my family, so they could continue to pay for daily living expenses while I made the trip. It was my job to make sure they didn't want for anything until I could return.

What is surprising is that, in a country beset by a lack of “productive capital,” there was an awful lot of capital circulating between 2005 and 2008. Land was sold, workable fishing pirogues were transferred to other owners, taxis were peddled, entire portfolios were liquidated all for the sake of departure. And for those who financed these journeys, there was a significant profit to be made (Cessou 2010; Rewmi 2007; MacDougall 2009). An excerpt from my field notes is instructive:

Even if some people bartered land for passage, the point is still that some piroguier or boat financier had access to sufficient money to invest in building and outfitting some of these large ocean-going vessels. I met one such piroguier in Saint Louis last week who had agreed to facilitate interviews for me with the refoulé contingent in town. Over the course of several days, he shared some of the details about his role as a piroguier, and the fortunes he generated between 2005 and 2008. Having made his money in the fishing business for years—which meant controlling his young man's appetite for earthly pleasures, such as consorting with girls, and buying fancy clothes, and instead meant making it home early every night and getting up early every morning to work and save his money—he now lives comfortably in a newly constructed and well-appointed compound across the river from the fish market. A soft-spoken man who is prone to giggling, Hassan has a fancy pickup truck, a fine western wardrobe, and a strict policy against shaking hands with women. Because he had been relatively successful and frugal as a young fisherman, he was able to finance at least three (but quite possibly more) pirogue trips to Spain, all of which made it successfully. Doing the

math one evening after my interviews, I calculated just how much Hassan made in the business of clandestine migration, which is at least partly why he is doing as well as he is today. In my interview with Birama [a voluntary returnee from 2011], he told me that a brand new standard issue 25-meter pirogue, outfitted with nets, engines, and petrol bidons [jerricans] cost about \$7,000. If you take off the nets and add the cost of food and fuel, you're probably looking at about \$8,000. But if each person pays, say on average, 500,000CFA (\$1000) and there are upwards of 100 people in the boat, then that alone generates \$100,000. Subtract the expenses, and you've still come away with \$92,000 each time. Multiply that by three (known) voyages for Hassan, and that totals almost \$300,000. Given the prevailing image of Senegal as "least-developed country," I can't help but be stunned by how much wealth was being generated between 2005 and 2008. Of course, that wealth was also consolidated in a few hands. (May 21, 2013)

In popular narratives among *refoulés*, in fact, it was often suggested that boat owners and investors bought their European visas before the pirogue had left Senegal. "They were long gone before we even set out," Moustapha, a *refoulé* from 2009, reflected. As such, whether or not one arrived safely, the fare was almost exclusively non-refundable.⁸³ No legal or social arbitration could recover what was lost. In Abdoulaye's case, this meant his means of survival were spent. Not surprisingly, these financial arrangements from nearly a decade ago continue to shape failed migrants' abilities to conceive of a future in Senegal today. But they are only part of the investment story.

Spiritual Provisions

The first verse of the Qur'an opens with the aphorism *Bismil-lāhir-Rahmānir-Rahīm*, a phrase that both invokes the singularity of God's mercy and articulates the speaker's intention of submitting to His dispensations.⁸⁴ In Senegal, as in other Muslim-majority countries, it is common practice to precede everyday acts, such as eating, entering a room, or beginning a

⁸³ I did hear of some rare cases in which boat owners gave returned migrants a spot in another pirogue free of charge.

⁸⁴ Importantly, this phrase occurs 114 times in the Qur'an, and begins 113 of the 114 surahs.

journey with the word *Bismillah*.⁸⁵ This invocation is meant to focus the heart's intention and the body's action on God's will. In other words, if one is to begin something, it should be done with God in mind. During the summer of 2011, I lived with a family in Dakar where, one early morning, the whole household awoke to bid *bon voyage* to the elderly parents who would be visiting a Tijani shrine in Morocco. In the darkness of pre-dawn, the father stood on the threshold of the doorway reciting prayers for a safe journey. His youngest daughter, Ndeye, later explained to me that no Muslim would think of undertaking a voyage without first asking for God's protection.

While departure from Senegal was seen among young men as requisite to their future success, travel was nevertheless widely considered to be dangerous. As a liminal space between departure and arrival, transit was physically and spiritually uncertain (see Chapter 4). In his portrait, Abdoulaye recounted the storms, sickness, exhaustion, and mystical visions that were visited upon his pirogue during its nine-day passage to Spain. That he was able to withstand the traumas of passage and deliver his human cargo safely was, according to him, a direct result of the spiritual preparations he had undertaken beforehand. Being the captain of the boat, he was ultimately responsible for the lives he carried across the Atlantic. After an especially terrifying encounter with a passenger, whose erratic behavior during a storm actually put the entire boat at risk, Abdoulaye was able to restore calm. "He wanted to kill me," Abdoulaye recalled. "Without a captain, the pirogue is doomed... [But] my *mara* [marabout] told me something like this would happen." As such, Abdoulaye was prepared for the worst. To avoid the perils of movement and the vulnerability it generates, clandestine migrants undertook a variety of strategies to protect themselves before setting out, not the least of which was seeking out the counsel, blessings, and

⁸⁵ In all of my voyages in *sept-places*, or bush taxis, across Senegal, the driver always uttered *Bismillah* as he sat down and buckled himself in before taking off in a cloud of dust. People enter buses, urban taxis, and other forms of transport by reciting the same invocation.

authoritative sanction, from their spiritual elders. Whereas only half of the *refoulés* I interviewed told their parents of their plans to emigrate clandestinely, all of them conferred with their marabout prior to setting out. In order to understand these practices, we must first explore the significance of the maraboutic relationship in Senegalese society.⁸⁶

Ninety-five percent of all Senegalese identify as Muslim. Of those, most follow one of the diverse Sufi “ways,” or *tariqa*.⁸⁷ Broadly speaking, Sufism has been distinguished as a mystical and philosophical tradition that focuses on “striving after spiritual perfection” (Chittick 2007: 19). As part of this “striving,” Sufi practice relies substantially on the relationship between master and student, or the *marabout* or *shaykh* (religious guide) and his *talibé* (disciple).⁸⁸ As William Chittick observes, a disciple’s initiation into a *tariqa* is facilitated by the *marabout*, who “transmit[s] an invisible spiritual force or blessing (*baraka*) that opens up the disciple’s soul to transformation” (ibid.: 28-29). This “invisible spiritual force” is something young *refoulés* frequently claimed to have experienced firsthand as a result of contact with their *shayks*.⁸⁹ When

⁸⁶ The majority of my respondents (89%) had marabouts.

⁸⁷ Though people in Senegal use *tariqa* and brotherhood (*confrérie*) interchangeably to refer to their religious affiliations, it should be noted that these two terms are conceptually and historically different. Conceptually, a *tariqa* is a spiritual “path” or method of achieving mystical knowledge, whereas a brotherhood is an institutional framework, or structure of adherents, which has social and political significance (Glover 2007: 46). As Knut Vikor argues, “We may, and do, have *tariqa*-Ways without *tariqa*-brotherhoods; but we cannot have *tariqa*-brotherhoods without *tariqa*-Ways” (2000: 441). On the historical level, *tariqas* accommodated a fluid and flexible membership before the eighteenth century, which often resulted in Sufi adherents being initiated into multiple *tariqas* and receiving multiple *wirds* (see Babou 2007). After the middle of the eighteenth century, however, brotherhoods began insisting on exclusive membership and adherence to the founding saint’s spiritual authority, due in large part to radical social transformations taking place as a result of colonialism. The “new” saints of the eighteenth century “viewed themselves not only as authoritative spiritual guides, but also as the leaders of an Islamic religious revival that should enable Muslim societies to affirm their strength in a world which was becoming increasingly dominated by the Europeans” (Abun-Nasr 2007: 128). John Glover would actually argue that Islamic reform, revivalism, and jihad in West Africa was a response to the Atlantic slave trade and thus predated the official colonialism by about two hundred years (2007).

⁸⁸ The *shaykh-talibé* relationship is not particular to Senegal, but is widespread in a variety of Muslim-majority contexts.

⁸⁹ The ubiquitous visual representation of religious figures in Senegalese society is one measure of their importance in everyday life. Portraits of the founding saints, as well as more contemporary *caliphs* within a particular brotherhood, can be purchased in nearly every corner of the city and are proudly exhibited in homes, offices, Kar Rapides, taxis, and talismans. The faces of these sacred men adorn everything from t-shirts to graffiti to paintings. See Buggenhagen (2010), Roberts and Roberts (2000, 2007).

I asked them to describe their marabouts, I was often met with effusive and inexhaustible narratives that revolved around love, reverence, and, above all, obedience. “Whatever he asks, you do it,” Amadou, a Tijani *refoulé* from 2007, explained. “Even if he asks you to walk until your feet are blistered, you do it because he is the only one who can show you the right way. He is the one who gives you the *wird*. Only your marabout knows the power of the *wird* and can transmit that power to you.”

Central to Sufi praxis is the acquisition of divine knowledge through the recitation of the *wird*. A series of obligatory and secret litanies to be recited at particular intervals each day, the exact iteration of the *wird* varies depending on the specific *tariqa*, or order. Generally, however, it consists in soundlessly reciting particular phrases hundreds of times.⁹⁰ Adherents frequently keep track of their count by using Sufi prayer beads (*misbaha*) not unlike a rosary. *Misbaha* most commonly accommodate ninety-nine beads made of wood, bone, glass, or metal, each corresponding to the ninety-nine Names of God.⁹¹ On any given morning or evening in Senegal, buses, taxis, Kar Rapides, sidewalks, donkey carts, benches, and prayer rugs are often crowded with people fingering their prayer beads and silently mouthing the *wird*.

Most disciples in Senegal have a keen appreciation for the emergent properties of prayer. According to my participants, recitation of the *wird* or the *dhikr* brings a disciple closer to God in the moment, and brings quantifiable reward in the future.⁹² It was common practice among the

⁹⁰ A general formula entails asking for forgiveness by repeating *astaghfirullah* one hundred times; asking God to bless the Prophet and his family by reciting the *Salat 'ala an-Nabi* one hundred times; repeating the first part of the *shahada*, or profession of faith (*La Ilaha illAllah*), which signifies the singularity of God, one hundred times; and reciting the second part of the *shahada* (*Muhammadun Rasulullah*), which discloses that Muhammad is His Prophet, once.

⁹¹ See the photograph that opens this chapter

⁹² Like the *wird*, the *dhikr* (literally, “remembrance of God”) is also a recitation practice, though it is usually performed in groups and entails not so much a formulated litany like the *wird*, but a sustained recitation of one (or more) of God’s Names. *Dhikrs* are sometimes amplified and can often go on for many hours, or until dawn. (See Abun-Nasr 2007: 188-194; Glover 2007: 46.)

young men I met to calculate a kind of spiritual *bilan*, or register, to keep track of their accruing *bénéfices*. Abdoulaye explained:

An extra *salat* [prayer] can bring ten fold its normal recompense. Reciting even one Surah al-Ikhlās is heavier on the scale than if you recite one quarter of the Qur'an. It brings more blessings. It is the same with the *wird* and *dhikr*. When you say Allah's name over and over, you cannot escape Him. We remember God in this way. But it's important to have a guide show you how to recite. If you pronounce something wrong, it's very dangerous. And some things you're not supposed to recite at all until you're ready. Your marabout makes sure that you don't use certain Names until you've reached the correct spiritual level.

Because, as Abdoulaye suggests, the Names of God were powerful, reciting them was like mixing volatile compounds: a dash too much of an open vowel might invite bad luck. In Islam, the power of words and the importance of proper pronunciation cannot be overstated. At the most mundane level, the five daily prayers, which require the recitation of the Qur'an, form the fundamental praxis of faith for Muslims in Senegal. In doing so, however, it is critical to keep in mind that, for them, the Qur'an is not a "book" in the traditional sense of the word, as having been written by someone on earth. Rather, the Qur'an is the original and unadulterated word of God. Therefore, reciting it invokes the awesome power of the Almighty.

As Annemarie Schimmel points out, "A wrong application of a divine name was considered to produce grave consequences for the person who used it or for those close to him. It is in this field of *dhikr* of the names that the wisdom of the mystical guide is particularly needed to instruct and supervise the disciple who may, otherwise, be exposed to serious spiritual and mental dangers" (1978: 178). None of the young men I met spoke Arabic. Therefore, they could not know what they were saying without the help of an intermediary. The importance of proper recitation was summed up by Iran, a *refoulé* from 2007. "*Il faut demander à ton marabout pour que tu puisse réciter correcte! Sinon, tu vas pêcher sans le savoir* [You must ask your marabout how to recite correctly! If not, you will commit a sin without knowing it]."

Given the importance of knowing both what to recite and how to recite it, a marabout's good guidance was a matter of existential necessity. As both Amadou and Abdoulaye's comments reflect, one does not "learn" the *wird* or the *dhikr* as an independent agent; one *receives* them from a spiritual guide, who has also received them as part of his training. "With the *wird* is transmitted not only mystical knowledge, but also an identity and, ultimately, an authority that constitute the *tariqa* as a spiritual identity" (Vikor 2000: 442). Indeed, this "spiritual identity" was critically important for most disciples I met in Senegal. For Abdoulaye, following the Qadiri path gave him a sense of who he was and where he was located in the cosmology of Islam. Being able to trace his "*mara's*" spiritual lineage back to the founding saint, Sayyid Abdul Qadir al-Jilani (1077-1166), was a fundamental part of why he chose to align himself with his religious guide. "My *mara* was a student of Cheikh Muhammad Mokhtar in Mauritania, who learned the 'way' from the grandson of Siddi Abdullah al-Jilani, a descendant of the founding saint," he explained. Abdoulaye also pointed out that the title of "Sayyid" that preceded founding saint's surname meant that he was a descendant of the Prophet. "His father was descended from Imam Hassan, and his mother from Imam Hussein, who were both grandsons of the Prophet, peace be upon him." For this reason, the Qadiri line was particularly auspicious. Abdoulaye articulated his desire to embody the same *baraka* of his spiritual lineage by way of his connection, through varying degrees of separation, to God's Messenger.

Being related to Muhammad—who is unequivocally characterized as God's most perfect human—was interpreted as a mark of holiness. Like the transmission of the *wird*, a founding saint's holiness, or *baraka*, was passed down to his *maqaddams* (marabouts), who became the incarnate carriers of the *tariqa's* esoteric knowledge. Today, as many young *refoulés* described to me, the marabout in Senegal functions as an intermediary between a disciple and the original

saintly fount of divine wisdom. “*Donc, tu le dois la soumission totale!* [Thus, you owe him total submission!]” Iran insisted. With this in mind, then, it seems logical that a disciple would seek out his marabout before undertaking a dangerous journey. For the young men I met, consulting with their marabouts before departure was therefore a critical part of their preparation. And yet, obtaining sanction was less a matter of gaining permission than it was a mode of protection.

In a conversation I had with Cheikh Malik Ibrahim Diop, a minor Dakarois marabout, he made it clear that Islam allowed for a man to enter another country, even if he was not welcome, if his intention was to support his family. “I see how difficult it is here for many young people,” Diop reflected. “I understand why they are leaving. They seek a better life. God made this earth for men to travel, to learn of his creations, to partake in what He has given. It is through seeing the world that we come to closer to an understanding of Allah’s mercy.” He continued:

It’s acceptable to leave one’s country in order to make money. As it’s difficult here in Senegal to live correctly, if you don’t have money or enough resources to support your parents, your family... if God has not given you the means where you are and if you have the hope that emigration will provide those means to *s’en sortir* [prevail] with God’s help, then Islam is completely in agreement with that.

Diop’s comment on living “correctly” is worth underscoring. In Senegal, achieving correct living as a Muslim is a serious ambition and a popular topic of discussion. Informal conversations frequently turn to debates about what constitutes proper comportment, what one should avoid, and what one should seek out. Such recommendations spring from the belief that the Qur’an is a complete compendium of guidelines that describe not only which behaviors result in admittance to paradise, but which behaviors encourage health and happiness here on earth. Despite the fact that clandestine migration was illegal in the eyes of international law, the Qur’an, which superseded human law in authority, sanctioned departure if it ensured the accomplishment of correct living as a Muslim. As we saw in Chapter 2, that “correct” living was often directly tied

to supporting family members, and thus migration was seen as a kind of *hijra*, or protective migration (Robinson 2013).

For Diop, preparing his disciples for clandestine migration was not simply a matter of approving their decision out of hand. Rather, he needed to protect them from ill-fated journeys by “seeing” the passage before it happened through divination.

With regards to the prayers that we [marabouts] make, in Senegal, and all across Africa, it is our right and our obligation. Before leaving, or doing anything, a person must seek the counsel of his marabout. It’s compulsory to see what is and is not feasible. The Prophet never did anything without using *la voyance* [divination]. It’s important to know that *la voyance* of the Prophet is different from that which is used by sorcerers or others in Africa, which is totally illegitimate in Islam. The type of divination used by the Prophet, what we call *listekhare* in Wolof, is the only form accepted in Islam. In this case, you recite certain verses of the Qur’an before bedtime, and then your dreams will tell you what happens, and what sacrifices to make. Thus, for those who want to leave via pirogue, or for those who wish to emigrate, it’s obligatory to visit your marabout so that he may make prayers and the *listekhare* for you. Only this gives you the authority to depart or not. And if there are sacrifices to perform before parting, your marabout will see to it that they are made. In this way, you will be able to say goodbye to your family in peace.

Echoing Amadou’s comment above, Diop underlined the “compulsory” nature of consulting with one’s marabout before making a decision. As he articulated it, the issue was not simply a matter of submitting to the marabout’s authority as a matter of course. Rather, by abiding the marabout’s recommendations, which gave disciples “the authority to depart,” young men could face the vagaries of passage knowing that their destinies had been assured in some way.⁹³

⁹³ The faculty of sight is intrinsic to Sufi practice. The Hadith of Gabriel describes Islam as having three dimensions: *islam* (submission), *iman* (faith), and *ihsan* (or worshipping God “as if you see him”). It is this latter dimension, *ihsan*, with which Sufis are preoccupied. As William Chittick observes, “The domain of right activity [is] the specialty of jurists, that of right thinking, the specialty of theologians, and that of right seeing the specialty of Sufis” (2007: 9). The goal of many Sufis I met was to transform their inner dispositions in order to be able to see God in everything. Importantly, this “seeing” is not accomplished with the eyes, but with the heart, which is possible only through the annihilation of the self. With respect to divination, sight becomes even more critical because it functions as a kind of “unveiling.” Again, William Chittick says, “Sufism differentiates itself from other perspectives in Islamic thought by holding that true understanding is the lifting of the veils that obscure the face of the heart... [T]he most general and common term for this sort of understanding is *kashf*, a word that can best be translated as ‘unveiling’” (ibid.: 179). As part of his divination, or *listekhare*, Malik attempted to lift a veil of sorts and “see” what

Most *refoulés* recalled spending some portion of their savings on sacrifices before departure. Babacar's marabout recommended purchasing a ram to distribute to poor families in his neighborhood of Thiaroye. The ram cost him 75,000CFA in 2005 (\$150), which was nothing compared to his fare (\$900). But such a sacrifice would still "accrue blessings" and improve his chances for success, he explained. Twenty-five of my respondents were either captains or crew and thus were not required to pay for passage. However, that did not mean that preparations were free. For Abdoulaye, consulting with several marabouts prior to departure also "improved their chances" of making a safe journey. "Each time, you must give a little something [e.g. alms] to the *mara*," he said. "This is how he survives. He is a spiritual man. So his food comes from the small money or rice his *talibés* take to him."

If the majority of marabouts were engaged in "predicting" the outcome of the voyage, not all of them publicly sanctioned clandestine journeys (Ba and Ndiaye 2008; Diallo et al. 2007). For some, encouraging illegal migration was strictly forbidden in Islam. Cheikh Moustapha Ousseynou Niassé, a grand nephew of Baye Niassé, the founding saint of the Niassiyya brotherhood, made his opposition to clandestine migration clear.

When you want to go to another country, you should ask permission from the government of that country. If they invite you, you are welcome. But you cannot force the border to get inside. It's as if you were to enter a house without telling the owners that you are coming. The country is a big house... It belongs to those people who are there because Allah gave it to them. There are borders; there are laws that we should respect. So Islam is *against* that kind of migration. But Islam, at the same time, allows people to travel. Allah said, 'Go around the world and discover the others. It is Me that made you into tribes and nations so that you would go around and get to know each other.' Islam asks us to travel, yes, but we should also respect the laws of other tribes and nations.

In contrast to Diop, who clearly articulated the spiritual "legality" of clandestine migration, Niassé was more equivocal. On the one hand, God commands people to travel the world in order

God would allow. On the practice of *listekhare* in Senegal, see Sow (2012): 54-63. On the importance of dreams in the Islamic tradition, see Mittermaier (2011).

to know each other. On the other hand, human laws must be obeyed. Without doubting his sincerity, Niasse's opposition to clandestine migration may well have been influenced, at least in part, by his personal social and political position as a relatively prominent marabout of the Niassiyya *tariqa*.

Educated in Morocco, world traveler and polyglot, Niasse described his intentions as a marabout as distinctly global. During our visit, he showed me a collection of photographs taken in 2009 during a trip he made to the United States to meet with his disciples and various state dignitaries. In one image, he is shaking hands with a US State Department aide after receiving a Certificate of Peace Mediation. In another, he is being designated as a Goodwill Ambassador and honorary citizen of the state of Arkansas. As a popular marabout and the founder of several development organizations in Senegal that seek a decidedly international audience, Niasse's ambitions may have disinclined him to condone activities that could conceivably be labeled as illegal.⁹⁴ This is more so the case with sponsors in the United States and Europe, both of which have vested interests in managing irregular flows. Other less visible marabouts in Senegal, like Diop, were able to speak of clandestine migration without reservation because, on some level, they did not have as much to lose.⁹⁵

My meeting with Niasse had been arranged by a friend of mine, who also happened to be one of his disciples. We had arrived at Niasse's *zawiya* (religious school) in Dakar's neighborhood of

⁹⁴ Niasse founded the *Mouvement International pour la Paix Entre les Peuples*, or MIPP (International Movement for Peace Between People) in 2004. In 2011, it became the *Mouvement pour la Santé, l'Éducation, et la Paix*, or MOSEP (Movement of Health, Education, and Peace), which published a quarterly bulletin that featured articles on homosexuality and human rights that were strikingly progressive for Africa. And most recently, it was renamed *Mouvement Pour la Dignité de l'Afrique*, or MODA (Movement for African Dignity) in 2014. With offices in six West and North African countries, as well as the United States, France, Italy and Spain, MODA describes itself as a humanitarian organization that seeks to promote development through a Pan-African model of political participation (<http://moda-international.org/qui-sommes-nous/>).

⁹⁵ Interestingly, both Diop and Niasse were marabouts in the same *tariqa* (the Niassiyya), which suggests that there was little consensus and a surprising degree of autonomy among marabouts. It also suggests a kind of "burden-sharing" at play in which the figurehead publicly condemns a certain practice, while his subordinates facilitate that practice behind the scenes.

Grand Yoff to find the waiting room populated by all manner of young men poring over well-worn copies of the Qur'an and quietly reciting surahs. When Niasse was ready to receive us, we were escorted inside the compound to his parlor door where my friend, who was normally a very proud man, proceeded to bend over and enter the room in acute prostration. With his head down and eyes averted, he crawled on his knees to where Niasse was sitting and gently kissed the marabout's hand before retreating to the floor beside a couch upon which he dared not sit. "You must think this all a bit strange," Niasse said to me in perfect English. "Please have a seat."

Niasse reclined on a large leather armchair at the back of the room, accompanied by two oscillating fans and a large flat screen television. Pale waves of white fabric from his grand boubou spilled over the sides of the chair, while on his lap three black cell phones beeped and chimed without rest. During our visit, I watched as young disciples entered and retreated, bringing cold drinks or phone chargers, each one bowing in submission. At first, the performance seemed like an enactment of compulsory reverence. The disciples looked positively *afraid* of offending the Imam. And yet, in talking with some of them later, it became clear that, although trepidation was part of it, it was not the only thing.

Niasse's disciples, including my friend, were profoundly aware of the marabout's ambitions to participate in the development landscape in Senegal. His ability to travel the world legally, to discuss issues of foreign aid and humanitarian assistance in Arabic, French, and English, to embrace and articulate an Islam that was congruent with international discourses on human rights, and to effectively place himself as a player within a growing niche of Islamic development in Senegal meant that he had access to visible forms of power. In this way, the disciples' supplications to Niasse were not, at least not completely, inspired by fear. Rather, they

were also performances of hope. To be tethered, if tangentially, to Niasse allowed the possibility that they, too, might someday partake of the power he brokered.

Though they seemed to disagree amongst themselves about the moral acceptability of embarking on such voyages, marabouts were nevertheless important actors and voices in the conversations surrounding clandestine migration out of Senegal. Many, like Malik, permitted and assisted young men in preparing for the trials of maritime passage. In Abdoulaye's case, his marabout's sanction was both authoritative and protective. Without it, Abdoulaye would have had to face the dangers of transit alone. Or, more accurately, he would not have gone at all.

As scholars have pointed out, the marabout possesses a kind of charismatic authority in Senegalese society (Copans 1988; Coulon 1981; Cruise O'Brien 1975). And yet, this authority is not self-evident. While his power is, historically speaking, linked to his placement in a lineage of spiritual masters and saints (*silsila*), a marabout's contemporary status is not simply the result of his being vetted in some institutionalized way. Nor is it an example of young men blindly or superstitiously following the edicts of a cult figure. Rather, the power of the marabout was also embedded in what it meant to be a Sufi disciple. A *mara's* authority resided in the embodied practices and experiences of those who supported him. One vector of that support was the fabrication, use, and profound belief in the power of the *gris-gris*.

Preceding the arrival of Islam in West Africa, *gris-gris*, or protective amulets, were worn by people to fend off illness, bad luck, possession, and death (Carter 1997: 68-69; see also Sow 2012). And while a good many people at the time injured themselves or died as a result of "testing" the protective powers of their talismans, the allure of the *gris-gris* as an object of invulnerability survived. "[I]t was by way of this magic function possessed by amulet makers that allowed the marabouts to better insert themselves in traditional society [in the eighteenth

century],” writes Abdoulaye Bara Diop (1981: 238). By appropriating local technologies, such as the *gris-gris*, newly Islamicized spiritual guides were able to create a novel mystical niche in which to ply their sacred trades. In part, the “magic” imputed to *gris-gris* in the eighteenth century was tied to the mystique surrounding the written word, particularly the Qur’an. “Any given letter was believed to contain mystical baraka, either from its original [Qur’anic] source or from some other scientific imputations the marabout conducted upon it. Letters condensed the ability to interpret, decipher and make specific recommendations” (Sow 2012: 114). As a man of letters, the marabout was skilled in the arts of deciphering, and interpreting divine knowledge for the illiterate masses. What remained intellectually hidden for most people in Senegal, because of their inability to read the Qur’an, also remained physically hidden in the *gris-gris*, a fact which made their power all the more supernatural.⁹⁶

Talismans that contained verses from the Qur’an were, and still are, considered powerful protective devices. At one point during my meeting with Diop in 2011, he retreated to another room and returned with an assortment of *gris-gris* he had commissioned for some of his disciples. He had chosen specific verses from the Qur’an and transcribed them onto small pieces of paper, which were then enclosed in the leather pouches and sewn together by an artisan (*wuude*) in the local market. Sometimes, other materials would be included, such as animal fur, feathers, or powders depending on the request and the objective. Ornamentation ranged from the single undecorated leather square to ringlets of *gris-gris* strung together on a cord (*ndombo*). Used for a variety of applications, it is not uncommon, for example, to see young children wearing *gris-gris* (*dialawlé*) around their arms, neck or waist. Being too young to supplicate God directly, the talismans are used as protection from ill health and sudden death. Of the *gris-gris*

⁹⁶ As Ralph Austen notes, “The opposition between *zahir* (visible) and *batin* (concealed) religious knowledge gained broader acceptance with the rise of Sufism... The most common application of *batin* throughout the Islamic world involves the manipulation of sacred texts: sewing them into leather-covered amulets” (2010: 96).

that Diop showed me that day in his sitting room, one was for a man who would be making a trip to Libya “to try and make it across the Mediterranean.” Another was for a disciple who would be leaving from Casamance.



Gris Gris_1, Dakar 2011

The proof of the *gris-gris* was in the proverbial pudding. With respect to clandestine migration, young men made it clear that safe arrival was, at least in part, a result of the *gris-gris* their marabouts had given them to wear. Like the *wird*, *gris-gris* afforded spiritual protection because disciples both believed in them and because they experienced them as evidence-based



Gris Gris_2, Dakar 2011

phenomena. Such practices also “worked” in some way because they *changed* the person performing or wearing them.⁹⁷ When describing to me how they felt while wearing *gris-gris*, reciting the *wird*, participating in weekly *dhikr* sessions, attending mosque, or even conducting one of the five daily prayers, young men would say to me, ‘*Ça te donne la force!* [It gives you power!]’ For most, these experiences were transformative on both a spiritual and visceral level. In his analysis of the Baye Niassé brotherhood in Senegal, Joseph Hill underlines the importance of exploring embodied techniques as inherent to the cultivation of religious subjectivity. For Hill, “the self and the body are not simply objects passively inscribed by anonymous social structures but are objects and media of intentional transformations” (2005: 72).

⁹⁷ A ritual, as Victor Turner has argued, works to the extent that it transforms the person undergoing it (1969). In fact, it is precisely the aim of the ritual to act as a path of conversion for the social subject.

Often, in addition to recommendations for sacrifices and *gris-gris*, specially formulated ablutions were prepared and given to adherents with special instructions for use before departure. Like the *lutteurs* who wash with various protective liquids fabricated by their marabouts before a wrestling match, young men were instructed to bathe ritually in the tonics their marabouts gave them. “Sometimes, they put plants in there,” Youssoupha said. “Plants you can only find in the bush. Other times, your mara will write some verses from the Qur’an, and then let it soak in the bottle with the water or milk. And then you bathe with it. But you must let it wash all the uncleanness out of your heart for the ablution to work.” Afterwards, there were special prayers to be recited to ensure safe travel. A 2008 pocket-sized cautionary comic book produced in part

Figure 4: Modou and His Ablutions



Source: Tijan 2008: 20

by the International Organization for Migration, which was meant to discourage young men from departing, shows the main character, Modou, dousing himself in a variety of mystic liquids before heading out on his fateful journey.

Evading certain death in the open ocean was seen as divine providence unleashed by God's interventions. As Abdoulaye put it: "Anyone who arrived safely [on the Canary Islands], it wasn't their doing, but divine will." By preparing in certain ceremonial ways, migrants could put themselves in alignment with God's will and thus increase their chances of safe passage.

Abdoulaye said:

We are Senegalese and we believe in the mystical. So before our departure, I paid the marabouts a lot of money to perform sacrifices for us so that we would arrive safely without issue... They prayed for us. They gave us *gris-gris*, which we wore on our bodies. They also gave us orders, such as to kill a sheep. Because we're Senegalese, we're African. And we believe in this. Besides, I was the captain, and if anything happened to the pirogue I would have suffered the consequences [in the afterlife].

As a fisherman who'd spent his life in a boat, Abdoulaye had more personal knowledge of the vagaries of the sea than many of his passengers. He knew the journey would be long and dangerous. Conducting a pirogue across the open Atlantic would not have been easy no matter what the circumstances. But with so many souls aboard, it would be an especially serious, and potentially grave, challenge. As his comment reflects, being the captain meant that Abdoulaye was responsible for the passengers arriving unharmed, so much so that his own existential fate was hanging in the balance. For that reason, safety was critically important, requiring patient investments of time and money to ensure its fulfillment.

Abdoulaye's comment also reflects the possibility that he, like a good marabout, was ultimately in charge of protecting and conducting his human cargo in the "right path" toward security and safety. In this sense, the ocean was a metaphor for the world; passing through it

required a protector and a guide. It was Abdoulaye, after all, who faced the *dëm*, warning him of the potential consequences. Despite the shock of realizing there was a shape-shifter on board, Abdoulaye was prepared for this spiritual trial, in part, because his marabout had foretold it. He had been “trained” both as a captain and as a guide, a subjective position he continued to cultivate long after his repatriation.

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that investments of money and spirit were an important part of the social process of clandestine migration out of Senegal. Because clandestine migration was not conceptualized as an individualistic endeavor, but one that entailed communal desires, departure was rarely, if ever, carried out alone. Migrants frequently and actively sought the support, counsel, advice, and authoritative sanction of others during the planning stages. The aim in providing this background has been to suggest that these investments of energy, hopes, capital, and imagination continue to inform *refoulé* subjectivities today.

The young men in this chapter described how their personal and family resources were liquidated to fund the journey, a reality that contradicts the prevailing stereotype that clandestine migrants were victims of chronic poverty. The reality is that the vast majority of them had access to some manner of property, which was transformed into fungible or cash payments, though perhaps not always of fair market value. Urgency increased underselling and left migrants and their families with fewer resources with which to make ends meet. In a climate of persistent economic uncertainty, the consequences of these fiscal gambles became all the more serious as migrants were forced to return empty handed. And yet, the hope they sustained, and the trials they experienced, have enduring value for most. If part of the price of existence is to embrace the

idea that change, however far flung it may seem, is possible, then these *refoulés* came to the table ready to take their chances.

At the very least, survival was one concrete return for the investments they made. As Abdoulaye's narrative made clear, it was the thoughtful calculations and investments of time that ensured a safe arrival on Tenerife. His case in itself is exemplary: he traveled to Mauritania to purchase the GPS plans, he sold all of his fishing gear, he consulted with his marabout, and he made the recommended sacrifices. Moreover, he went to extra lengths to pay other marabouts to ensure a safe voyage for his passengers. These were necessary measures that ultimately paid off. Without such preparations, Abdoulaye and the 110 souls in his boat, according to him, would have been doomed.

As part of examining the spiritual preparations undertaken prior to setting out, this chapter has also explored the maraboutic relationship as a fundamental feature of Senegalese society. Amadou's comment about walking until one's feet are blistered reflects the common belief in Senegal that one's marabout is a conduit of divine knowledge, who requires and deserves total submission. On the one hand, this submission should not be misconstrued as passive faith. Rather, as the young men I met described, it gave them "power." On the other hand, such submission did articulate within broader structures of religious authority in Senegal. Scholars have explained the marabout's status as a conduit of divine knowledge by focusing on his lineage or connection to the founding saint of a brotherhood. Such religious authority grants him special access to mystical truths in the eyes of his adherents. As Joseph Hill reflects, "Religious knowledge is inseparably bound up with authority, for what is passed on is not simply information... but the spiritual blessing (*baraka*) that became associated with any given piece of knowledge when given to the lineage founder" (2005: 83). In other words, a marabout's power

comes by way of his *baraka*, which is “linked to the lineage, and the spiritual power of a historical ancestor [which is] thus diffused to his extended family” (Vikor 2000: 442). The influence of a particular Sufi brotherhood in Senegal, and the spiritual leader who founded it, is based largely on the *silsila*, a “spiritual genealogy” or “chain of transmission” that traces saintly lineages back to North Africa and the Middle East (Brenner 1984: 44; Chittick 2007: 28; Hanretta 2009: 34; Glover 2007; Saheb 1998: 56; Ware 2014; Vikor 2000: 441; Villalón 1995: 131 and 282 fn. 65). Divine knowledge and religious practices have thus been passed down, exchanged, and modified over time, a process that links contemporary practitioners to their historical forebears. Importantly, the *silsila* is not an antiquated practice unfamiliar to everyday adherents in Senegal. In fact, locating one’s marabout in a spiritual constellation of revered figures was, for many, requisite to abiding him.⁹⁸ As we saw with Abdoulaye, it was important for him to be able to place himself within his marabout’s lineage, which he could profitably trace back to the Prophet (Rosander and Westerlund 1999; Vikor 1993; Villalón 1995).

In attempting to understand a disciple’s submission to his marabout, scholars have highlighted the transmission of *baraka* as a “social apparatus” of religious authority (Geertz 1968: 2). The problem with looking at religious authority this way is that it ignores the embodied experiences of people who aspire to piety, and the meaningful practices they undertake to achieve it (Asad 1993; Deeb 2006; Gilsenen 1982; Hirschkind 2006; Mahmood 2005). As I have argued, if a young disciple’s submission to his marabout looked at first like an act of fear, it was also an act of aspiration.

⁹⁸ It also fails to account for contestation and dispute within religious practices and hierarchies. See Khan (2012) and Hirschkind (2006). Another problem is that it posits religion as a “transhistorical and transcultural phenomenon... separate from [histories of] politics, law, and science,” and thus as exempt from analyses of power (Asad 1993: 28). For an analysis of the marabout in West Africa as a politically and historically constituted subject, see Kebe (2012).

As previously discussed, the *wird* was articulated as a kind of gateway through which adepts would pass once their preliminary spiritual training was over. Being given authoritative permission to recite the *wird* connected disciples to a larger history of Sufi saints, scholars and clerics who had come before and had opened the “path,” or *tariqa*, to enlightenment. But the *wird* was an important threshold for disciples to cross not only because it soldered connections across time and space; the *wird* “worked” in some way because it *changed* the person reciting it. Likewise, *gris-gris* were an embodied technology that transformed the body of the migrant who wore them by “encircling” him in a “community of faith... [which] protects and promotes free movement in dangerous or potentially dangerous situations” (Carter 1997: 69).

One of the consequences of passage, outside of wholesale expiration, was a kind of spiritual no-man’s-land from which there was little hope of return. Migrants and marabouts alike described preparations as requisite to recovery from the traumas of Atlantic passage. Abdoulaye explained it this way: “Of course it’s a risk. But if you don’t talk to your *marabout*, if he doesn’t protect you or pray for you, then the voyage is so hard, it can break the spirit.” As we will see in the next chapter, transit was a physically and spiritually dangerous undertaking. For those who did not avail themselves of spiritual protection, passage alone was traumatic enough to drive people mad. As *refoulés* confirmed to me time and again, *les fous* (literally, “the crazies”) populating urban Senegal today are the sad result of making the journey without the benefit of the various mystical technologies discussed here: sanction, amulets, ablutions, sacrifices, and prayers. While there is no way for me to confirm this, my own observation is that, during my first trip to Senegal in 2007, at the height of the clandestine migration phenomenon, I did not witness any such *fous* in Dakar. However, when I returned in 2011 (and later in 2013-2013), after the mass repatriations of clandestine migrants, these street dwellers were strikingly present

in a variety of urban neighborhoods. From the elite *tubaab* boulevards in Les Almadies that catered to the discothèque crowd to the dusty avenues of low to middle class Ouakam, the *fous* could be seen napping under trees or “aimlessly” roaming the streets. Additionally, and despite not having any verifiable proof, all these men looked to be roughly of the same generation as most of my participants (20-40 years old). In her work with Senegalese migrants in Andalusia, Spain, Liliana Suárez-Navaz observes, “Senegalese believe misfortune will result if a *Marabout* does not bless the voyage and provide a *gri-gri* (protective charm)... [they] recount stories of young men who drowned... or faced arrest and deportation because they ignored the advice of the religious leaders” (2004: 169). For Abdoulaye, who required a “spiritual re-entry” after forced return, his marabout was the only one who could help him recover. As such, sanity itself was linked to the marabout’s curative powers.

As I have argued, clandestine boat migration out of Senegal was not simply a response to rising poverty; nor was it an irrational option of last resort for young men. It was an increasingly visible and valued mode of spiritual striving and a means to support kin at home. And yet, the after effects of clandestine migration left an indelible stamp on the Senegalese national psyche. As young *refoulés*, their families, and their communities continue to live with the memories of migration and the realities of forced return, they must also come to terms with the financial losses incurred to fund the voyage as well as the spiritual dimensions of failure.

PART II
Transit

MANSOUR



Mansour, Médina Dakar, 2013

Mansour was 23-years-old when he made his first and only attempt to reach the Canary Islands by pirogue in 2007. Like so many others, he heard about the journey from a friend. On his way home from a job in Thiaroye one day, he ran into Babacar, who told him about a boat that was leaving soon. As the Car Rapide rumbled over the pocked Dakar streets, Babacar cast a suspicious look around him to the fellow passengers.⁹⁹ He didn't want to "unveil the secret" in public, and assured Mansour that they would discuss details as soon as they descended.

"And so he gave me his phone number," Mansour explained in 2012, as he sat uneasily on the sofa, five years on from his attempted passage. As he spoke, he kept his eyes fixed on the ground, or on his calloused hands, which rested in his lap. From time to time, he fingered an old

⁹⁹ Informal public transportation in Senegal, Car Rapides are typically second-hand Renault commercial vans from the 1980s converted to seat 20-24 people.

scar on his right hand, some previous insult from the edge of a chisel. Mansour was a carpenter who worked on any small job that summoned him, trucking his tools around the city in a white plastic bag. I would come to understand that talking about wood was one of his favorite past times. But for now, he was visibly nervous.

Initially, his inhibition seemed like a sign of respect. For many Muslims, looking at a non-kin woman is largely forbidden; and in Senegal, direct eye contact, especially with a stranger, is considered impolite, even confrontational. But Mansour's reserve had less to do with cultural conventions and was more inspired by fear. In fact, he would later tell me that, while he sat there not looking at me, he half suspected that I might call someone to arrest him for what he'd done: that is, for trying to reach Spain illegally.

[Babacar and I] made a time to meet, next to the Hann Park in order to talk things over. It's there that he told me I'd need to pay 400,000CFA [roughly \$800 USD]. I'd been saving money for a while, but I still had to borrow most of it from *les proches*.¹⁰⁰ That's one reason why I've had so many problems since my return. Because I owe all this money. And it's gone... I came back with nothing.

Unlike a third of my participants, who told no one of their attempts to migrate, Mansour revealed his failure to his family after he returned to Senegal. The stigma of shame and the hardships of inter-generational tensions at home tainted his already disappointing *échec* (failure) and exacted a heavy social cost. After his expulsion from Mauritania, he was expelled from his house. From then on, he decided to keep his secret to himself. That he had come to talk to me, a complete stranger, was no small thing.

When I met him in 2012, Mansour lived off-and-on in Médina, a busy quarter of Dakar not far from the *centre ville*. He lived in a crowded compound that belonged to his maternal grandfather. In addition to his grandparents as well as his mother and five younger siblings,

¹⁰⁰ *Un proche* is someone who is 'close' in terms of kinship or social relations, and thus can indicate either a parent relative, but also a close friend. In Mansour's case, *les proches*, meant neighbors from his quarter, former clients and bosses, and elder acquaintances.

several uncles and their respective wives and children also occupied the compound. “Twelve adults and countless young ones,” Mansour explained. As the first-born (*taaw*), Mansour was especially burdened with supporting his mother and kin, though accomplishing this was far from self-evident. More drastically, though not uncommon in Senegal, his father had passed away when he was in his teens, and so he was “the only man” to care for his mother, who was effectively isolated as a widow in the household.

In addition to the five siblings at the house in Médina, Mansour also had younger brothers who lived in Mbour, about an hour drive south of Dakar along the *petite côte*. As his mother, Seynabou, explained one day, after her husband passed away, she became unable to take care of all the children by herself. She sent half of them to the *daara*, where they would work for the marabout. It is not unthinkable to imagine that their fate is the same of *talibés* across Dakar. With their feet unshod and their scalps dusted with lice powder, these young boys crowd the streets, waving their pitted tins, and walking into the traffic at a stoplight, to beg for money.¹⁰¹

To make ends meet, Mansour plied his trade in a variety of ways: helping out in an *atelier* around the corner, or working at a makeshift table on the street, or by going from one customer’s house to the next, often spending his meager wages on transportation costs. On good days, he earned roughly \$1.50; on bad days, he didn’t make anything at all. While he didn’t know anyone personally who had emigrated, a quick glance around his neighborhood revealed the trademarks

¹⁰¹ Literally, “students” or “disciples,” *talibés* range from roughly six to eighteen years of age, and work for marabouts (religious guides) ostensibly in exchange for instruction in the Qur’ān. While initially widespread in the rural regions, this predominantly Sufi practice has spread to urban centers, where, instead of working a *shaykh*’s agricultural field, *talibés* now beg for alms to support the *daara* (religious school). While a few urban marabouts do provide education, many have been accused of exploiting *talibés* by withholding food, clothing, and safe shelter, and resorting to physical beatings when children do not return with enough coins or sugar cubes. When I was in Senegal, one widely mediatised case of negligence resulted in the death of nine *talibés* in Médina on 3 March 2013 after their *daara* caught on fire. This event, which shocked the country, prompted the prime minister at the time, Abdoul Mbaye, to prohibit *talibés* from begging on the streets (<http://www.jeuneafrique.com/Article/ARTJAWEB20130307180004/>). The boulevards were eerily empty of *talibés*, but only for about a week.

of sudden wealth, which most people understood as coming from abroad through remittances. Such signs of wealth take the form of luxury cars, well-dressed women, the arrival of big-screen TVs, and, often, the wholesale transferring of entire families to bigger modern compounds in one of Dakar's boroughs.

Mansour had started apprenticing at a young age with a local woodworker in a shop not more than 5 square meters in size. One day when I visited Mansour in his grandfather's compound, he showed me an old photograph of this *atelier*. As he carefully touched the edges of the black and white image, he recalled his experiences as a young apprentice.

I stopped going to school because I didn't really have anyone in my family who supported my studies. Also, I could tell that my father was having trouble buying me school supplies. So I decided to find a *métier* [vocation]. At the time, I liked hanging out at a local woodshop. When I went there, the men would let me work on small things and eventually they began to teach me. This is how I came to love woodworking, and I dreamed of one day being a real carpenter. When I asked my father, he gave me his blessing. I think I was 12-years-old. This was before he passed.

When he got older, Mansour also set up a small worktable on the sidewalk outside his grandfather's compound. When work was slow at the atelier, Mansour would sit at the table and hope that passersby might require his trade—to repair a table or fix a door. Mansour dreamed of one day being able to afford enough wood with which he would build a bed set, carved and finished by hand. With something as substantial as that, he said, he could attract more clients, until eventually, he might be able to rent a small shop of his own.

Sometimes, I stay here for weeks without work. Clients don't want to come to my meager table, which lacks good mechanical tools. All I have are some chisels and a handsaw. When people see that, they say to themselves that I must be unqualified. If I had power tools, they would take me seriously. But they look at me and keep walking. If I could show them that I know what I'm doing, I know I could succeed.

For this reason, Mansour argued, he needed something that could “show off” his talents. “Traditional Senegalese furniture,” as he put it, is typically constructed of West African hardwoods (e.g. mahogany, padauk) and intricately carved before being set out on the street for sale. One day, Mansour and I met in Médina and walked to a lumber seller where we talked shop with the owner. Long rough-hewn red and maroon planks stretched out in front of us. “This one is from Côte d’Ivoire,” the owner said in a booming voice. “This one, Cameroon.” He was a large man with a round belly and an authoritative swagger about him. Standing next to him, a thin and shy Mansour paled in his shadow.

On our way back to the compound, Mansour explained that the cost of lumber alone, even for a simple bed, would be in the hundreds of dollars, and thus out of his reach for the foreseeable future. Doing small jobs for a dollar here or there would never allow him to build up the necessary funds to invest in building such a piece. According to his logic, going to Europe, where work was assumed to be plentiful, would have brought him across the invisible but palpable threshold of temporal insecurity. He could have come back to Senegal in two years with enough money to set up a modest, but honest, business by which means he could support his mother and siblings.

Still, taking a pirogue to Europe was risky: for Mansour, it meant leaving under the cloak of night from Yarakh, a small fishing village outside Dakar, with at least one hundred other people. “In those moments it’s hard to calculate exactly how many people are on board because you’re so obsessed with arriving safely.”

When I left, I didn’t tell anyone where I was going. But when I came back, my family questioned me: where had I been? I explained that I’d gone in one of the pirogues to try and get to Europe. It was to help my parents and my family. Plus, I have little brothers who aren’t yet grown up, and they depend on me because I’m the eldest. I explained that this was my only objective: to work and help my family because they’re so tired of struggling... But when they realized [what I’d

done], my whole family turned against me. Only my mother understood. But the others, they don't even speak to me anymore. In the morning, when I greet them, they don't respond. I know they look at me with shame.

Mansour lived “off-and-on” in Médina because, he explained, “I'm afraid to eat at the house. I don't feel welcome... When I'm hungry, I have to leave.” The rest of the time, he stayed with friends in Thiaroye-sur-Mer, a suburb ten kilometers from Dakar.

The Médina compound was typical for urban Senegal. From the street, a metal door opened onto a walkway with single-story cinderblock buildings on either side. The end of the walkway led into a small open courtyard with laundry lines running laterally and a utility faucet and cement basin at the south wall. A sheep tied to the faucet under the laundry lines bayed mournfully. Tabaski, the end of Ramadan, was right around the corner. Fabric covered the doorways, which led into private bedrooms. Another narrow walkway led out of the courtyard and into the back of the compound where other bedrooms and the kitchen were located. In the first bedroom, Mansour's grandmother diligently massaged her *chapelet* (prayer beads). Next door, his mother's room was crowded with large aluminum soup pots and 15-liter plastic buckets of Niinal cooking oil. Faded blue walls were decorated with laminated photographs of Serigne Fallou, the fourth son of Amadou Bamba and the second Caliph of the Murid order. Though he passed away in 1968, Serigne Fallou is still perhaps the most popular Caliph. Stories of his divine abilities to cure the sick are widely recounted. In one story, a family asked Serigne Fallou to offer prayers over their dead father, and Fallou is alleged to have resuscitated the man back to life. Because he is seen as the saint of those in need, his sepulcher in Touba is surrounded by the longest lines during Magal, as adherents wait to get inside and touch the iron railings that guard his tomb.

“When Mansour returned, I knew something was wrong because he was very ill,” Seynabou told me. A soft spoken and sheltered woman who “almost never” left her father’s compound, Seynabou had little knowledge of what her son had gone through. The fact that he had fallen sick suggested to her that he not been *au village* (in the village) as he’d initially claimed. He never told her what had happened in the boat because, to him, that would have been unfair. When we were alone, he explained to me:

Three days after we left, we ran out of food. Then, we ran out of water. Some passengers were tempted to drink the sea water, which gave them sore stomachs and caused them to vomit. Two people in front of me died. The first one said that he was sick; he wouldn’t stop vomiting. The other one said he had a headache. They both died...

He described the spatial disorientation of the ocean as inducing a kind of vertigo. Like many, Mansour had lost his bearings and, amid the blank uniformity of waves, could not tell where he was.

For someone who doesn’t know the ocean, I can’t tell you how far from land we were. When the fuel [for the outboard motor] ran out, I couldn’t see land anywhere. We were surrounded by water. After a while, some small pirogues that discovered us helped us to find shore. When I arrived, I didn’t have any money left. I walked until exhaustion. Then I managed to hitchhike home. I don’t know where we landed, but people told me it was Mauritania.

Some *refoulés* didn’t go home at all. If successful migrants bring *teral* (honor) to their families by allowing them to distribute and circulate wealth, and thus confirm their status as bound for paradise, then one might assume that failed migrants do the opposite. That is, they embody and visit disgrace upon the family. According to Seydina Kane, consultant for the International Organization for Migration in Dakar, “The shame is too much to bear. When you think that some of their mothers sold all their jewelry to send their sons abroad... Now those sons cannot face them. They would rather pretend to be at the bottom of the ocean.”¹⁰³

¹⁰³ Personal interview, Dakar, April 16, 2013.

For those who do return home, reintegration can be complicated. They must live with the “*mauvais souvenirs*” (dark memories), as Mansour said, which was not always a straightforward process. Most experienced depression, and others were consumed by fits of “madness” that could last for days or weeks after they returned. In addition to trying to forget the horrors of the journey itself, as well as battling dysentery, dehydration, and malnutrition, Mansour had additional immediate problems when it came to returning: he owed people money. And yet, a solution that would enable him to repay his debtors continued to be elusive up to the moment I met him.

If I had told [my creditors] in the beginning that the money they were loaning to me was going to be spent on buying passage in a pirogue, they never would have agreed. When I got back I told them that I was visiting family *au village*. That way, I could buy some time to pay them back. I only repaid 5,000CFA [\$10] to one person. All the others, I have to hide from them. When I see them coming down the street, I change directions, or turn a corner. I’m between a rock and a hard place. If I told them I’d used their money for a clandestine journey to Europe, they could file a complaint and take me to the police station. So I don’t say anything... At this moment, I don’t even know how I can ever reimburse them.

During one of my visits to the Médina compound, Seynabou quietly informed me that she regretted her son’s fate in the family, but could not openly oppose her brothers. When her husband died, she lost what small amount of authority she had in the domestic hierarchy. Living by the good graces of her male kin meant that she could not openly challenge them. Her brothers, she explained, were angry that Mansour had spent such a large sum of money on the pirogue. “They wanted to know why I didn’t stay here and ‘invest’ it,” Mansour interjected. The subtext was clear: Mansour had not appropriately distributed his borrowed bounty within the lineage. To make matters worse, he had not consulted with his elders before making the journey, which upset their gerontocratic authority. As a fatherless youth, Mansour was, in some sense, an outlier, a floating agent in his family’s cosmology. It was for this reason, Mansour explained, that his

uncles and grandfather tried all the harder to dominate him. That he did not easily acquiesce only made it difficult, and then impossible, for him to live under the same roof.

Mansour was shunned and ordered to leave the compound many months before I met him. He secretly visited his mother during the day when his grandfather was at mosque. Though Seynabou assured me that this was “*problème bu ndaw*” (a small problem), it was nevertheless a great source of frustration for Mansour. “*Ils m’ont tous tourné le dos* [They all turned their backs on me]. They say I was selfish.” In Mansour’s eyes, he struggled to take care of his family, making his grandfather’s and uncles’ accusations all the more biting.

In the immediate present, Mansour’s limited earning potential meant that he could not offer appropriate or respectable contributions to his extended kin, especially the men. While those elder males were not his “father” in biological terms, they nevertheless represented gerontocratic authority in the wider sense. In Senegal, to call someone *un parent* is to place them in the same cohort as one’s mother or father, which is a cohort of *yaru* (respect). Mansour’s uncles were *like* his father because they belonged to the same peer group. That he did not properly “share” his assets with them, such as the borrowed fare for the pirogue, was reason enough for his admonishment.

Money also represents a way to salvation within the Murid brotherhood. Because asceticism is central to Sufi conceptions of moral integrity in this life and spiritual deliverance in the next, sacrifice for and the contribution of *addiya* (offerings) to one’s *shaykh* is inherent to Sufi doctrines of salvation in general, and of particular significance to the Murid path due to Cheikh Amadou Bamba’s well-known disdain for material accumulation. Mansour was expected to participate in the upward circulation of cash, which would progress along the following lines: after leaving his hands, it would circulate to his uncles and grandfather, and then up to their

shaykhs. For the elder men of the house, this last step was crucial because this is what would bring them blessings.

And yet, if Mansour had shared his resources, there would have been nothing left, he said. As he and others pointed out time after time, the obligation to support one's family was embraced as a duty because it manifested *teral* (honor) and bestows *baraka* (blessings) upon the child, but it was also blamed as the reason why many could not *avancer* (get ahead) in life. For one thing, there were so many hands to fill that even something like 400,000CFA would quickly be exhausted.

Soon after Mansour was evicted from the compound, his grandfather ordered him to pack up his worktable and tools, which had occupied the sidewalk in front of the house. "He said I made too much noise," Mansour explained. But Médina is far from quiet. As a *quartier populaire*, or working-class neighborhood, the streets are variously inhabited at any given moment by an assortment of playing children, bombastic Car Rapides, bell-clad horse carts, yelling *apprentis*, bravado youth, taxis, and mopeds.¹⁰⁴ Still, Mansour obeyed his elder, and moved his table to a temporary work station across the street. I visited him there one day as he carved a wooden frame for a sign. Fully exposed to the blazing midday sun, I cast a look across the street to where his table used to stand, in the shade of his grandfather's compound. Mansour didn't know why he'd been banished. "Sometimes," he said, "I see my grandfather coming back from the mosque and I wonder: 'He spends all day there praying, but then he turns away his blood. How is that possible?'"

¹⁰⁴ *Apprentis* generally refers to the young men who work for Car Rapides, encouraging customers to board and collecting the fare once they're under way. These young men most frequently hang out the back of the Car, feet swinging in the air, and yelling their destinations in order to attract customers.

Mansour's failure to distribute his resources, limited though they were, was only compounded by his larger failure to migrate. In the end, he expressed his desire to become an adult in the only way he knew how; that is, in relation to his social world.

I could imagine having a wife one day, but only after I can support myself and my family. First, I think it's better to concentrate on outfitting my atelier with tools and machines. After that, I can see myself getting married. That, too, is part of my life project... What I want is to have a good job to help my mother. It's me that has to do it. But when I think of all that money I spent on the voyage, which didn't succeed... Now I'm obliged to face the situation.

Shortly before I left Senegal in 2013, Mansour had been invited to return to the compound by his grandfather. When I asked him why, he shrugged. "Maybe *le vieux* [the old man] got tired of scolding me. I respect him, he's my *père* [father], but he's not my *patron* [boss]."

What Mansour did not initially explain was how he had used my presence to influence his domestic world. Over the course of a year, I'd made several trips to his grandfather's compound to visit Mansour and Seynabou, always when the patriarch was at mosque. Whenever I arrived, Seynabou deferentially retreated to allow her brothers' wives to greet me, usually with loud but playful rebukes for not visiting enough. Requests for money (or cars or TVs) usually followed not long after, at which point Mansour would step in quietly and offer me a place to sit in Seynabou's blue room. This space was, thankfully, off-limits to the clamoring wives, and I always enjoyed the escape.

What was happening "behind the scenes" of such performances was not altogether clear to me at first. But it became clear after Mansour took me to tour his neighborhood one day. After visiting several of his customers—older women whose husbands were in Europe—in their relatively well-appointed apartments, I realized that Mansour was not showing the neighborhood to me; he was showing *me* to the neighborhood. As a white "scientist" from the West, I'd grown

accustomed to carrying my privilege around behind me like a long shadow. The uncles' wives in Mansour's house had already alerted the grandfather to my presence. But it was the well-appointed and well-fed women, praising Mansour as a "hard worker" and bemoaning his situation with his grandfather, who eventually came to bear indirectly on the patriarch.

After meeting and thereby being relationally associated with me, word travelled back to Mansour's grandfather that these women, and more importantly their husbands, were taking an interest in the young carpenter. Mansour never knew exactly who interceded on his behalf, but he suspected that someone with clout convinced his grandfather to reconsider. In July, shortly before I left Senegal, he was invited home. That Mansour used his affiliation with me to garner community support, which in the end, leveraged his elder and reconfigured generational power arrangements at home, was indicative of the "small" moves many youth strategically make as a way to claim new positions, albeit incrementally, in Senegal.¹⁰⁵

Before I left Dakar, I asked Mansour why he had agreed to meet me and tell me his story, particularly if he thought I worked with the authorities and might turn him in to the police. He told me, "I had to risk it. You never know what will happen. You just have to say, 'Insha'Allah she will be a good person.'" Not unlike the risks he took to leave Senegal, Mansour gambled on the possibility that his relationship to me might just yield benefits. As he suggested, the outcome could not be predicted, but the risk itself was requisite to unlocking the door.

¹⁰⁵ As AbdouMaliq Simone points out, "[B]eing 'in the right way' demands a sense of invention, not just adherence to the rules... [It] attempts to find value in what [other people] are doing so that their lives can be 'bundled,' however momentarily, to one's own" (2010b: 151).

IV. THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF PASSAGE



L'Atlantique, Dakar, 2011

“To be in the boat is to be in a coma.
You don’t know when you will wake up. Maybe one month,
maybe two. You don’t know.”
(Ibrahima)

Introduction

As the previous chapters and portraits suggest, struggle is an important theme in *refoulé* narratives. The figure of the *lutteur*, or Senegalese wrestler, occupies a central place in Senegalese society. His ability to perform courage in the face of challenge is something most youth seek to embody themselves. And yet, notwithstanding the strength it takes for a *lutteur* to fight, his measured patience is equally prized as a virtue. Though his timing—when to strike and when to pull back—appears to be the key, in the end, it is Allah who decides. In Ibrahima’s portrait, he described how humans are not precisely in the business of knowing their fate; they are only in the business of going out to search for it. It is that space of searching—the indeterminate *barzakh* of transit—that this chapter seeks to analyze.

This chapter takes up the theme of struggle by exploring transit as a meaningful social, spiritual, and somatic space. It attends to the practical and experiential dimensions of passage: the delays that were tolerated, the hardships that were endured, and the hopes that were sustained. This approach builds on the exposition of the previous chapter, which brought to light various modes of decision-making and preparation that went into clandestine departures. Here, I analyze the experiences of struggle that migrants sustained during transit, experiences which continue to shape the social worlds they inhabit after return. Like preceding the episodes, this chapter argues that we cannot understand who *refoulés* are today without looking at what experiences shaped them in the past. It is “only through explicating the logic of key emotional and intersubjective constructs [that] major social dramas become intelligible; likewise, only amid such contemporary social enactments can we understand particular domains of affect and agency” (Biehl et al 2007: 10).

That these “social dramas” were undertaken as part of communities both on land and on the boat disrupts the notion that migration was an individual choice concluded by an individual actor. Indeed as Papis explained to me, “It’s not recommended to make the voyage alone because it’s not easy. If you saw a group of five friends, it was just to *lutter* (struggle) against the solitude and the fatigue. It’s safer to be accompanied by others.” By telling their stories, and performing *le drame* (the drama) of transit, *refoulés* were actively positioning themselves in relation to me and to each other.

This chapter is divided into four sections. The first, Interminable Beginnings, charts the protracted negotiations, waiting periods, and encounters with police and border agents that preceded embarkation. The second section, A Moveable Community, reveals the first glimpses of the *grande pirogue*, as well as the practices of daily life aboard—the conviviality and competition, solidarity, fighting, and prayer that accompanied clandestine journeys. The third section, The Body in Transit, explores more pointedly the somatic experiences of transit—the sickness, injury, and fatigue, and the death and burial at sea. The fourth and final section, The Warriors, looks at how migrants experienced and interpreted mystical visions, storms, and boat failure in the register of spiritual battle. If Ibrahima’s epigraph to this chapter suggests that passage is like being in a coma—the ultimate stasis—he also elaborated on how even in a coma one can act. “You’re not dead,” he explained. “You can still feel and think and pray.”

Interminable Beginnings

The journey begins with a price. A price that is not fixed, but is subject to debate and negotiation. The participants with whom I spoke used the verb *waxhaalé* to describe the process of negotiating a fare, which could be a slow process. In Wolof, to *waxhaalé* is to bargain—a

practice that governs nearly every system of exchange in Senegal. Seemingly, most goods and services are subject to *waxhaalé*: taxi fares, food, textiles, bride wealth, land. *Waxhaalé* informs both how people trade and consume. It also informs and reflects social relations. Unlike Western notions of pricing that are linked to regulated forms of valuation, in Senegal value depends on both social and geographic fields.

Jane Guyer argues that in contrast to the West, where markets are (theoretically) disciplined by institutions like banks and federal reserves, in West Africa, exchange has historically been mediated through “popular conventions rather than formal regulation” (Guyer 2004: 4). For Guyer, value in West Africa has not been historically ordered by numerical scales—that is, by a fixed currency of exchange—but instead by nominal scales, which is to say, by *relational* indices. The difference between numerical and nominal scales is like asking someone how much something costs in terms of currency (e.g. dollars, Euros, or CFAs) and how much something is worth depending on who is asking (e.g. where they come from, who they know, where their family lives). A price is the result of “calculative flexibilities,” writes Guyer, which require both the consumer and producer to be fluent in “orders of magnitude... and possible thresholds of relative value” (ibid.: 92). Such flexibilities weigh consumer goods and services based not on currency and labor power, but on spatial and relational spheres. Bargaining is therefore social labor because it relies on a consensus of value and thus brings the volatile market, where prices fluctuate too wildly for people to control, into the realm of the domestic.

If value is spatially and relationally determined in Senegal, it should not be surprising that prices for passage should fluctuate. For example, if a migrant had relations with the boat captain

or had access to the *passeur* (handler), he could possibly petition for a reduced fare.¹⁰⁶ Mas explained his consultations this way:

I asked him how much the fare was. He told me I needed at least one million CFA [\$2000]. I said, “That’s too much!” So he asked me how much I had, and I said 300,000CFA [\$600]. He told me, “With this amount, you could stay here for years and never make the voyage.” But it was a ruse on my part. I couldn’t just come out and say I had the whole amount. That way, you can spend all your money and not have anything left. Afterwards, he said, “If you have 500,000CFA [\$1000], I could negotiate for you with the handler.” I told him okay. And later, he put me in touch with the handler who asked me to give him the sum we agreed on.

In this case, Mas made *waxhaalé* with a middleman, who then put him in touch with the handler, who had the authority to accept his offer. Other migrants were able to address the boat owner directly, though this was less common. Typically, arrangements were negotiated through a handler or other intermediary. And sometimes, even if these agents were “friends,” they still attempted to make a small profit from their connections.

Most *refoulés* described the negotiation process as one that required caution, even if the people guiding and mediating on their behalf were trusted friends. One such story begins with Iran, who recounted to me, in precise detail and with emphatic gestures, his experiences with the social process of negotiation. It was a Sunday morning, his day off. After sleeping in until 10AM, he made his way to the market not far from where he lived in Guédiawaye. It was there that he encountered his friend. He mimicked waving to an imaginary person, saying:

He hailed me from the street... He said there was a boat leaving tomorrow. I asked him how much, and he said 500,000CFA. I told him, “I don’t have 500,000CFA. I have 300,000CFA.” Because he was attaching himself to me, you see? He is my friend, but he wanted to earn something [from the transaction]... Still I only

¹⁰⁶ I translate the word *passeur* as ‘handler’ instead of ‘smuggler’ for two reasons. First, while most translators and policy experts would use the word ‘smuggler,’ this term carries with it strong overtones of impersonal organized crime, a feature I did not find in *refoulés*’ stories. As this chapter argues, journeys were frequently negotiated within close-knit communities among people who already knew each other. Migrants were often familiar with their handlers and were more likely to call them a friend (*ami*) rather than a criminal. Also, the young men I met and talked to would not see themselves as “smuggled,” which implies victimhood. Rather, they saw themselves as making calculated choices based on a host of social and spiritual factors.

proposed 300,000CFA, and he said, “Okay, let’s go to the *télécentre* so you can call the man. If he accepts, we can go.” We went to the *télécentre*, he called the man, who accepted [the fare].

Notions of friendship neither prohibit nor exist outside spheres of economic exchange. It was understandable, even expected, that Iran’s friend would attempt to turn a profit from a chance encounter. “*Nit ñi ñëpp wara takkou ci doudun bi* [Everyone must make an effort in life],” Iran explained. Chance may seem to govern people’s fortune, but, as Iran elaborated, “*C’est le bon Dieu qui l’a ainsi volou* [It’s God who wanted it this way].” For Iran, bargaining for pirogue fare was part and parcel of the larger struggle of life whose architecture was divinely ordered. To make his case for entry onto a pirogue was not to usurp this divine ordering, but to work within in it. He recognized that ultimately the final price was not up to him. And yet he also saw the process as a pathway to religious maturity. For Iran and many others, *waxhaalé* was nested in a broader constellation of social forces, wherein travel, piety, and adulthood were consubstantial. Bargaining not only signified the variability of value, it was also an enactment of existential labor.

On the variability of the pirogue fare, Abdoulaye explained that even within the same vessel, there were differences in what passengers were charged. Handlers and owners quickly and efficiently sized up potential candidates, charging more from those who seemed to possess the means and less from those who did not. One migrant described how his failed first attempt bought him the sympathy from a boat captain who let him try a second time for free. Additionally, the longer it took to amass enough passengers, the lower the price fell. Frequently, boats only left when all the “seats” had been filled, which could sometimes take weeks. Other passengers, such as captains and crew, were not required to pay at all. Abdoulaye explained that

normally he would be paid for conducting a pirogue to the Canary Islands. Instead, he declined payment and brought his brothers as crewmates to help him over the course of the journey.

A paid fare did not necessarily mean an expedited departure. For many migrants, waiting was inherent in the act of transit. No longer at home but not yet at sea, migrants were frequently housed in remote villages while attending departure. Domestic compounds in rural villages were transformed into warehouses where as many as “90 clandestine candidates waited in one room,” Ibrahimia said. Other times, groups were partitioned off to various compounds, suggesting that organizing clandestine journeys was something of a village undertaking in some cases.

Some *clandestins*, like Papis and Mamadou, did not have to wait long to embark. As Mamadou explained it, “We left home [in Thiaroye] at four in the morning to spend the night in Yarak. The pirogue left from there at 6AM.” Others, like Iran, faced weeks of waiting: “Me, and three other people from other regions [in Senegal], we got into a taxi to go to where they were holding the *clandestins*... Even before we arrived, there were people who’d been waiting there for a whole week! More than fifty people!...” Despite the daily assurances from the handlers and crew members that they would leave “*demain, demain, demain* [tomorrow, tomorrow, tomorrow],” Iran waited in the house for a week and three days. He held his head up and said gravely, “You have to be patient.”

Sometimes, the conditions of the water forestalled departure. Maodo recounted to me how he had to wait in Saint Louis for two weeks because the sea was too agitated. At other times, conditions were blamed even though everyone knew that the handlers were looking for more passengers to fill up the boat. Mas, who had received advice from a friend in Spain to depart from Mauritania, which was closer to the Canary Islands, said that when he arrived the clandestine migrants congregated in a kind of camp while awaiting their departure. “There were

so many people,” he explained. “It was like a city built on multiple levels.” Separated by nationality, the inhabitants of this clandestine city had been waiting for various amounts of time, entertaining perennial reassurances from the handlers who said they would leave soon.

“Sometimes they said the water was too rough,” Mas continued, shaking his head. “Other times, they said we needed more passengers. Once they said the motor was broken, but no one really knew. These were just excuses. Me, I stayed there nine months.”

In addition to waiting for the boat to leave, there were other migrants who had to wait while at sea. Mansour described how, after his pirogue ran out of fuel, they drifted for days. “We stayed immobile offshore for a long time... For someone who doesn’t know the sea, I couldn’t say if we were near or far from land. When we set off, it was nighttime, and by the time the fuel ran out, I couldn’t see land at all. We were completely surrounded by the water.” Mansour, like other *refoulés*, expressed frustration and malaise when recounting the periods of waiting. Not only did it underscore their vulnerability, it recalled the vivid persistence of seemingly interminable postponement, a feeling which had preoccupied their adult lives in urban Senegal.

But if it was ubiquitous, there was a way in which waiting was also a kind of work in itself. As Modou explained to me one day, the differences between various forms of labor mark off distinctions between who is rigidly tied to predictability, and who possesses the flexible acumen to be ready for the unexpected. A *travailleur* (worker), he said, is someone who is on salary, or who makes a consistent amount of money each week. “He is there in his office every day doing the same thing.” But a *débrouillard* (a streetwise self-starter) is “someone who does different things each day, not knowing every morning, where his money will come from,” Modou said, gesturing quickly with his hands as if moving invisible merchandise.¹⁰⁷ “He is someone with the ability to make survival out of nothing. Out of no work, he finds a way to eat every day.” The

¹⁰⁷ See MacGaffey and Bazenguissa-Ganga (2000).

débrouillard is ultra flexible, can do just about any task on a moment's notice, can respond to the volatility of each day with ease, and "does not forget that whatever comes his way comes by God," Modou interjected. The *débrouillard* must also be comfortable with long periods of passing time before work actually materializes.

Waiting was also a sign of deference to the divine. Impatience is widely spoken of with disdain in Senegal as something of a character flaw possessed by those who do not have the self-restraint to manage their appetites. Whereas in the West the hungry and competitive "go-getter" is the exemplar of social success, in Senegal forbearance is spiritually supreme. Quick business schemes and fast triumphs are distrusted as marks of questionable character or witchcraft. To say that someone "*aime la facilité*" (or enjoys that which is easy), amounts to an attack on a person's integrity.¹⁰⁸ To be a daring entrepreneur is not necessarily bad, however. Nor is wealth creation. Rather, one's efforts should not be hasty. The line is ambiguous: one must work hard when work is present, but one must not rush in and force things before the time is right. Such a forcing privileges fulfillment over striving, and thus takes a world of possibility and renders it static and uncompromising (Khan 2012). When I began research, my friends would often chide me for not exercising patience. "*Il faut faire doucement*," they would say. "Here, in Senegal, you cannot rush in. You must go *ndank ndank* [little by little]."

Similarly, waiting can be a form of religious restraint whereby doing the bare minimum is, by definition, doing enough (Simone 2010b). As a consequence of increasingly restrictive

¹⁰⁸ It's worth noting that "*la facilité*" and self-interest is often associated with agents of the state, who drain national coffers when in office and then, frequently, retreat to Europe or the US when their post expires. The self-expatriation to France of Senegal's former president, Abdoulaye Wade, is a case in point. Widely considered to be a corrupt president, whose pockets were 'overflowing' with money and whose interests were more focused on 'prestige projects' than helping Senegalese people, he nevertheless escaped punitive action after his presidential defeat in 2012. His son, Karim Wade, however, has not enjoyed the same fate of immunity. The newly formed Anti-Corruption Court in Senegal is, at the moment of this writing, prosecuting the younger Wade for the embezzlement of close to 200 million Euros from Senegalese government agencies over which he was head while his father was in office.

economic policies implemented in Senegal during the last quarter century, achieving a good life in the future has become less certain, even if one has abided the rules. For men like Ibrahima, who show up to wait for work to come along, “reducing one’s life to a minimal series of actions potentially leaves one free to be ready for something else” (ibid.: 148). Waiting, it seems, is not passive, but a form of investment, which often has moral and spiritual overtones. Ibrahima often repeated the refrain to me: “*On attend que le bon Dieu nous aide* [We are waiting for God to help us].” Divine assistance, in this sense, is payment for patience.

Waiting—for the weather to improve, for other passengers to show up—was certainly one stumbling block for migrants, but maritime patrols also structured how and from where pirogues would set off. The increasing presence of coastal police agencies, such as Frontex after 2006, could forestall a departure indefinitely. Iran explained to me that once his group arrived on the beach where they would set off, a patrol helicopter began to circle above them. The handlers shouted at them to hide in the ironwood trees that hugged the dunes. “We stayed there, hiding in the trees until nightfall.”

While most of the *refoulés* with whom I spoke departed from somewhere along the coast some chose to leave from locations outside Senegal. Traveling over land to Maghreb states was one strategy some migrants used to obtain a closer departure point to the Canary Islands. Recalling that his friend in Spain suggested that he leave by way of Mauritania, Mas decided to take his chances, even though he knew he would face police harassment along the way. He therefore left the bulk of his fare with his mother in Senegal, who would wire it to him later once he had arrived safely in the camp. As expected, he was detained, interrogated, and beaten at the Mauritanian border, and his belongings were searched for stashes of money. “I saw with my own eyes,” he said, “other people getting *dépouillées* [stripped] by the Mauritanian police and left

with nothing. No money, no papers.” Despite there being people from Guinea, Gambia, and other West African nations at the border crossing, Mas said that only Senegalese nationals were targeted.

Everyone else was waved through. They started beating me up when I didn’t answer their questions the way they wanted. They asked me if I was hiding money. I said I only had 50 euros on me. They asked me why I wanted to come to Mauritania. I said I was looking for work as a fisherman. “If that was true,” they said, “you would not have left Senegal to come here.” They accused me of being a liar and trying to pull one over on them. “We are the law,” they said. Then they cut open the stitches on my *gris-gris* to see if I was hiding money inside. When they found only verses from the Qur’an, they let me go. I later found a man in my camp who repaired the *gris-gris*.

As he spoke, Mas again hung his head. When he looked up, his expression had darkened. He apologized, saying that it was hard to remember these things. Though he tried not to think about it, he was sometimes overcome by memories. I suggested that we stop the interview, but Mas refused. “No! I *want* people to know this. They must understand what we all went through.”

Other *refoulés* had similar stories of the fates they suffered at the hands of the Mauritanian authorities. The fact that Mas and others were discriminated against because they were Senegalese likely had to do with political and racial tensions that have existed between the two countries since 1967, and which came to a violent head in 1989 resulting in the deaths of hundreds and mass forced expulsions from both countries (Nicolaj 1990). Frequently in Senegal, descriptions of “*les Naars*,” or Arab Moors, are characterized by suspicion and distrust.¹⁰⁹ As the next chapter shows, *refoulés* often had to face extreme treatment if their vessels became shipwrecked off the coast of Mauritania. That the Mauritanian state had signed repatriation and border control agreements with European nations, which included policing their waters for clandestine pirogues headed for Spain, didn’t help matters. While this well may represent an

¹⁰⁹ The name *Naar* derives from the Arabic word for fire and references early Moorish modalities of warfare, which often included burning enemy settlements.

“externalisation” of EU borders to North Africa (Lavenex 2006; Lavenex and Uçarer 2004), so that one could conceivably think of Schengen territory as extending as far south as Nouakchott, it was no less obvious to migrants that the consequences they suffered at the hands of Mauritanian police were a consequence of what they called *le racisme tout court*.

The threat of exposure was always present, whether by local police or border control vessels patrolling offshore. In Abdoulaye’s portrait, he recounted his departure in 2006 this way:

It should have taken place here [in Mbour], but because there were police hiding all along *la petite côte*, and the patrols were frequent, the owner of the boat said we should leave from Kayar [along the coast leading northeast to Saint Louis]. I agreed, so I left Mbour around 4PM and took the pirogue to Kayar. When I arrived, I told the owner that I wouldn’t *durer* [linger, or stay indefinitely] given the fact that the patrols were everywhere, especially along the coastal zones. I could see their boats morning and night going back and forth along the coast hoping to discourage the migrants. And I told him we needed to leave no later than 2AM because otherwise it wasn’t safe, and I would leave and go back to Mbour if it got to be too late. So, we started loading the bags around 8PM until midnight. And then we loaded the passengers until 1AM, and cast off at 2 in the morning headed for Spain. It was in this moment that we left to *prendre le large* [set off/flee to another country].

As Abdoulaye spoke, the room fell quiet. We were seated on the floor of a small dimly lit bedroom that belonged to Naby, one of Abdoulaye’s former crewmembers. The fabric over the door had been drawn, and Abdoulaye spoke clearly but quietly, as the women were just outside in the courtyard watching television.

It struck me that coming to speak with me—by filing into the compound one by one, followed by my arrival, the conspicuous white lady with her computer bags and overheated complexion, all under the watchful eyes of the neighbors—was no small thing for Abdoulaye and the others. Indeed, virtually all of my interviews with *refoulés* were held in the privacy of a single room, in the protected interior of a family compound, or on a deserted beach where the waves drowned out our voices. What these encounters underscore is that although we may not

have been facing helicopters or coast guards or border police, the threat of being found out was still omnipresent in *refoulés*' lives. As Mansour recounted in his portrait, exposure could sometimes bring scrutiny and shame, which prompted many to carefully guard their histories. As such the fear of capture, the experiences of flight, and the spaces of evasion still exerted a lingering affect on *refoulés*. They continued to influence *refoulés*' gestures, how they moved through their communities, and the way they relived their stories as they recounted them.

A Moveable Community

When the coast was clear, the actual moment of departure was a harried shuffle of people, provisions, and baggage into the *la grande pirogue*—bags of rice, canteens of water, outboard motors, 20-liter jerricans of fuel, coats, shoes, prayer beads, toothpaste. Captains impatiently loaded passengers, some of whom came from the interior of the country and had never seen the ocean before. Stories of overcrowding were common. If you brought too many personal belongings, the crew would force you to leave your bags on land. The point was not to make room for suitcases, but to fit as many people on board as possible.

Alioune's pirogue, for example, was so overcrowded that he and his friend had to "take turns sleeping." The 90 passengers in Massamba's pirogue were "packed like sardines."¹¹⁰ Papis's boat was in such a dilapidated state, he feared the boat would crack under the load of passengers. After departing from Yarakh, he started having serious misgivings. "We were too many passengers," Papis reflected. "The handlers were obliged to overload the pirogue to such an extent that some people had to sit on the gunnels. In the beginning, I was afraid that the boat was so full, she would crack, and I told myself by the looks of it I would never arrive at my destination." If the condition of the boat was good and the weather remained calm, the journey

¹¹⁰ The numbers aboard ranged from 80 to well over 100.

would take roughly eight days. According to Abdoulaye, it was exactly 1,647 kilometers from Kayar to Tenerife, the largest of the Canary Islands. However, as we will see bad motors, faulty GPS devices, and storms all played a part in some journeys taking significantly longer and ending, ultimately, in *l'échec* (failure).

In an effort to avoid crossing paths with maritime patrols, the *grande pirogue* would wait offshore, while smaller pirogues were charged with going back and forth, hauling goods and loading passengers in divided groups. This system of embarkation contributed to migrants' not having a real sense of just how many people were on board. As Maodo put it: "It was only when we arrived in the middle of the ocean that we realized there were 81 other passengers." The condition of the boat was also unknown until it was too late to turn back. Like Papis's pirogue, Iran's was in a state of disrepair. "Finally, we departed," Iran reflected. "The *grande pirogue* was hidden far away in the open ocean. And we were transported to it by way of smaller pirogues in groups of ten. The pirogue itself was plenty big, but it wasn't a good boat. We descended into the hold anyway because what could we do? It was a Saturday."

This question, *what could we do?* reflects a common theme in many *refoulé* narratives. Once on board, there was no escape, no way to change your mind. For Alioune, the boat became a space of total submission: "You must know that when you are on board, after 40 meters, you cannot be afraid anymore. I just had the mantra in my head that I repeated over and over: *barça ou barzakh*. Because if you are there, you can no longer turn around. Neither your cries nor your sea sickness will change the captain's mind." As he spoke, Alioune looked around nervously and rubbed his hands together. Later, after the interview, Seydou asked me, "Did you see how he was shaking? Like someone would find him out?" Sure enough, a week later, Alioune said that he thought I would turn him in to the authorities, underscoring just how much *refoulés* thought they

were risking in speaking to me. In the context of recalling traumatic memories, such an undertaking was no small act.

Some migrants knew full well what they were up against; others could only imagine. As both Iran's and Alioune's comments suggest, the boat—always overloaded and frequently dilapidated—represented physical and psychological submission to whatever fate had in store. Fears of boats succumbing to the waves were not unfounded. In Massamba's case, his pirogue became immobilized because it was taking on so much water.

First, the waves started to fracture the pirogue, and it started to look like she would break apart completely. We emptied the water out as fast as we could until exhaustion, but no one could really do anything to stop it. She kept filling up with water. If she had given way, we all would have drowned. We lived in this hell, pumping and emptying, past Morocco and into Spanish waters. That's where the Spanish coast guard found us just sitting there... We were only 50 kilometers away from the Canaries. One more day, though, and the pirogue would have broken up completely. Allahu akbar [God is the greatest].

As these descriptions make clear, the *grande pirogue* itself acted on and structured migrants' perceptions and movements in both physical and spiritual registers. The wooden gunwales, the planked bottom boards, the curved ribs, the bowsprit pointing to heaven all came to represent both captivity and protection. Whether emptying limitless water out of the hold or reciting mantras, the boat itself exerted an affective charge on migrants' experiences. The tangibility of potential outcomes, like pirogues breaking up and sinking, took on a kind of terrifying *real*-ness, a topic I cover below in the section on The Body in Transit. As the outer limit between passengers and the ocean, the pirogue symbolized a kind of *barzakh* or liminal space, which they inhabited. As we will see, life in that *barzakh* was negotiated and endured as both a physical and spiritual struggle.

Despite the uncertain nature of passage and the uncontrollable elements with which migrants contended, life in the boat was remarkably organized. Labor was usually divided by assigning

different *équipes*, or teams, to take care of things like cooking, fishing, or cleaning up. Alioune was assigned to water patrol, hoisting buckets of sea water up over the gunnels when the waves crashed into the hold. “We were four altogether. We would take turns, each of us working for two hours at a time. There were eleven fishermen, others who steered the pirogue. Some commanded the motor; the specialists were in charge of the GPS.” Ibrahima also described how people were divided into groups depending on their skill level and physical compartment: “From the first day, we were organized—some cooked, others who were more athletic were in charge of emptying the water out of the pirogue. They also took care of the tarpaulins that provided shelter. Me, I was placed in the kitchen because I knew how to cook.”

Given the limited nature of provisions, and not knowing how long they would be at sea, food was a major topic of conversation in my interviews with *refoulés*. Descriptions of milk biscuits, or *mouhamsa* (porridge) for the morning, and *thiéboudienne* (Senegal’s national dish of rice and fish) for the afternoon seemed to occupy some space in everyone’s narrative of passage.

Generally speaking, most *refoulés* recalled that provisions, at least to begin with, were relatively abundant. “Good boats” were the ones where the captain had purchased plenty of rice, cooking oil, and bottled water. Some, like Abdoulaye, even brought vitamins for those too seasick to eat. And meals were taken together, in classic Senegalese style, with groups of people each centered around stainless steel bowls. The image of communal meals and “teams,” each performing their tasks, paints a portrait of transit that was, at least in part, a convivial experience. “We were like brothers because we all had the same goal in mind: to arrive safely in Spain,” Abdoulaye said.¹¹¹

Such conviviality often inspired migrants to work together for communal benefit.

Sometimes, solidarity was a necessary, if self-interested, response to disaster when collective

¹¹¹ Caroline Melly’s respondents also confirmed that clandestine migrants “battled risk and worked together as brothers” (2011: 370).

effort was the only way out of a potentially dangerous situation. For example, after realizing that their boat had run out of fuel and they wouldn't make it to Spain, Ibrahima's captain decided that they should make their way toward land. "We were all called on to row the boat one by one," he said. "Everyone without exception." Without the collective labor of all on board, Ibrahima's boat may have foundered at sea indefinitely.

But solidarity was not always prompted by survival instinct. There were times when migrants helped each other with seemingly few ulterior motives. For Papis and his friend Mamadou, finding enough to eat after the food and water ran out became a formal preoccupation. "We had big problems finding enough to eat and drink each day," he said. "We were obliged to rely on others around us for help." Likewise, when Iran's contingency landed in Mauritania, not all passengers could afford to call home for assistance. "Some of the *clandestins* called their families," he explained. "But, if you were like me, you didn't have anyone to call for help. There was no one I could ask for money. So the other passengers each gave me a little so that I could return to Senegal. And then, you could see the solidarity."

Nevertheless because of the overcrowding on the boat, daily needs were sometimes too difficult to satisfy. For those not charged with performing some kind of labor, sitting still was often the smartest thing to do. "If you moved to go to the bathroom, for example, you would lose your place. That's how crowded it was," Massamba said. "Sometimes, you were forced to urinate right there in your seat." Abdoulaye described how, as a longtime "man of the sea," it was his job to teach the passengers how to behave while aboard the pirogue.

We are fishermen. We've been out there [at sea] for a long time. We figure things out as we go because we're habituated to it. For example, if we need to use the bathroom, we know what to do. But for many *clandestins*, they had no sense. We had to give them a bucket and show them how to empty it when they were done.

Directing the passengers in the sociality of the sea, Abdoulaye and his crewmates were ultimately able to keep the peace and to maintain sanitary conditions. But it was a struggle. There were nights when no one slept because of fighting. The canvas tent Abdoulaye's crew had constructed for cooking during inclement weather became a zone of contention as people jostled and shoved each other for shelter during the cold nights.

Alioune also described how the lack of adequate space generated tensions in the boat:

Sometimes there were fights between the *clandestins*. Even me, I got into fights twice in a row with a Diola [ethnic group from the Casamance region of Senegal]. The first time, it was because there wasn't enough space to sleep. The second time, he went to the bathroom in a bucket right next to me and refused to dump it in the ocean. So I had to do it for him and we got into it because of that.

The overall impression here is that overcrowding was a major source of tension in the boat.

Other times, the scarcity of resources inspired conflict. Whether discussing the lack of adequate provisions or space, such challenges were part and parcel of the overarching narrative of struggle that clandestine migrants recounted.

Prayer was frequently invoked as a way of facing and withstanding the challenges of transit. It often prefaced the moment of departure before the smaller pirogues actually set off, and it constituted a focal point around which daily practices were organized. Ibrahima put it this way:

When I was in the ocean, I prayed, but not like the prayers we make five times a day. You see, prayer can be performed in different ways. Even a sick person in the hospital who is in a coma, he can pray. One cannot say, "I am sick, I am disabled." Wherever you are, you can pray. All you need to do is concentrate and make certain gestures. Above all, it's about consecrating oneself to God. And it's your conscience that guides you. For every moment I was in the boat, I concentrated on prayer. You see those small black pebbles there [on the beach]? If you don't have [clean] water, you can perform your ablutions with the pebbles. It's enough just to take the stones and touch them. That way, you replace the water with the stones. There was a small black stone in the boat, which is what I used to take my ablutions. On the first day, I cleaned the stone in seawater, really cleaned it well, and then I put it aside. When I was ready to start preparing myself for prayer, I would touch it. Like this...

Ibrahima picked up a black pebble from the beach where we sat and whispered *Bismillah*. He then rubbed his hands over the pebble, first “washing” his right hand three times, then his left hand three times. As he performed this *tayammum*, I asked him about prayer in general.¹¹²

Muslims are obliged to pray five times each day, but occasionally, Ibrahima explained, he had to postpone prayer because he was in the middle of doing something else. For those missed prayers, he could make them up later, usually at his earliest convenience. I asked him if it was necessary to make them up right away, and he shook his head. “No, but when I’ve missed a prayer, I feel unsettled. My body feels heavy and tense.” He hunched his shoulders and lifted his forearms rigidly as if being shaken by another person. “When I pray, *je me décharge* [I discharge myself of energy]. It liberates me.”

The Body in Transit

In addition to the negotiation processes that preceded departure and the forms of sociality that were cultivated during transit, passage was also fraught with somatic pain and illness. As scholars like João Biehl, Byron Good, and Arthur Kleinman suggest, investigating the body as an ethnographic site can tell us both how subjectivities are emergently constituted and how somatic processes and traumas influence social life (2007). This section explores how migrants experienced and articulated transit with and through their bodies.

Even if some captains like Abdoulaye brought vitamins, and other passengers like Iran purchased “*des médicaments*” before the crossing, very little could be done to prevent sickness on board. As Mamadou put it: “We spent one week at sea. We’d run out of food and water. At

¹¹² *Tayammum* is the process of taking a dry ablution (or *wudu*) before prayer. Typically, this is done with sand or clean earth, but a stone can also be used.

one point, my stomach started to ache, and then the vomiting started. I didn't have anything to eat or drink, but I kept vomiting.”

As mentioned, clandestine journeys often encountered a moment when both food and water supplies became exhausted. Water, in the words of Papis, had “become like gold.” To combat their increasingly violent thirst, some migrants resorted to drinking seawater. With a salinity concentration that is four times the level found in normal bodily fluids in humans, seawater actually increases dehydration, causing muscle cramps, nausea, and eventually kidney damage. And yet, it becomes almost impossible *not* to drink something when thirst sets in and there is nothing but water that surrounds you. As migrants explained it, the temptation was excruciating. Some admitted to drinking their own urine.

In addition to the physiological effects of drinking seawater, more general seasickness was a common problem. People struggled with nausea and vomiting, which increased dehydration. They also experienced impaired mobility because, as Abdoulaye said, they'd been sitting on one position for too long. It was enough to wear a person down, to put them at odds with their most basic impulses. “It was enough to *nous fatigué* [exhaust us],” as Mansour said.

Time and again during interviews, the word *fatigué* came up. The expression “to be *fatigué*” refers both to physical exhaustion and psychological frustration. *Refoulés* used *fatiguer* to describe the somatic consequences of being at sea for days on end, exposed to the elements, and frequently without sufficient food and water. Maodo explained how physical and psychological exhaustion prompted some people to tumble overboard:

I was tired, too, at a certain moment, but not as much as the others. That's because I had a friend next to me, and I was looking after him. He was asleep on my lap because he was so tired from hunger. There were some people who fell into the water, and we had to fish them out. They lost touch because of the stress and fatigue. They were overcome by the things they saw. There were so many who

didn't understand the sea. They're weren't prepared psychologically to face the things that awaited them on board.

In this passage, Maodo alludes to the confusion between falling and throwing oneself overboard. On the one hand, people “fell into the water.” But on the other hand, they did so because they'd “lost touch.” Though as Abdoulaye suggested, intentionality was hard to decipher because, “When you are out at sea, if you are unprepared, falling accidentally and letting oneself go are the same.”

Fear is physically *fatigant*, or exhausting. Migrants knew that, at any moment, the pirogue could break apart, or a wave could come along and send them all into the unforgiving swells. Continually bracing oneself for the worst required a tremendous amount of energy. And after the sun set, the darkness of night meant that no one could see what was coming. As Papis explained:

We had a flashlight that we used at night. It was so dark. You couldn't even sleep because you didn't know what was in front of you or what was behind, and there were waves over three meters [roughly ten feet] high. At a certain moment, I was so tired that I wanted to jump overboard into the sea. I told myself I wouldn't survive, but my friend [Mamadou] held me back and consoled me.

Fear of the unknown inspired such fatigue in Papis that he had to be restrained from jumping into the ocean. At that point, it seemed easier to face the fear of drowning rather than endure the anticipation of it. As his account suggests, sometimes fatigue, and the hopelessness it elicited, could only be diverted with the help of someone's intervention. In this way, the somatic process of emotional and physical exhaustion influenced social life.

Fatiguer was also used to express assessments of life on land, where opportunities were limited and demands were high. As Dolé put it: “What ‘fatigues’ me is to have a good job.” Moreover, to *fatiguer* someone was to make their life difficult, to breach their attempts at success. As mobile merchants, who used their bodies as vehicles for merchandise—carrying fistfuls of knock-off watches, arm-lengths of leather belts, or the occasional chest-high stack of

polo shirts—Papis and Mamadou described how the police fatigued them with constant harassment and confiscation of their goods in Dakar. Alioune, another *commerçant ambulant*, also complained of local gendarmes, saying that if a merchant filed a complaint or tried to recoup their merchandise, the police would search them out to “fatigue” them even more in the future. Mobile merchants argued that the police and Lebanese shop owners were in cahoots. “We all know where our merchandise goes,” Mamadou explained. “The Lebanese don’t like us because we compete with them.”

To be *fatigué* is not simply to be tired, but to be faced with some extraordinary situation or burden. Abdoulaye blamed his exhaustion on his duty as captain to conduct the boat.

When we arrived in Spain, some people were injured, others were *hyper fatiguées*. Like me, for example—I had stayed for days and nights without sleeping. It was my job to watch over the pirogue. I was the guardian. That’s why, when we arrived, I slept for three days straight. I didn’t even wake up to eat or drink. I was too tired.

While Abdoulaye seemed to have staved off consummate fatigue during the nine days it took him to steer the boat to Tenerife and only collapsed when they arrived, many others succumbed to the rigors of passage while in transit. As Massamba recounted to me, one of the passengers on his boat succumbed to the hardships of passage.

On the third day, we realized that there was a kid no more than 13-years-old on the boat with us. He was hidden in the pontoon we’d used to embark on the pirogue, but he waited until we were well out at sea to reveal himself to us. And during the four days that followed he was bedridden because he was so sick. He couldn’t survive. He died on the morning of the seventh day. All we knew about him was that he came from the same village as us. We said to ourselves that it wasn’t necessary to throw him in the ocean because we would be arriving at our destination very soon. Four days later, we still couldn’t see the light at the end of the tunnel, and the kid’s body was already in a state of advanced decay. We had lived for four days with a rotting corpse on board. And the passengers were afraid to approach it because the odor it was giving off was so putrid. Finally giving up, we wrapped the body in a tarp and performed the Muslim funeral prayer before throwing it in the ocean.

Deaths were a common part of clandestine journeys. In fact, the majority of *refoulés* I interviewed had at least one death in their boat. If hunger, thirst, and fatigue were described as the major somatic challenges of passage, it is because they indexed one's proximity to total consumption. In Massamba's case, the young teenager had remained hidden for three days, and as such by the time he surfaced he was already dehydrated and malnourished. His struggle with life and subsequent death was seen as inevitable. As Massamba said, "He *couldn't* live."

More terrifying than the expiration of a sick passenger or a weak soul were the deaths that seemed to come "out of nowhere" with little cause and almost no notice. Mas recalled that, in addition to the dead teenager, another six passengers perished days later when his pirogue collided with a rock just off the coast of Mauritania. As *refoulés* described it, this kind of unexpected loss was somehow more traumatic. Because no one saw it coming, migrants struggled to make sense of it. Mansour recalled the circumstances of sudden death in his boat:

It was too hard. Three days after our departure, we didn't have anything left to eat. We ran out of all our supplies. We had neither food nor water. We were obliged to drink the seawater, which gave us a sore stomach and made us vomit. There were two people who died in front of me. One said he had a stomachache, then he started vomiting and couldn't stop. The other one had a headache. They both died.

The idea that something as simple as a headache or a sour stomach could be harbingers of death was paralyzing for many. Even if one could withstand the worry and hunger and thirst, and even if one's boat didn't sink or come apart during transit, a headache could still kill you.

What to do with cadavers was another matter of business for many pirogue captains and their passengers. As Ibrahima explained, the burial process was both a significant challenge and honorable undertaking for those on board. The fact that his compatriots chose him specifically to perform the funeral rites for two deceased *clandestins* on board his pirogue seemed to give him a sense of purpose. "Maybe they picked me because no one else knew how to recite the funeral

prayers,” he said. “In Islam, knowing how to perform the funeral is essential. Otherwise, the body doesn’t rest in peace, and the grave is a place of agitation. Luckily, I knew the prayers, so after reciting them, we threw the corpses into the sea.” Despite the macabre nature of his narrative, Ibrahima’s expression seemed to relax as he recounted how he prepared the body and how he recited the *Salāt al-Janāzah* (funeral prayers). It was, he reflected later, with a sense of moral duty that he buried those bodies at sea. “It must be done with the heart, with respect,” he said. “The Qur’an says we must remember to act with grace.” He was also proud for being chosen by his community of fellow *clandestins* as one who was pious enough to officiate the funeral.

But more than anything, it signified his own acceptance of a similar fate that may well have been visited upon him. In other words, there was no way for him to know what his final outcome would be during transit. The conclusion of his efforts was, as yet, unwritten. Such an acceptance, pointed to an egalitarian understanding of mortality and risk, and “opened his heart,” he said, to what God had in store. According to Ibrahima, death did not visit the “deserving” in a judgmental sense; rather, leaving this world was not up to human intervention, good or bad. Actions did not necessarily result in recompense in this life; instead, they determined the rewards and punishments that would be meted out in the next. Even if life in the boat was punctuated by periodic competition and acrimony, everyone was on the same playing field. In other words, no one was exempt from defeat. And while accepting this was, for Ibrahima, a process that enabled him to face future struggles with a newfound equanimity, a topic I discuss in more detail in Chapter 7, for others it was a source of existential suffering.

Inexplicable causes of death created anxiety and suggested that no passenger was invulnerable to the ocean’s mysterious force. It was a space of suspension, where the normal

rules of action and consequence were reconfigured.¹¹³ On land, one could presumably step out of the way of an oncoming car. Or seek out medical attention when feeling ill. But the ocean was a space where all bets were off. One could not prevent an oncoming wave from overtaking the wooden shell, nor could one avoid the persistent weather as it beat down from above. The topography of the ocean is powerful because it is fundamentally unavoidable once we are in its midst. It is also profoundly unknowable, as we cannot see into its depths; we cannot know or control its inner movements in any permanent way. Instead, we bob on its surface, pursued by its waves, watched by its unseen and otherworldly occupants from below. It is this otherworldliness, and the courage required to face it, that constitute the remaining section of this chapter.

Ay Jambaaryi (The Warriors)

This final section analyzes why the voyage across the sea was often described as a mystical experience, which required passengers to embody strength in the face of paranormal events. Frequently clandestine migrants conceived of themselves as struggling and striving in the way of God. In Ibrahima's portrait, he commented on *la lutte*, or the struggle, as both a mode of achieving masculinity and a means of performing piety. Like life, *la lutte* "should not be easy," he reflected. Transit was a space in which struggle was actively performed as a kind of *jihad*, or spiritual striving in the way of God. It was also tied to normative ideas of masculinity and courage. As Massamba put it, "*Il faut être un véritable homme pour pouvoir faire ce voyage* [You need to be a real man in order to make this voyage]." Part of the reason the voyage was so

¹¹³ In fact, some scholars like Prem Kumar Rajaram and Carl Grundy-Warr argue that boat passage is actually "state of exception" where the migrants are reduced to "bare life" (2004).

difficult was because, as described, it required migrants to submit themselves to unrelenting exposure to the sometimes violent and mysterious forces at work in the sea.

Storms figured prominently in migrant narratives. In the many conversations I had with boat captains, summer was widely seen as the best time to attempt passage. Anytime during or after the rainy season (August-November) was not advised because the ocean was too tumultuous and the winds were too strong. Nevertheless, not all captains followed this golden rule, and as a consequence many boats and their passengers perished at sea. Even experienced captains like Abdoulaye described how, despite having picked a safe time of the season for transit, storms could still come out of nowhere and immobilize boats at best or sink them at worst. His boat was incapacitated for two days during which time the “sea was stormy and there was too much wind. Plus, I had remarked on the technical weaknesses of the pirogue and calculated that she wasn’t strong enough to handle it... The following night the wind calmed down enough for us to get underway.”

Weathering a storm was challenging and frequently traumatic. Descriptions of waves that topped 16 feet filled many interview transcripts. And more often than not when *refoulés* described these memories, they became agitated and solemn. When Papis recounted to me, for example, how he wanted to throw himself into the ocean during a storm because it seemed preferable to anticipating his own annihilation, he became visibly disturbed. We sat on an unoccupied beach not far from downtown where he and Mamadou walked the streets peddling their cheap watches. “You should know,” he said. “We haven’t unveiled our stories to anyone. You’re the first. It’s just too hard to remember. Even right now, talking to you, I see the waves in my mind again. It’s too much.”

As described in Chapter 2, the traumas involved in boat passage have often been depicted in the literary genre of migration fiction. In his 2008 novel, *Mbëkkë mi*, Senegalese author, Abasse Ndione, describes the morning after a storm at sea in chilling detail:

Not knowing anymore which saint to call upon in devotion, with all hope lost, and ignorant of whether the wind was directing them towards the open Atlantic, or to shore, the passengers were ravaged by exhaustion and dread, tortured by thirst and hunger, shivering from cold, and unable to sleep. They stayed awake until morning in a heavy silence, interrupted by fits of vomiting and heavy sighs of desperation or brief lamentations that mingled and mixed with the whistling wind and the lapping waves. All the while, the skiff, endlessly shaken by the monstrous swells, imperturbably continued its slow descent into obscurity (75).

This fictional description is not unlike the oral testimonies of *refoulés* whom I interviewed. And it evokes an iconic image of clandestine passage that has become everyday vernacular within Senegalese society. The dramatic exceptionalism of this kind of experience is, in fact, not so exceptional for young men and their families in Senegal.



Pirogue Mural, Dakar 2011

While writers have used the fodder of clandestine struggle to comment on the vagaries of passage and critique the political economic conditions that would prompt so many to leave, so too have visual artists. There is a now well-known street-art painting in Dakar, not far from Soumbédioune, the capital's artisanal fish market. Extending alongside a pedestrian walkway on the *corniche*, which runs along the westernmost edge of the Cap Vert peninsula, the painting depicts a pirogue named "Yorouko" filled with passengers who all undertake collective entreaties to the captain to turn the boat around. Open mouths cry, "Sea sickness... Stop... Let's return!" or "Don't capsize the boat!" Even the dolphins who accompany the boat say, "Let's stop them from continuing. Otherwise, they will die!" Abdoulaye reflected on the journey this way:

It was too hard. The sea is too mystical. You know, because *géej dafa dee wor* [the ocean is deceptive]. Yes, the ocean deceives. It's risky. And you want to succeed, and you want to leave, but you can't. There were so many deaths. So many deaths in the pirogues. You arrive, but it's Allah who has made you arrive as his warrior. It's God's will, but there were a lot of deaths because it's so risky.

Here Abdoulaye highlights how passage was perceived as a risky operation. Chapter 2 explored how migrants articulated risk as a necessary precondition for economic and social success. Along those same lines, this chapter argues that the risk involved in transit is tied to notions of spiritual struggle. "Life is like that," Ibrahima said. "To know, one must discover. And discovery requires courage." But Abdoulaye's comment also underscores the mystical nature of passage, which resonated, to varying degrees, with all of my participants. The idea that the ocean can deceive is a common refrain in clandestine migrant stories, as we will see.

As Mansour recounted: "Me? I'd never been in a boat before, so I didn't know the ocean. But I knew from the Qur'an that there are things there, in the water. I knew I had to be vigilant." Here, Mansour's comment about the "things" in the water points to a general sense among many of my participants, and indeed many in Senegal, that the ocean is spiritually dangerous. As

mentioned in Chapter 2, most *refoulés* I interviewed had not passed the US equivalent of the sixth grade. Nevertheless, all of them had attended *daara*, or Qur’anic school, at some point. It was at *daara* that many learned of the energies and potentialities of *géej gi* (the ocean).

In Islamic thought, the ocean is a powerful and ambiguous phenomenon. On the one hand, water is both the birthplace of mankind (Qur’an 21:30; 24:44; 25:53) as well as the surface upon which God’s Throne rests at the beginning of the world’s creation (Qur’an 11:7).¹¹⁴ The Sufi mystic Ibn al-‘Arabi underlined the importance of water in his *Fusus al-Hikam* (Bezels of Wisdom) when he opened Chapter 19 with the following: “Knowing that the secret of life flows in water, for it is the basis of the components and the basic elements. For this reason, Allah made every living thing of water” (Year?: 94). On the other hand, the darkness of the ocean’s deepest fathom is also the shadowy fate of those who do not properly submit to or acknowledge divine authority. Existential and intellectual ignorance are the layers of clouds and waves that obscure light; in such darkness a person cannot even see their own hand in front of them (Qur’an 24:40).

Because water holds the “secret of life,” it can be dangerous. It is where metaphor and materiality conjoin. According to Ibn al-‘Arabi, the meanings of life are limitless, like an ocean without a shore. Therefore, one should bob upon the waves, but be careful not to get tossed too violently by their tumult (McAuley 2012: 212).¹¹⁵ And in the Qur’an, the earth both springs from and rests on an “all-surrounding ocean” (Schimmel 1994: 7). At the same time, traveling across the material ocean is risky because it is a space of submission, suspension, and supernatural mystery. *Refoulés* frequently recounted to me how the ocean was a zone of mystical apparitions and visions that visited them during their struggles.

¹¹⁴ In Hadith 3191 of Sahîh al-Bukhâri, the Prophet is asked about the beginning of creation, and he replies: “First of all, there was nothing but Allâh, and (then He created His Throne). His Throne was over the water, and He wrote everything in the Book (in the heaven) and created the heavens and earth” (Sahîh al-Bukhâri, Volume 4, 1997: 264). On the importance of water to Islamic symbolism, see Zargar (2014).

¹¹⁵ See also Chodkiewicz (1993).

The ten days at sea were the longest of my life. It was unthinkable even to close your eyes at night. Sometimes, we heard cries of children or women laughing. They were playing, laughing, and crying. They were invisible. The women caressed our faces, our arms, all over our bodies. They gave us the impression they wanted to make love to us. In the morning, the passengers looked at each other with suspicion. People sitting next to each other didn't trust each other anymore. Because there were several nationalities in the pirogue, we told ourselves that there must have been cannibals among us and that they were waiting for nighttime to come. After that they would transform themselves into women and children to mystify us. Many of the passengers were changed. They couldn't come out of this experience unscathed. Even today, they still drag around their memories like a heavy baggage. They are afflicted with nervous depression and panic attacks. I lost my best friend in that boat.

Here, Mas reveals several themes that frequently came up in other *refoulés* accounts: the incarnation of the “impossible,” the experience of fear, trauma and suspicion, and the lingering persistence of memories. Importantly, the idea of seeing different sorts of things in the sea did not just apply to cannibals and shape shifters. On several occasions, *refoulés* described to me how they saw entire cities rise up from the water, or friends coming to them by walking on the turbulent surface. Some, like Maodo, saw the water itself turn luminescent colors.

In Mas's account, “spiritual realities take body in the [imaginal] world” of the *barzakh* (McAuley 2012: 204). Like Harry West's Mozambican (Muedan) villagers, who saw hybridized shape-shifting lion-people threatening their homes and communities, conceptions of the unthinkable had a material reality for many in the boats leaving Senegal and transiting the Atlantic (2007). West's provocative analysis of sorcery in Mozambique does not—in the tradition of symbolic anthropology—see practices or beliefs as standing in for other things like power, gender, or class relations (c.f. Shaw 2002). Rather, West privileges the *real*-ness of his interlocutors' perceptions, even if those perceptions include hybrid “lion-people” or shape shifters who transform themselves into real lions and steal into villages at night to kill people. As West describes it, “Muedans conceived *of*, and thus *conceived*” their worlds in a very material

sense (2007: 62). Mas and other *refoulés* testified to the *real*-ness of the things they saw the events they experienced. As he said, he did not imagine women caressing him; he *felt* it.

In this way, Mas's narrative also highlights how experience is intrinsic to Islamic notions of knowing God's world. As illustrated in Chapter 2, travel was often articulated as a religious obligation for the young men I met because God is said to be manifest in creation. From the first surah, the Qur'an is explicit about the world being the product of divine activity. A famous *hadīth qudsī* says, "I was a hidden treasure and I wanted to be known. Therefore I created the world so they would know Me through it."¹¹⁶ Seeing and experiencing first hand the signs of such productive activity brings one closer to understanding God's nature. As Annemarie Schimmel argues, "For the Muslim, everything could serve as an *āya*, a sign from God" (1994: xii). The trick is not simply to see the signs, but to experience them because that is what leads to true acknowledgment.

Mas's story also highlights the widespread suspicion that people from other regions could not be trusted. Speaking of the different nationalities coming to Senegal for departure, Papis explained, "Indeed, there were Nigerians, Peuls [Fulani] from Guinea, Moors from Mauritania, and lots of other nationalities who came from everywhere. Sometimes, I was afraid because I saw different kinds of people who came from all over, and also many different sorts of things in the sea." In this description, Papis conflates nationality and ethnicity, as well as the presence of different people and seeing "different sorts of things in the sea."

Different nationalities and ethnicities were not always blamed for being cannibals, however. What is distinctive is the degree to which cannibals, irrespective of origin, figure in migration narratives. Roughly two-thirds (65%) of my participants confirmed that there were cannibals in

¹¹⁶ "A *hadīth qudsī* is believed to be God's word as revealed to the Prophet Muhammad but not included in the Qur'an" (Mittermaier 2011: 252, fn. 10).

their boat. Such shape shifters were said to transform themselves at night and devour people in the darkness.¹¹⁷ For Mas and Abdoulaye, cannibals, like all of God's creations, are very *real*. Other *refoulés* would agree. Time and again, it was said to me, "There is *everything* in the Qur'an: angels and *jinn*, good and bad." And the logical conclusion is that what exists in the Qur'an, necessarily *exists* in the world. To discount the existence of cannibals would prohibit us from understanding what they mean to the people with whom they presumably come into contact.

Social scientists have long struggled with how to interpret fantastical stories. Some early anthropological accounts perpetuated stereotypes of non-Western peoples as illogical or irrational. Later ethnographers tried to see the logic in cultural practices, even if through an ethnocentric lens. In her historical ethnography of memories of the slave trade in Sierra Leone, Rosalind Shaw likens stories of cannibalism to "social memory" (2002: 226). Moral communities, she argues, are constructed, in part, through cultural narratives. Stories of cannibals have their own particular historical context, but they also exist as part of a longer legacy of stories that have circulated across time. For Shaw, cannibalism stories circulated widely in Sierra Leone during the colonial period as a response to the slave trade. But, as Shaw argues, such narratives actually predated European intervention in West Africa, and as such forms part of a longer history of societies responding to and making sense out of moments of crisis.¹¹⁸ In other words, rumors of cannibals indicate both a moment of rupture, such as the rise

¹¹⁷ A specifically Wolof phenomenon dating to pre-Islamic practices, Cheikh Tidiane Kane explains *dēm* as "human beings who possess supernatural powers and who, after killing their prey by taking possession of their soul, they consume their flesh" (2014: 109).

¹¹⁸ Likewise, in her work on vampire stories in East Africa, Luise White argues that rumors of vampires naturalized the colonial encounter (2000). In addition to adapting forms of storytelling for the purposes of speaking about colonialism obliquely through the vehicle of the self, White argues that Africans who circulated these bits of hearsay were seeking normative explanations to phenomena, often technological, that were unaccountable in other local vernaculars. "Rumors explain; they naturalize the unnatural" (62).

of the colonial slave trade, and a historical continuation of cultural responses to other ruptures or moments of crisis.

Narratives make logical sense out of what is presumably *il*-logical. As Achille Mbembe and Janet Roitman have argued, narrating oneself within the logic of crisis, then makes that crisis intelligible (1995). “[T]he ‘eating’ of humans is a powerful image for the articulation of... warfare and state-building with a form of commerce in which ‘consumable’ bodies were captured and sold before disappearing forever” (Shaw 2002: 230). In this case, Shaw argues that cannibalism is a metaphor for people disappearing as a consequence of the Atlantic slave trade. But, as West would counter: metaphor for whom? If Shaw’s Sierra Leonean interlocutors, like my *refoulé* respondents, articulated cannibals not as metaphors, but as reality, then is metaphor an appropriate designation? As Andras Sandor has suggested: “no metaphor occurs where none is recognized. Accordingly, we should not interpret predications metaphorically unless we have good reason to assume that they were meant that way” (1986: 103). How then might we understand stories of cannibals (or jinn spirits or angels) if they are not shorthand for something else, such as colonialism, adversity, class conflict, or gender relations?

Taking seriously the fact that *refoulés* construe cannibals as real allows us to understand and make sense of cannibals’ presence as meaningful entities in the lives of *refoulés*. What cannibals “mean” is that the spiritual world these young men inhabited was sufficiently broad to accommodate such phenomena. Cannibals’ existence substantiates the degree to which migrants struggled during their journeys. Having faced such creatures and survived actually forms an integral part of *refoulés*’ subjective understandings of being God’s warriors even if they were unable to successfully reach Europe.

Of the three kinds of voyage mentioned in the *Kitâb al-isfâr*¹¹⁹—the journey *toward* God, the journey *in* God, and the journey *from* God—Ibn al-‘Arabi discusses the first as being accomplished by either land or sea. The journey *toward* God by sea in fact symbolizes speculative thought and is thus “uncertain and even dangerous” (Chodkiewicz 1996: 74). Indeed, because the ocean is a metaphor for God, it is the repository of profound secrets. As we see in Mas’s story, the unveiling of those secrets can be shocking, so much so that some *clandestins* never recovered from “what they saw.”¹²⁰ As such, the Qur’an speaks of the dangers of boat passage with grave warning (Qur’an 10:22; 17:67). Whether one could recover or not, the images and memories often lingered after years had passed. Ibrahima said:

I saw things that were truly extraterrestrial. I don’t know how to describe them. It’s like the same things we think of when we begin to fall asleep. You have the impression that you’re entering another universe. With everything combined—you’re in the middle of the ocean, you can’t see anything especially at night [pausing]... Now whenever night comes, I think about the things I saw, and they fall on me, like *that*.

Here, Ibrahima punctuated the suddenness of being overcome by memories by planting his fist in his palm. As such, the experiences of transit continued to live on well after arrival and return had concluded.

Ibrahima’s comment illustrates the degree to which visions in the boat—both what was seen and what remained invisible—exerted a lasting affective force on *clandestins*. Recalling that vision plays an important sensory role in Senegalese conceptions of place and subjectivity, migrant deaths were all the more traumatic if no one saw it coming. Importantly, vision was not simply tied to the faculty of sight perception, but was integral to understandings of a spiritual

¹¹⁹ The *Kitâb al-isfâr ‘an natâ’ij al-asfâr* (Book of the Unveiling of the Effects of the Voyage) is Ibn al-‘Arabi’s most complete investigation of the theme of travel. See Denis Gril’s translation of al-‘Arabi’s, *Le Dévoilement des Effets du Voyage* (1994).

¹²⁰ See Chapters 3 and 7 for more on the presence of homeless male street dwellers in Dakar who are widely characterized by people as being *refoulés* who were irreparably traumatized by passage.

self. What was perceived by the imaginative eye, or the “waking vision” as Amira Mittermaier might put it, is significant for many Muslims (2011). Given the importance of mystical visions to Sufi practice and epistemology, it would be inaccurate to describe what clandestine migrants saw as apparitions, hallucinations, or products of delirium. Instead, if we take those visions seriously, we might come to understand that, for many young Senegalese Muslims, the world is constituted of more than what meets the eye.

Conclusion

Scholarly attention to migration out of West Africa has focused largely on successful migrants who are able to navigate transnational mobility through religious brotherhoods, education programs, or family reunion schemes. While this approach is not unrevealing, it does neglect the narratives of *refoulés*, whose experiences are equally illuminating when it comes to understanding social realities in Africa today. Likewise, attention to the actual space of transit itself, as a practical and phenomenological category, has been sorely lacking. More pointedly, the social worlds created, sometimes temporarily, during transit have not been fully explored. This chapter regards these spaces and social worlds as moments where subjective experience, embodied spirituality, and the terrifying magnitude of the natural world all intersected in meaningful ways.

Stories of transit are many things. They are populated by people at once surprisingly generous and suddenly menacing. They are intimate and terrible, full of hope and horror at the same time. They tell of fantastic transformations at sea, where the line between what is possible and what is real becomes not so much blurred as irrelevant. They linger like traces in the minds and sometimes on the bodies of *refoulés*. They are also interminable in some way. Though they

speak of only a window in time, they are trapped in dreams and lived over and over in re-telling, like a passing moment without end. They cannot be un-experienced. And only with great effort can they be forgotten. These stories describe the space of transit as the “betwixt and between” that is neither departure nor arrival, but rather the materialization of uncertainty itself, where the normal rules are suspended and new socialities, practices, and subjectivities emerge. These stories are also embodied, performed, and contested with vigor and pathos worthy of any dramatic stage. Expressing solitude and *communitas*, disclosure and reflection, suspicion and camaraderie, the performance of narrative is as informative as the story itself.¹²¹ The *refoulés* I met reenacted their trajectories down to the smallest detail, at times arguing with each other over the conditions of the water, the number of days without food, who died and how.

Rather than conceptualize trauma and memory as being discursively fixed in time and space as something experienced in the past, this dissertation seeks to reveal the ways in which memories live beyond their events, in narratives, in encounters, and in social relations. They live in the people who are constantly reframing and negotiating them, and fashioning their ideas of the future in relation to them. Spaces and times of transit are reflective of contemplative traditions in Sufi Islam whereby travel is linked to striving and personal transformation. As Alioune pointed out, reciting the phrase *barça ou barzakh* proved consoling. Most of the young men with whom I spoke had a keen sense that life was a pathway back to the divine. As William Chittick points out, “[H]uman beings do not enter the world as full-fledged divine forms. They start out as a sort of infinite potentiality for actualizing the all-comprehensive name [Allah]. When human beings return to God... they go by way of the intermediate worlds [or *barzakhs*]” (1989: 20-21). The *barzakh* is then a path itself to communion. Indeed, as Ibn al-‘Arabi argued in his *Futūhāt al-makkiyya*, or *The Meccan Openings*, the Supreme Barzakh, which separates God

¹²¹ See the portrait on Tëngéej.

and nonexistence, is a space of infinite possibility (Chittick 1989: 204). Whether Alioune ended up in Barcelona or the hereafter, his journey either way was ultimately one of return.

This chapter has explored how the spaces of transit, like the stories that describe them, had, and continue to have, affective value for *refoulés*. According to Yael Navaro-Yashin, affect is not merely human emotion, such as envy or desire, which presumably originates in the black box of the human heart; affect is the visceral pre-discursive *experience* of emotion. Importantly, the source of affect can be located in the material world, among objects that are both natural and man-made. “[T]here is something in space, in material objects, or in the environment that exceeds, or goes further and beyond the human imagination, but that produces an affect that may be experienced by human beings, all the same” (2012:18). Through swelling waves, inescapable exposure, dehydration, and disturbing visions, the material world of transit exacted its consequence with striking affect. Not only did people act on spaces by, for example, traversing the Atlantic with man-made pirogues; those spaces also acted on people, on their bodies and on their psyches. The material environment—the boat, the sea, the wind and the sky—exerted a force on their human cargo. Passengers struggled against the elements and, in turn, were reshaped by them. The memories that linger continue to exert an affective charge on most *refoulés*. The act of speaking about their journeys was no small task; in recounting the stories, the spaces of transit were made material and lived again. Sudden silences, wayward gazes, trains of thought gone astray were common punctuations to *refoulés*’ monologues. Transit was not simply a space through which captains and passengers navigated; it was a space in which their subjectivities became embroiled.

Indeed, as the stories recounted here reveal, the ocean between here and there was a space of danger and revelation: they were dangerous because they were occupied by of a host of earthly

and supernatural forces; they were revelatory because submitting oneself to Allah's will became all the more pressing. In the boat, there was no one else to call on as migrants entered a new world where only God could intercede on their behalf. In Ibrahima's portrait, he articulated this undertaking as a spiritual *jihad*, a theme which echoes prominent meditations on striving as being requisite to the performance of piety and knowledge of the divine. To travel across the *barzakh* and to *lutter* against the vagaries of passage—the inclement weather, the strains of seasickness and injury, the deaths and fatigue—is to seek greater proximity to God.

In this chapter, we have also seen traces of Victor Turner's conception of ritual passage, which both symbolizes a state of in-between-ness, and generates new forms of *communitas* (Turner 1969). Indeed, the stories here reveal how social worlds were cultivated on board as friendships and fighting, solidarity and solitude, conviviality and competition were all part of the experience of transit. If transit was a space of unknown dangers, it was also one where novel and emergent social relations materialized. Ambiguous and anonymizing, liminal spaces accommodate those who are still "becoming" (Deleuze 1995: 170-171). However, liminality does not always assume a temporal end, nor does travel assume a final destination: the spaces that *refoulés* describe in the following pages are figurative of a more prolonged process of in-between-ness. In other words, such spaces are still very present in the subjectivities, in the practices, and in the social worlds of the men who transited them.

To journey is to open oneself to uncertainty and liminality. According the *refoulés* I met, travel is frequently rife with hardships. But, it is the struggle of the journey that makes it morally and spiritually valuable. Not quite a space of exception, transit is, nevertheless, a space of indeterminacy. It is where the unexpected is embodied through gestures, translated in prayer, and perceived through visions. Traveling is both a spiritual duty to see the "signs" (*ayat*) of God in

all worldly creations and an embodied experience of struggle. In these accounts, we see how subjectivities are emergently constituted and how somatic processes and traumas, as well as spiritual experiences, influence social life. As such these narratives crystalize the uncertainty of the journey, and prepare us for the uncertainty of return.

NDARY



Ndary and Moussa 2013

I met Ndary in The Gambia in 2012 during a trip I made to visit a friend and colleague living in Lamine Village. Ndary had come from his village not far from the Senegal-Gambia border to visit his uncle and “make contacts” in the agriculture aid sector in Serrekunda. His village, which I would later visit, was home to a growing movement of what Ndary called *des groupements de femmes*, or women’s collectives that were becoming increasingly involved in rural agricultural production. Ndary functioned as their mouthpiece and front man, seeking out financial sponsors and partners across the region.

When I first met him, he was wearing a tightly waxed bright lavender boubou with white ornamental stitching around the cuffs and collar. When he found out about my research, he said he’d made the clandestine voyage twice and wanted to tell me his story. A few days later, as we sat and talked underneath a mango tree in the courtyard of his uncle’s house, he sported a yellow

“President’s Malaria Initiative” t-shirt printed with logos from the CDC, USAID, and the US Department of Health and Human Services. I imagined he’d gotten it from one of the many *conférences* he attended. Ndary moved easily in the world of development—a world that intervened in everything from growing corn to passing out mosquito nets, and left its stamp (and its t-shirts) all over Africa. Though Ndary had to leave his studies early like so many other *refoulés*, he nevertheless stayed long enough to obtain at least a modicum of formal education, which gave him the linguistic competency in French to operate as a self-professed “development consultant.”

“I studied first at the [Collège] Babacar Cobar Ndao in Kaffrine [not far from Kaolack in central Senegal],” he said. “After getting my BFM [middle school diploma], I went to the Lycée Demba Diop in Mbour. But that’s where my studies were interrupted by an accident.” He had been working for Amerger, an industrial fish processing company in Senegal, which had started exploiting shrimp markets in the Casamance in 1980, but then later moved north to the Petite Côte to export high-value fish to Europe. In 2003, Amerger was bought out by one of Spain’s largest seafood conglomerates, Grupo S.A. Eduardo Vieira. One year later, Ndary had his “accident,” the details about which he was decidedly ambiguous, saying only that he spent time in hospital:

Really, I wanted to finish my degree. I wanted to go to university. But... with my accident, I had to spend two months at the hospital. At that time, I was a student in *la première* [US equivalent of a junior in high school].

My father was a big farmer, and he also raised livestock. He even had his own herd of cattle. But it’s the family that causes problems for us here in Africa. He died in 1997, when we [the children] were all still very young. I was fourteen-years-old and in *la troisième* [ninth grade]. But even within the same family, if the father dies, sometimes we [the children] have to part ways. Each one goes to live with his mother. There is tension. Because here in Africa, understanding and patience within the family is weakened by people criticizing one another all the time. There is so much fighting and competition. After my father died, his eldest

son managed the house for two years. But little by little, with the small daily cracks and fissures at the heart of the family, everyone went their separate ways. From then on, each son was responsible for managing his own family.

And that also pushed me to quit school. If I had stayed, my mother would have cried, saying, “My son doesn’t take care of me. Look at my [female] neighbors and their sons who take care of them. But this one [Ndary], he spends all his time at school. And we all know French school isn’t worth anything [it won’t get you a job].” Even when I was in school, trying to concentrate on the lessons, I had these family burdens following me...

I am the eldest of my mother’s sons, and our family is composed of around seventeen members. So I am responsible for their food and education. I have friends who made a good living in Europe, who came back to Senegal and built houses. They called me a lot, telling me all about Europe. So then I thought I would prefer to go there and leave my *petit boulot* [petty job] here in Africa.

While most sons felt an obligation to support their mothers, being the eldest often came with additional pressures. To make matters worse, Ndary’s mother, like Mansour’s, was a widow. As such, he was even more compelled to provide financial protection for her, a proposition that was not at all straightforward. Moreover, losing his father also meant losing access to his father’s wealth. Because Ndary was his *mother’s* first son and not his father’s, he was not entitled to the land and livestock that his elder half-brother managed and eventually appropriated. Consequently, he sought paid work far from his natal village. Incidentally, this allowed him to make his preparations for departure far from the eyes of his kin. “I know very well that if I’d told them, they would have said I shouldn’t go,” he said.

When I asked him why there was such a surge in clandestine migration between the years of 2005 and 2008, he explained it in terms of politics.

As for the “Barça ou Barzakh,” who made this happen? In my opinion, it’s because during the years 2005, 2006, 2007, the state was not providing opportunities for the youth. And to think, it’s us who brought Abdoulaye and SOPI to power. During that time, the government was always talking about the problems of overcrowding in the city, in Dakar. They constructed roads and buildings there. But if you leave an empty bag here in the village, do you think it can amount to something more than that in the future? Before building the capital,

you have to educate the youth. These young people they know that if the state doesn't care, then they tell themselves, "I have to find a solution." And the solution is to go elsewhere.

At the time of his first migration in 2006, Ndary was a fishmonger, buying shrimp in Mbour and re-selling it in Dakar. This work earned him enough to send 350,000CFA (\$700) to his family in the village and to pay the 600,000CFA (\$1200) pirogue fare. "I sold all my belongings, too," he recalled, shaking his head. "Then, I went to see my *mara* in Kaolack."

Starting in Mbour, he traveled south to the Sine-Saloum delta where the two rivers—the Sine and the Saloum—converge before emptying into the Atlantic. Stopping on a small peninsula between Njirnda and Djeffer, he found his boat mates. "We couldn't see the big pirogue. Instead, we took small boats out until we arrived in the middle of the ocean, and there it was." Describing the journey, he said:

There were days when you would pass all your time cowering under the waves. You know? Waves like *this* [his arms held high]. At that time of year, the water was very agitated. But there were some guys in the boat who were really tough, really wild. Even me, I'm not trying to make myself big, but I am very active. If the water started coming into the pirogue and people were tired, I would say, "Give me the bucket; I will bail the water out."

You couldn't even go two meters without the pirogue going up one wave and then descending down the next. Some people lost complete control. With all the movements and the waves that jostled us, they started vomiting inside the pirogue... You could say that I was a kind of doctor because I'd brought medicine from Mbour to help with seasickness. And we chose food that wasn't too heavy, like biscuits, or maybe some groundnuts, light foods. And we didn't drink too much because we were afraid the water would run out.

Still, there was a guy who died because he vomited too much. But his friend refused to put him in the water. As you can imagine, you leave a body like that for too long and it will start to smell. It's not sanitary! So, at five in the morning, while the man slept, we threw the body overboard. It was the best solution! If not, things would get contaminated. What can you do? He was already dead. So he shouldn't stay in the pirogue with those who are living. As soon as his friend woke up, he said, "Where is my brother?" We told him, "Eh, console yourself. He's no longer alive. What are you going to do with him? You can't eat him. You

can't keep him. The best solution is to send him overboard so that everyone can rest easy. If not, you're going to join him." You see how hard it is.

We left Senegal on a Thursday, and we were at sea for about seven and a half days. When the captain pointed to the lights on the horizon and said it was the Canary Islands, people started applauding and dancing in the pirogue. Suddenly, you could breathe again.

But when we got closer, we saw all the instruments and machines on the coast. Big steel towers with satellite dishes and cameras everywhere. And then the *Guardia Civil* [Spanish Coast Guard] came out in their fast boats to intercept us. And you knew there was no way to avoid them; they were everywhere. In the boats, in the towers, in the helicopters. Truly, I thought to myself, "Look at all those Spaniards who have jobs because of us."

And the Red Cross took such good care of us. When you get there, they give you a towel so you can bathe yourself. They give you warm clean clothes because really we weren't used to the climate. They give you medicine if you're ill. They give you food and water. Sometimes, we would even walk a bit in the courtyard together. Truly, they gave us total liberty! But as time went on with so many migrants arriving, the situation started to exceed them. The time of giving you papers to go find work in the cities was over. And so they put us up in small rooms to wait for the Senegalese state to decide what to do.

As Ndary summed up, "The state did nothing... In fact, they betrayed us!" After his repatriation from Spain, Ndary, like many other *refoulés*, was told to go to Thiès to deposit his identity card and put his name on a list. The state promised to recruit *les jeunes* for temporary work visas, which had been allocated by Spain as part of its bilateral agreements with Senegal in 2006.¹²² And yet, again like so many other *refoulés*, Ndary got neither a response nor a way to seek legal entry to Spain. "The President created a program called Plan REVA. Surely you have heard of this. It means *Retours Vers l'Agriculture* [Return to Agriculture]. But it didn't amount

¹²² In December 2006, Senegal's Interior Minister, Ousmane Ngom, announced that Spain had allocated 4,000 temporary Spanish work visas as part of efforts to help clandestine migrants who had been repatriated from the Canary Islands. The Spanish Prime Minister, José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, however, was quick to refute this information, saying that no such numbers had been determined. What Zapatero did confirm was that, if any work visas were offered, the terms would be determined on a case-by-case basis by Spanish authorities (see http://www.seneweb.com/news/Societe/4000-visas-accord-s-aux-migr-s-clandestins-par-l-espagne-au-s-n-gal-zapatero-d-ment-ousmane-ngom_n_7064.html)

to anything. The Spanish gave 13 billion CFA [€26.6 million] to Senegal, and what did the state do? They ate it! Turns out, the Plan REVA was, in fact, a ‘*rêve*!’¹²³

Ndary was in Kayar at the time when Plan REVA was announced, working as a beverage vendor with a friend. Using what money he’d made selling Fanta and Sprite, he went back to his village and funded his own “Return to Agriculture,” he said. “But at that time between the years of 2006 and 2007, Senegalese agriculture suffered a lot of problems of disbursement and distribution.” When I asked him what he meant by disbursement, he said:

Sometimes, you don’t get paid. You can “sell” your groundnuts in December and not get paid until September the next year. That year, I had a lot of groundnuts, millet and corn. But even if you sell two or three tons, the merchant gives you a receipt, saying, “The factory is closed. They don’t have any money. Take this receipt.” And so you take it and wait to be paid. You see how the President betrayed us? I made my own REVA and it was completely *foutu* [worthless].

Once his REVA had collapsed in 2007, Ndary left his village again and obtained another paid job, this time working with some young laborers from Guinea-Bissau.

Initially, he tried to put migration out of his mind. He convinced himself that he was uninterested in making another attempt. And to all appearances, he seemed satisfied with his decision. But his Bissauian co-workers, who were preparing for their own departure via Mauritania, had other plans. Promising him a seat in their boat, they eventually convinced him to reconsider. “After many discussions, they changed my mind. But it wasn’t that hard. I had tried to forget, but at that time, all I could see was Europe,” he said. Some of his childhood friends had already succeeded in getting to Europe via pirogue and were now sending money home to their parents. In his village, Ndary knew that the local talk of these “good sons” was impassioned and would invariably touch his own house. Though his family would not have officially approved of

¹²³ Plan REVA was proposed by president Abdoulaye Wade in 2007 during his reelection campaign. The Senegalese population on the whole (and not just *refoulés*) alluded to the illusory quality of Wade’s agricultural development program by taking advantage of the wordplay between REVA and *rêver*, which means “to dream” in French.

his departure, they might also secretly wonder why he didn't try again. As he recounted it, "This also pushed me to cross the Atlantic again to try and make something of myself."

My second voyage left from Mauritania in 2007. It cost 400,000CFA [\$800]... When I called Ndangane Sambou [on the coast south of Joal], they told me to pass through Diofior and then Fimela, and from there, five of us got into the pirogue that would take us to Mauritania. When we arrived, there were three other guys from Guinea-Bissau who wanted to come along. But the captain said no, all the spaces were taken. He told them, "You will have to wait for another pirogue." Well, the three Bissauians didn't like this. They went directly to the Mauritanian police.

We left on a Sunday, and I had calculated that there were exactly 85 people in the boat because I wanted to make sure it was big enough to carry so many passengers. We spent the first night in the pirogue. But the next morning, we saw the Mauritanian border patrol. They had surrounded us with one boat behind, one to the left, and one in front. They raised their rifles at us and said, "If you do not return, we will shoot you." Two of them boarded the pirogue and took charge of the motor. They turned us around and conducted us back in the direction of Mauritania.

Once on land, the authorities transported Ndary and the other migrants to a detention camp in Nouadhibou. "They called it Guantánamito," Ndary laughed. "We stayed there for nine days, and it was almost worse than being in the pirogue." The treatment they received at the hands of the Mauritanian authorities was "brutal," and included not being allowed to leave the crowded cells except for bathroom breaks, having insufficient access to food and water—to say nothing of medical care—and being randomly beaten by the guards. Inside Guantánamito, Ndary met other Senegalese migrants who had been there even longer. They explained to him that the police were waiting for enough people to fill a truck, which would take them to the border. Not knowing how long he would have to endure the prison was a source of great anxiety. Though he was never physically beaten, he witnessed others being abused "without reason" and wondered when his time would come. "On the tenth day they put us all in a truck and took us to Rosso [on the

Senegalese-Mauritanian border]. And they just left us there in the desert, with no way to get back home.”

Truly, that experience [in the prison] also shook me. When I came back, the small pocket money I had was gone. I had to start again from zero. Still, up to the present moment, I struggle and manage to earn something that will support my family. And to supervise my brothers who are either in school or training as apprentices for different vocations. This is so that what happened to me never happens to them.

Ndary looked as if he was about to weep. “Those *Naars* are completely racist,” he said. “That’s why they want to imprison us here.”

When I asked him what he meant, he explained that the Spanish gave money to the Mauritanian government for policing Atlantic waters and detaining clandestine migrants. Like others, Ndary was keenly aware of the existence of bilateral accords, though what they regulated, and for whom, was less evident. His feelings about European intervention quickly became mixed, as he wasn’t sure which state was at fault, though the primary actors seemed to be Senegal, Spain, France, and Mauritania. In the end, deciding where to lay the blame was less important than recognizing that real people suffered the consequences. “There were some people in Guantánamito who weren’t even trying to migrate,” he said. “They lived and worked in Mauritania. But [the Mauritanian police] only have to ‘suspect’ that you are a *clandestin* and they can lock you up. That means any black African is at risk in such a country.”

This time when he returned, Ndary was unsettled. “When I came back,” he said, “I got to Mbour and learned that one of my family members had passed away.”

It was such a shock I couldn’t handle it. This man loved me so much. We worked together. We shared the same house. He educated me about everything. When I learned he was dead, I said to myself, “Oh, look at this. I have returned from a clandestine voyage and now someone has died. What am I going to do?”

I spent two days in the village, but I felt a little crazy. I couldn’t even look at my family. I couldn’t stop thinking about the moments I’d lived through. And then

coming back empty handed? I lost my will. But my mother knows me very well. Each time I started to retreat, she would call out, “Eh, my son, come here!” She would tell me stories to ease my spirit and to give me stability.

During a visit I made to Ndary’s village, we took a walk one evening with his son Moussa out to the *champs* (fields). Ndary pointed to the vacant parcels between the leafless baobab trees. The air was hot and dusty as the gigantic orb of the sun began its slow descent in the west. When the rains came, Ndary explained, this desiccated stretch of earth could yield tons of groundnuts, corn and millet. Whereas the problem before was one of “disbursement,” today the issue was one of *engrais* (fertilizer).

Agriculture in Senegal has not done well because it’s poorly managed. Today, the groundnut is very expensive. It’s the same with millet and corn because now you need fertilizer. If you don’t have the money to buy it, the yield will be paltry. But if you have fertilizer and you put that in the fields? Truly, the yield will be profitable. A young man could manage such a situation if he had some subsidies [for seeds and fertilizer]. He could live decently and feed his family by working in agriculture. You could come back and you’d see him totally changed from one year to the next.

The evening light had begun to descend on us in the *champs*, so we decided to make our way back to his compound. Along the way, we met some women walking to the village well to collect water. Ndary greeted them, respectfully clasping his hands in front of his chest.¹²⁴ They asked who I was and if I was with an NGO. “*Déédéét*,” he answered. “*Gëstukat la*.” (No, she is a researcher.) Because Ndary already formed part of the village’s social architecture surrounding development, it was not at all suspect for him to be seen with a white researcher from the United States or other *tubaab* country. I could see that he carried the reputation with pride. He was the portal through which people in his small corner of the hinterlands accessed the “elsewhere” to which he had irrevocably been denied entry as a younger man.

¹²⁴ A gesture that is performed when hand shaking, most often between men and women, is not appropriate.

As we walked slowly, he revisited the subject of culpability. “You know, Stephanie, when I said I didn’t know who was responsible, I was wrong. Even more than the other European countries like Spain or France, it’s Senegal that betrayed us.” He described how the government put out the call for *les rapatriés* to come forward with the promise of winning a coveted visa to work in Spain’s construction or agriculture sector. Spain, according to Ndary, needed strong, able-bodied workers to tend the harvest.

I’m a farmer born and bred. I could do that work with no problem. But the state lied. They sold us out. They said they were going to recruit the youth to go to Spain and other countries. They said they needed people in good health between the ages of twenty-two and thirty, no drug addicts, no criminals. In this way, they calibrated the quality of applicants. They even said that doctors would verify a person’s health before departure. But listen, what really bothered me about the whole drama was that they gave a visa to a woman who was three months pregnant. Where are the doctors who consulted her? And as soon as she landed in Spain, they sent her back. She cannot work in the fields being pregnant! So, the authorities did whatever they wanted with the visas. They only know how to be corrupt. They gave the money to the doctors, to the police. And they *bouffé* [stuffed themselves or ate without restraint] the Spanish funds for the *refoulés*. After that, everything was finished. And to think there are people who lost their lives for those visas. People who spent all their money. And when they repatriated us, we had to start from zero.

Now, I am a development actor. When they returned me, I came home to Senegal, back to my locality and I found a new mission in life. Now I work with CARITAS [a Catholic charity organization] in Kaolack. This is my principal occupation. I am a certified development organizer. When I came back, I told myself, ‘There’s no need to go elsewhere anymore. I betrayed my country when I left. Even though my country betrayed me, too, I won’t do it again. Today, my burden is here.

V. (TEMPORARY) ARRIVAL



Joal 2013

“When the petrol was finished, some said we couldn’t make it.
Others said we should go towards Morocco. Me, I was there where they’d
left me, thinking about my escape.”

(Dolé)

Introduction

This chapter explores the process of arrival for migrants at three primary destinations: Spain, Mauritania, and Morocco. These were the places where boats either ran aground or were intercepted by maritime police. Arrival was temporary, however, because uncertain periods of detention and eventual expulsion usually followed. It was in these militarized spaces of capture, detention, and *refoulement* that clandestine boat migrants came face to face with global migration governance. My central argument in this chapter has three parts: First, global migration governance has become an enterprise that generates substantial profits for industries and states. Second, clandestine migrants were aware that their movements were being controlled as part of this enterprise. And third, they used that knowledge not only in attempting to resist capture, but also in their strategies of return to Senegal.

If, as *refoulés* argued in Chapter 2, the surge in clandestine migration out of West Africa between 2005 and 2008 was the result, in part, of a defiant logic at work among Senegalese youth who felt immobilized by their government, their encounters with border technologies and mechanisms of internment revealed the extent to which their newfound mobility had been instrumentalized by African states and European businesses eager to control, and profit from, the migration management industry. *Refoulés* in Senegal often expressed the sense that their peregrinations had been used against them. As Maodo put it, “*C’était mon voyage, mais c’est l’état qui a gagné* [It was my voyage, but it’s the {Senegalese} state that profited].”

Between 2005 and 2008, there was an explosion of reports on clandestine migration in the media. News pieces were filled with images and rhetoric that catalyzed the fear of African migrants descending in “waves” on European shores. Young male African migrants were constructed as a kind of lumpen refuse—marginal, undesired and dangerous—largely through

images. The overcrowded boats, the chaotic assemblage of faces, the poignant hungry stares all perpetuated the erroneous idea of clandestine migrants as embracing a kind of irrational logic. By filling the frame with faces too numerous to count, such images reified the notion that Europe was being “invaded” by African migrants during this period. Moreover, the sheer number of these images circulating also indicated the extent to which the media scape was saturated with representations of young black Africans depicted as scared, exposed and, above all, illegal.

Such narratives about African migrants did not exist in a vacuum, nor were they exclusive to growing racist sentiments in Europe at the turn of the millennium (Law 2014; Van Amersfoort 1999). Rather, they were intrinsic to the logic of capital: on the one hand, these popular narratives justified the investment in, and profit from, migration control and surveillance technologies; on the other hand, they substantiated the demands of European markets, which required cheap, flexible and, above all, disposable labor to fuel its economies (Migreurop 2012; see also De Genova and Peutz 2010). Despite the plethora of media reports, pirogue migration to Spain represented only a small fraction of illegal entries to Europe. As Hannah Cross has pointed out in her exploration of security discourses within the EU’s border regime, “[m]ost illegal immigration to Europe is via airports” (2009: 179). In spite of this, vast amounts of money have been invested in and produced by border control (Andersson 2014: 66).¹²⁵

Media representations of boat migrants between 2005 and 2008 effectively contributed to the legitimization of coercive measures undertaken to control them (Agier 2011; Fassin 2005). Since the mid-2000s, several strategies have been adopted by the European Union and individual Member States to halt the “flood.” The first strategy focused on border management. In an effort to stem the flow out of West Africa, the EU heightened the presence of maritime patrols and

¹²⁵ For a running total of the amounts spent on militarizing European borders, see The Migrant Files, <http://www.themigrantsfiles.com/>.

surveillance systems in the Mediterranean and off the Senegalese coast. This was operationalized largely by Frontex, the external border management arm of the European Union. Created in 2004, Frontex has played a major role in crippling clandestine naval routes to Europe by both stopping journeys before they begin in Senegal and by policing the North African coast and the Mediterranean Sea before arrival at their destination.¹²⁶ Like Frontex, Spain's Sistema Integrado de Vigilancia Exterior (SIVE) has been another effective border control mechanism. By positioning highly sophisticated surveillance technologies off the Spanish coast, boats were detected and intercepted earlier and thus fewer pirogues were able to make it to European shores (Carling 2007c).

Up until the 1990s, most "boat migration" to Europe consisted mainly of Moroccans traveling to Spain across the Strait of Gibraltar (Carling 2007c). At the time, such movements were legal as North African nationals were not required to obtain a visa to enter Spain. In 1986, Spain joined the European Economic Community (EEC), and in an effort to improve relations with its more powerful neighbors, such as France, Germany, and the United Kingdom, the Spanish government instituted a visa requirement for all non-EC immigrants in 1985. As Jørgen Carling points out, "The elimination of internal borders within much of the European Union meant that control of the Spanish borders was important to countries much [farther] north" (ibid.; see also Pérez 2003). Spain also embarked on an aggressive and expensive border control operation known as SIVE in 1999, which stemmed the flow across the Strait and along the North African coast, and effectively re-directed it to departure points farther south along the coast of West Africa (Andersson 2014).

¹²⁶ Though it has been highly effective, Frontex's methods came under scrutiny by NGOs, such as CARITAS Europe, which accused the agency of not complying with the standards of non-refoulement (Gaydazhieva 2012). While most West Africans were considered "economic migrants," and thus not protected by the 1951 Convention on Refugees, CARITAS and others (e.g. Human Rights Watch) argued that refugees and asylum seekers were among those who were forcibly turned back.

A second strategy focused on development diplomacy. Bi- and multi-lateral partnership agreements with African states like Senegal, Mauritania, and Morocco required that African nations police European borders from the other side of the Mediterranean (Kunz et al. 2011; Lavenex 2006; Miraglia 2015). In exchange, African states received significant foreign aid. The 2007 Country Strategy Paper (CSP) and National Indicative Programme (NIP) signed by the EU and Senegal is a case in point. Citing the “unprecedented wave of clandestine emigration coming from Senegal [which] descended on the Canary Islands” in 2006, the NIP provided significant “financial instruments” for, among other things, the militarized control of clandestine migration (Senegal-European Community, Part I: 19; Senegal-European Community, Part II: 2).¹²⁷

A third, interrelated strategy entailed bilateral repatriation, or “readmission,” agreements (Cassarino 2007). In 2006, Senegal and Spain reached one such agreement, which stipulated the return of 6,000 irregular migrants to Senegalese territory in exchange for €19.8 million in development aid, as well as the provision of 4,000 temporary work visas that would allow Senegalese laborers to work in Spain legally. In 2008, a similar agreement was reached between France and Senegal, which effectively tied the allocation of development aid to the forced repatriation of Senegalese nationals (Lefrançois 2009: 6).

Most *refoulés* perceived the regimes established to control their movements as part of a vast and complex moneymaking enterprise, a realization that contributed to a rather dark cynicism upon their return to Senegal. This chapter explores how migrants understood the global migration management industry and their place within it. It also attends to some of the capital gains associated with the management of global mobility. The focus here will be on interception and detention, which will frame the following chapter on Expulsion.

¹²⁷ In the amount of €288 million between 2008 and 2013.

On the level of mobile labor, developed economies have a vested interest in making sure that migration is not shut down altogether, but is strategically *controlled* (De Genova and Peutz 2010). Contrary to the idea that Europe is a “fortress,” it is best understood as a “net” that judiciously retains the migrants it wants and, theoretically, expels the rest (Geddes 2000: 6). While at the outset, this “net” may seem to favor highly skilled workers, it also, though less obviously, ensures the continued inflow of informal laborers into the construction, agriculture, health care and manual labor sectors in Europe, all of which benefit from having a disposable, deportable labor force (Calavita 1998).

Further, the global migration management system is one that produces its own *raison d'être*. As part of an apparatus which has sprouted up around the control of moving bodies, migration regulation justifies the creation and subsidization of new technological instruments of surveillance, which have favorable profit margins for the corporations that design them. Likewise, the privatization of detention centers and mechanisms of forced return converts migrants into “lucrative ‘beds’ or ‘heads’” in need of transport or confinement (Rhodes 2006: 223). As recent scholars have made clear, detecting, intercepting, detaining, and deporting migrant bodies is becoming an increasingly commercialized and privatized industry (Andersson 2014; Gammeltoft-Hansen and Sørensen 2013; Hernández-León 2005, 2008; Peutz 2006; Rodier 2012). The *refoulés* in this chapter were aware of their role in the “big business” of migration control. “*Nous sommes devenus la marchandise: achetés et vendus,*” as Moustapha put it. “We became merchandise: bought and sold.”

African states like Mauritania, Morocco, and Senegal also stand to gain considerable rents from the control of human mobility (Cross 2011). Recent development partnerships between the EU and these African states include specific language on joint policing operations and the

establishment of detention facilities in third countries.¹²⁸ In addition to direct financial assistance, mobility partnerships also often include technology transfers, training and equipment. If migration scholars such as Jørgen Carling and María Hernández-Carretero argue that direct control measures such as joint-patrols and detention have limited value as a deterrent for clandestine migration, those measures nevertheless represent substantial compensation for African states (2011: 56).

But development partnerships with third countries are also profitable for European states. These types of agreements often stipulate the liberalization of third country economies by offering preferential trade and resource extraction deals to European merchants and investors.¹²⁹ Secondly, as migration control is increasingly written into development partnerships, European industries can benefit from a steady, and highly controlled, flow of cheap labor from Africa. Third, European tech companies that design and manufacture surveillance technology benefit from government contracts and contribute to a strong European economy. And finally, people are put to work in the tech industry or at the border, which is especially important in times of economic recession.

When we talk about such development partnerships that tie aid to migration control, we are often referencing something policy makers call the migration-development model. One of the underlying arguments is that, the more third countries improve their economic opportunities, the less pressure there will be for people to seek illicit employment elsewhere. This model has been widely adopted by European states in an effort to better manage migratory flows. Labeled a “cooperative” approach to migration policy, the migration-development model is neither very

¹²⁸ Third countries are non-EU member states.

¹²⁹ Rather than contributing to stronger African economies, liberalization more often opens burgeoning or vulnerable markets to a flood of cheap consumer goods with which local producers cannot compete. Or, it depletes a country’s native resources to such an extent that local artisans have nothing left to harvest (see Chapter 2).

effective at stemming irregular flows, nor does it align very well with liberal ideals of human rights. On the level of effectiveness, Jérôme Audran has pointed out that increased development does not stop migration pressures in countries of origin (Audran 2008; see also De Haas 2011a; Massey 1988). In fact, as countries develop in the short-term, the pressure to migrate becomes more acute because, if nothing else, migrants have more access to the social and financial resources that would enable them to travel (De Haas 2010: 254; Singer and Massey 1998).¹³⁰ Moreover, development itself has been a project fraught with challenges, not the least of which is the recalcitrance of developed countries to fulfill their financial commitments, and the mismanagement of bilateral aid in developing nations (Bond 2006; Easterly 2002; Thérien and Lloyd 2000).¹³¹

If, as the scholarship suggests, migratory pressures are in fact attenuated by real, sustainable and long-term development, but such development is impossible within the current policy framework, we might well ask ourselves if the objective of “mobility partnerships,” which promise aid in exchange for migration control, is in fact to eradicate irregular migration. As we will see, some *refoulés* saw it as a strategic policy calculation that actually aimed to ensure the underdevelopment of Senegal and thus perpetuate the controlled movement of irregular and informal labor to Europe.

On the level of human rights, the “cooperative” approach starts looking decidedly more coercive in light of repatriation agreements, which authorize the forced return of migrants either to their country of origin (which is problematic for rejected asylum seekers), countries of transit (which is problematic for people who transited through authoritarian states), or “any other third country” (which is problematic for any migrant who might end up in a place like Morocco where

¹³⁰ More cynically, Audran argues that keeping sub-Saharan Africa in a position of extreme poverty would actually be a more efficient migration management policy (2008: 109).

¹³¹ See Escobar (1995) for a broader critique of the discourse of development.

the observance of human rights for immigrants is virtually non-existent) (Cassarino 2006: 2014). At the very least, it becomes very difficult for the EU to argue that migration management is a humanitarian mission when at the same time they partner with states whose track records on abuse and torture of migrants are so egregious. States like Mauritania and Morocco have been essential to the “co-operative” implementation of EU migration control measures, but they also have notoriously bad reputations when it comes to human rights. In light of this, European commitments to human rights principles suddenly appear rather ambivalent (Grant 2005; Ifekwunigwe 2013; Minter 2011). This fundamental schism between rhetoric and practice was abundantly clear to *refoulés* I met.

EU-African cooperation on migration management also contributes to what Sandra Lavenex and Emek Uçarer have called the “externalization” of European borders (2004; see also Aubarell et al. 2009; Carling and Hernández-Carretero 2011; Chou and Gibert 2010; Reslow 2010, 2011; Robin 2009; Styan 2007; Uberti 2014). The idea is that Europe, as a supranational territorial entity, does not “stop” at the southern edge of the Mediterranean but rather extends across it and into parts of Africa. Rather than undermining the sovereignty of African states by asking them to police European frontiers from thousands of kilometers away, border externalization actually galvanizes state power in North and West Africa by compensating regimes (through direct development funds or technology transfers) for being Europe’s “gatekeepers.” However, as we will see, it does lead to some confusion among transiting or detained migrants about exactly where the border is located and exactly who is in charge of its defense.

While labor migration has been addressed in development partnerships between European and African states since independence, current agreements are different in one significant respect. Today, migrants are consistently framed as security threats. Whereas bi-lateral

development partnerships had, up until the early 2000s, framed migration as a vector of co-development, after 9/11 European politicians and policy makers scrambled to find new tools to combat the unknown enemy. Notable among those tools was the re-articulation of “development,” which would presumably convert potential terrorists into happy entrepreneurs and laborers in the global economy.

Development has thus been conceptualized as a strategy to ensure global security, signifying an institutional shift from the trade-and-aid marriage to the “migration-development-security nexus” (Truong and Gasper 2011). If the former development paradigm was characteristic of Cold War proxy politics, the latter is a fundamental feature of post-9/11 economies and anxieties (Burr et al. 2007). Moreover, after the 2008 economic crisis, migration governance has been one way for developed economies to withstand the shocks of global recession. Border control—the policing, militarization, securitizing and extension of (supra-) national frontiers—has been reconfigured as a new machine of capital production and accumulation, which runs on the discursive construction of clandestine migrants as threats to national security (Andersson 2014; Cross 2013).

The *refoulés* I met were painfully aware that they had been construed as criminals, a label they had to bear with their physical bodies, as they were held at gunpoint, frisked, beaten, or imprisoned. Ndary, whose portrait precedes this chapter, was both a *rapatrié* and an *échoué*. Like many of the failed migrants I met, his attempts to reach Europe did not stop after his initial effort. Rather, he successfully arrived on and was repatriated from the Canary Islands in 2006, and then was shipwrecked off the coast of Mauritania in 2007 during his second attempt. As such, he had experience with arrival in both contexts—in Spain and North Africa—which had

differential consequences for him and the other migrants who were forced to negotiate those spaces.

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section examines the interception of migrants, highlighting how border management produces capital for industries and states. The second section examines how migrants were detained in Europe and Africa. This chapter emphasizes how the clandestine journey did not necessarily end with landfall. Rather, arrival was a space where *refoulés* had to navigate myriad militarized structures including interception, post-arrival processing and detention before their ultimate expulsion. Because they were “economic migrants” and not refugees, none of my participants applied for or received asylum. At each stage, however, many of them tried to evade and resist detection and confinement. Most importantly, exposure to migration governance continued to inform their subjectivities and strategies of re-integration upon to return to Senegal, which I will take up in the final section of this dissertation.

Interception

We saw a boat and thought it was coming to stop us, but it motored away. Evidently, they called the Spanish coast guard, though, because shortly after a helicopter arrived and swooped down low to tell us, over the megaphone, to cut the motor. Then they left. Next, a plane flew over us and encircled the pirogue three times. But they left, too. We had to spend the night drifting on the waves. At around five in the morning, another boat approached us. This time, they brought us on board and took us to Tenerife. When the authorities found out, the police came to interview us, followed by the firemen and the Red Cross.

In this brief account, Massamba catalogues the variety of equipment and personnel that were mobilized to intercept and capture his pirogue: two boats, one helicopter, a plane, as well as members of the national Coast Guard, municipal public safety officials and international NGO

workers. He wasn't expecting such a show, or at least not in those numbers. "But I guess it's their job," he said.

As Massamba later revealed, there was some dispute among the migrants and the captain about how to proceed once they had been detected. "Some of the *clandestins* said we should escape and go around the other side of Tenerife. We still had fuel. We weren't shipwrecked." But the boat captain had decided that they should stay put and not try to evade the patrols that would surely be coming soon. "He told us, 'You're no longer *clandestin*,'" Massamba recalled. Their compromised invisibility meant that escape options at that point were limited. As they approached the port of Tenerife the next morning, the pirogue captain pointed to the matrix of surveillance instruments that lined the coast: looming satellite towers with cameras that could detect boats far out at sea, mobile sensor and antenna communications stations posted along the cliffs, and large spoon-shaped radar dishes that dotted the island's southern perimeter. "It was like a movie," he said. "I asked myself: who built all this?"

Figure 5: SIVE



Source: <http://www.revistanaval.com/noticia/20130722-050678-gmv-sive-mediterraneo-guardia-civil-valencia/>
One word that comes to mind is the Spanish multinational Indra, which was chief architect in

the design and implementation of SIVE.¹³² The Sistema Integrado de Vigilancia Exterior (SIVE), or the Integrated External Surveillance System, was originally implemented by Spain's Guardia Civil (Civil Guard) as a support system for police operations at the Strait of Gibraltar where, since the early 1990s, boat migrants had been making the treacherous 17-kilometer crossing from Morocco to mainland Spain. In 1999 when it was first implemented, SIVE was nothing more than a few rudimentary radar antennae hitched to the back of panel vans parked along the coast. By 2002, however, Indra had designed an "integrated" surveillance system that linked radar

¹³² Two other Spanish companies, Isdefe and Ampere Sistema, provided software and technical support, but Indra was the primary designer of Spain's maritime border control system. Indra's operations span telecommunications, risk analysis and insurance, financial services, security and defense, healthcare, transport, consumer goods and public administration in sixty different countries. Some of its most recent flagship projects include modernizing the tax system in Algeria, installing air traffic control in Romania, and providing financial management services to the Zambian government. But what really put Indra on the map after its creation in 1993 was its role in re-designing SIVE.

detection, video, and infrared images to a central command center. In an effort to evade and resist these increased controls, boat migration moved south to departure points along the coast of Mauritania, Senegal, The Gambia, and Guinea. When boat migrants started arriving in greater numbers beginning in 2005, SIVE was expanded to cover the Andalucian coast as well as the Canary Islands.

Today, SIVE consists of an array of video cameras and infrared optic sensors that can detect small vessels 39 kilometers from shore. Using military reconnaissance planes, naval vessels and patrol boats, Spain is able to monitor 425,000 square kilometers of ocean between the Canaries and Senegal. GIS data and high-resolution graphics depicting the virtual ocean grid are delivered directly back to a central command and dispatch via continuous-wave radar antennae. The Guardia Civil also uses UAVs, or drones, as well as images from the commercial satellite, Ikonos, to monitor the Mauritanian and Senegalese coasts. Not surprisingly, this high-tech control system has been expensive. Between 1999 and 2004, Spain invested €150 million in the creation and implementation of SIVE. According to Jørgen Carling, this represents roughly €1800 per intercepted migrant during that same period, an amount of money that humanitarian NGOs and the Catholic Church said “would have been better spent on development assistance to the countries of origin” (Carling 2007b: 325). Though costly, SIVE remade Spain’s reputation within the EU. Once a “poor neighbor,” Spain became a quickly emerging economy, thanks in large part to Indra’s success. Moreover, SIVE became the blueprint for future surveillance installations across the EU’s external borders, and its Guardia Civil border patrols were given expert status with respect to designing and implementing larger Frontex interventions.

“I don’t know how much it cost,” Samba, a *refoulé* from 2006, told me. “But it looked expensive. People said they put those machines there to stop us.” Others I spoke to were less

equivocal. Moustapha put in bluntly, “*Ils ont dépensé des millions d’euros pour nous empêcher d’arriver, au lieu de nous aider ici! Même si une petite tranche de ces millions nous appartient, on va rester ici. On ne va pas partir pour mourrir dans l’océan!*” [Instead of helping us here {in Senegal}, they spent *millions* of euros to prevent us from arriving! Even if a fraction of those millions belonged to us, we wouldn’t have gone to die in the ocean!]

In this way, Moustapha understood the mechanisms of border control as part of a profiteering enterprise that could have been “better spent” on creating economic opportunities in Senegal.

In an effort to stimulate innovation and generate international interest in Europe’s security industry, the Seventh European Framework Programme, which ran from 2007 to 2013, allocated €1.4 billion to security research (Andersson 2014: 87). And sixty percent of the EU’s Home Affairs Budget for that same period (or €4 billion) was allocated to migration management (ibid.: 14). This would suggest that migration control had officially become a business whereby new security technologies were innovated, and border agencies’ payrolls were expanded.¹³³ Research and development projects have also been expensive, but lucrative. Between 2002 and 2013, the cost for 39 R&D ventures funded by the EU or the European Space Agency amounted to €255 million.

Some of this funding has also paid for the establishment of the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of Member States of the European Union, or Frontex (*Frontières Extérieures*). Becoming operational in 2005, Frontex provides tactical, analytical and organizational support to EU member states, and their partners, on issues of external border control. Insisting on its role as a “facilitator” and not an actor, Frontex began coordinating joint-patrols in Spanish waters with the Guardia Civil and other EU members in 2005. Soon after, they expanded their operations farther afield.

¹³³ See The Migrant Files: <http://www.themigrantsfiles.com/>.

Because returning unauthorized migrants to their respective countries of origin was bureaucratically more difficult, and more expensive, from within European borders due to the costs of detention, judicial processing, and chartered flights home, agencies like Frontex sought to intercept vessels at sea and turn them back. Working with Guardia Civil, as well as third country agents, Frontex implemented Operation Seahorse in 2005. With an initial budget of €2.5 million, Seahorse mandated participation with police forces from Morocco, Mauritania, Senegal and Cape Verde (López-Sala 2009: 23). The later Seahorse Network, implemented between 2007 and 2008, was modeled after SIVE and provided the technology infrastructure that allowed points of contact at substations or “cooperation centers” in Africa to connect with and provide intelligence to the centralized command and control center in Spain via a secured satellite network (Casas-Cortés et al. 2012).¹³⁴

Frontex also conceived of and deployed operations Hera I, II, and III from 2006 to 2007. Hera I, which ran from July to October 2006, provided identification assistance to detention facilities in Spain where irregular migrants without papers lingered in bureaucratic limbo. Hera II (August-December 2006) provided technical support to sending states (e.g. Senegal, Mauritania, and Morocco) by helping them to intercept boats before they got too far from shore.¹³⁵ And Hera III (February-April 2007) combined identification and interception support.¹³⁶ In coordination with the Guardia Civil and the Spanish Navy, the three Heras cost over €6.2 million for operations lasting less than one calendar year. Taken together with its other commitments across

¹³⁴ This Seahorse Network was funded by the EU’s Aeneas Programme for €2.5 million and built by Indra.

¹³⁵ During Hera II, boats that were more than 24 miles from African shores were “escorted” to the Canary Islands by the Guardia Civil. Boats that were less than 24 miles from Africa were intercepted and turned back. For those preparing to depart, as we saw in Chapter 4, this meant evading detection by leaving under the cover of night and then trying to remain “invisible” during the journey. For others, it sometimes meant getting just far enough to be rescued. “In some cases,” Carling observes, “this has led migrants to deliberately expose themselves to danger in order to be rescued and taken ashore” (2007b: 321).

¹³⁶ Since 2007 and up to the present, Frontex has continued its Hera operations, though with more focus on coordinating EU member states to jointly patrol the southern maritime borders.

the EU, it is not surprising that by 2010, Frontex's annual budget had grown to more than €88 million.¹³⁷

Though the *refoulés* I met did not know the exact amounts invested in SIVE, Frontex, or other militarized operations, they nevertheless had an acute sense that these enterprises were both resource intensive and resource producing. As Ndary reflected when he faced Spain's vast security apparatus, "Look at all those Spaniards who have jobs because of us." Indeed, as Ruben Andersson has pointed out in his work on the European "business of bordering," Spanish border forces alone increased over fifty percent from 2003 to 2010 (2014: 14). Moreover, like the satellite technology of the Cold War that gave us GPS systems on our smart phones, innovations in migration-security technology generate new "revenue streams" in the consumer market. The "capacity-based approach" recently adopted by the European Security and Research Advisory Board (ESRAB) signals a turn toward a "techno-industrialist logic" when it comes to defense and (supra-) national security (Boulanin and Bellais 2014: 238). Vincent Boulanin and Renaud Bellais have recently argued that ESRAB's response to security needs has been to "develop the global competitiveness of European technological supply... Technological development, especially in a transatlantic perspective, was presented as an issue in itself" (ibid.). In other words, technologies that are innovated to control mobile bodies, like those technologies that were innovated to prevent full-scale nuclear annihilation, "float down" to consumers, making their continued development a market necessity.

¹³⁷ Though it goes beyond the scope of this dissertation, it is worth noting that the United States has also played a part in the African migration management regime. With the initial deployment of a rapid-response and highly-mobile African Partnership Station (APS), or Global Fleet Station, to the Gulf of Guinea in 2007, the US has been providing tactical and technical support to AFRICOM and national maritime border police in controlling illegal migration as part of its "promotion of African maritime security" (Sohn 2009: 46; see also Campbell et al. 2009; Flynn 2007).

Despite the challenges associated with being intercepted off the shores of Tenerife or Las Palmas, *refoulés* suggested that there were worse fates. For Daoda, whose boat was intercepted off the coast of North Africa in 2008, the choice was clear: “At least in Spain, they bring you ashore and give you food and water. In Morocco, they put you in prison!” As Ndary’s portrait revealed, North African police used unquestionably harsh techniques when it came to intercepting clandestine pirogues. In his case, the Mauritanian police held passengers at gunpoint while they boarded the vessel and redirected it to shore. Evading detection in the Atlantic by “going around” border patrols was one thing; being faced with a rifle was quite another. In the both the Moroccan and Mauritanian context, detection and interception were both cruder and more brutal than in Spanish waters. The EU had been actively courting third countries for some time to police European borders from the other side of the Mediterranean in exchange for “development” aid. Such joint-patrol agreements were largely coordinated by Frontex and included, among other things, the provision of training, equipment and technology to third countries. Though Frontex officers managed and often physically attended patrol operations, their power was limited. In fact, the logic of joint-patrols specifically deferred power to the national partner whose flag was posted at the helm. When it came to intercepting boats in North African waters, it was Mauritanian and Moroccan police who made the final call.¹³⁸

¹³⁸ Though Frontex “assets” do personally accompany joint-patrols, their role as observers and advisors means that they do not actually carry out any of the capturing. Instead, partner authorities (e.g. Senegalese coast guard or police) execute the operation. This hands-off approach does a couple of things: First, it defers all authority, and subsequent accountability, to the partner state. And secondly, in so doing, it absolves Frontex of responsibility. In other words, Frontex has the rather peculiar luxury of being able to watch events unfold without the moral burden of needing to intervene if those events turn ugly. This is not to suggest that the Frontex advisors who work alongside Senegalese or Mauritanian coastal patrols are indifferent to people in dire situations. What it does suggest is that the policy framework for Frontex is an interesting piece of statecraft in that it actually demands that Frontex *not* intervene, because that would be an infringement of the partner state’s sovereignty. By “respecting sovereignty,” Frontex agents, and by extension the EU, can avoid being cast as the same old dominator in neocolonial clothes. Human rights violations, when they occur, are likewise deferred to the state in charge of the operation, whether that is Senegal, Mauritania, Morocco, or another partner state. Because Frontex enjoys operational, budgetary, and legal autonomy, the EU cannot be held legally responsible for Frontex operations, even if human rights were violated as a consequence of those operations.

The prevailing logic for this approach was one of humanitarian “protection,” which presumably stopped migrants from risking their lives in the Atlantic crossing. “By emphasizing the dangers of migration, policies that prevent migrants from departing can be framed as benevolent and protective” (Carling and Hernández-Carretero 2011: 45). And yet, there seemed to be some correlation between interception rates and mortalities in the Atlantic crossing. According to Jørgen Carling, “[T]he number of fatalities [in the Atlantic] has risen and fallen roughly in the same way as the number of interceptions” (Carling 2007b: 331; see also Spijkerboer 2007). This is because migrants sometimes took riskier measures to avoid detection, such as alternate routes that used more fuel. Moreover, if protection was the primary goal, we might wonder why migrants were turned back to states like Morocco and Mauritania where detention practices customarily violated international and European human rights principles (EU Charter 2000; UN 1990). As critics have pointed out, this dynamic enabled the EU to delegate its human rights obligations to third countries and then turn a “blind eye” when those obligations were violated (Amnesty International 2008; André 2012; HRW 2006, 2009, 2011, 2014; La Cimade 2010; Planes-Boissac et al. 2010; Wender 2008).

Refoulés in Senegal saw the disjunction between *paroles* and *pratiques*, or the policy speak and policy practice, of migration control. As Ndary told me, “When you catch a clandestine migrant and you send him back to Mauritania, or Morocco, you’re putting him in the hands of assassins and thieves. And yet, Europe says they’re doing this to protect us. Even though it’s not true.” According to Ndary and others, sending boats back to Mauritania was not based on solidarity or benevolence. Rather, it was a convenient and inexpensive way to redirect the circulation of African bodies and labor.

Detention

After interception and capture, undefined periods of detention typically followed. Detention centers are “spatially ambiguous” precisely because they exteriorize that which is still *within* the territorial confines of the nation (Coutin 2010: 203). As spaces of internal exclusion, they create “portals between nations,” where bodies are suspended and transacted across territorially and juridically indistinct zones (ibid.: 205).

For migrants who landed in Mauritania, detention most often meant spending time at “Guantánamito.” In 2006, the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation turned a former school on the outskirts of Nouadhibou into a detention center (Social Watch 2009: 76). Classified as an “ad hoc facility” by the Global Detention Project, this center has no legal mandate and no name, although migrants like Ndary called it “Guantánamito,” or “little Guantánamo” (Lamazou 2008; Meunier 2008).¹³⁹ The first year it opened, between two and three hundred migrants were detained at Guantánamito each month (Moctar 2014; Wender 2008). The following year, in 2007, 3,257 migrants were detained and later deported to border towns in Senegal or Mali. “As the centre is not governed by any law, there is no limit on the duration of such detention, which may extend from one or two days to a week or more, until the police are able to organize transport” (Amnesty International 2008: 23). When he was picked up by the Mauritanian coast guard, Iran and his boat mates stayed in detention for one week waiting for enough people to fill a bus that would take them to the border.

Ndary recalled his experience at Guantánamito as harrowing. It was, he said, “almost worse than being in the pirogue.” Though he managed to escape physical abuse, he witnessed others who were subject to random acts of violence. The facilities were deeply inadequate, with only cots for beds, and people confined to the classroom-cells for the majority of the day. Alioune

¹³⁹ <http://www.globaldetentionproject.org/countries/africa/mauritania/introduction.html>.

reflected on the conditions at Guantánamito, saying, “It was so overcrowded, the air inside was putrid. All I could do was cry.” Surveillance was constant and even bathroom breaks were police-escorted because the guards were afraid that people would escape.

Not all Guantánamito detainees, however, were actually “migrants.” In fact, because of the vigorous fishing industry in Nouadhibou, commercial fishermen from Senegal, as well as other West African nations, had been living and working in Nouadhibou for years (Choplin and Lombard 2008). Mas described his time in Guantánamito in the following way:

There were fifteen of us to a room and we were closed up in there all day. The guards would only let us out to use the bathroom. That place wasn’t even a real prison. It was an abandoned school or something... One day, they just opened it up and started putting all the *clandestins* in there, inside the classrooms. And some of the people in there weren’t even migrants. One Senegalese man said he lived in Nouadhibou. He had a family. But the guards didn’t care.

Because detention procedures in North Africa “are only partially in compliance with guarantees provided by national rights regimes (where such guarantees exist) and by international law... arbitrary detention, forced and illegal repatriations or inhuman and degrading treatment” are all common procedures (Planes-Boissac et al.2010: 33). In addition, mobility partnerships signed with Spain required Mauritanian police to detain anyone “suspected” of having intentions to migrate clandestinely to Spain (Poutignat and Streiff-Fénart 2010).

When I asked Mas why Mauritanian guards detained sub-Saharan residents, he said, “I think they have a quota.” This comment reflects an understanding that, in the economy of migration control, substantiating demand ensures supply. From the point of view of a sending or transit country like Mauritania, the more irregular migrants residing in or transiting through their territory, the more provisions will be allocated to manage those migration flows. Consequently, as Armelle Choplin has pointed out, over the years Mauritanian authorities have routinely inflated the estimated number of migrants in the country, which “allows the government to

convert European policy into cash. The presence of migrants has become a means of procuring funds and negotiating ‘partnerships’ with Europe” (2010: 79). The issue of migration management couldn’t be more important to Mauritania, whose effectiveness at “managing migratory flows” has become the single most important criterion by which its overall governance profile is evaluated by international actors and donor countries (Wender 2008: 73). Securing borders is often perceived as the hallmark of sovereignty. As such, Mauritania’s ability to manage its borders through the detection and detainment of irregular migrants is a direct reflection of its “efficacy” as a state, and thus its legitimacy as a partner to and recipient of EU mobility protocols. Even though, in a 2009 report concerning migration flows in Mauritania, the European Commission admitted that the official estimate of 500,000 migrants residing in Mauritania was unverifiable, the funding for migration control continued unabated (Choplin 2010).

According to Ndary, the reason that sub-Saharan Africans of all stripes—whether transiting *clandestins* or permanent residents—were unsafe in Mauritania was because border management policies had blurred both territorial and racial boundaries. “They have Spanish money and Spanish friends, so now they think they’re Spanish, too. They pretend they’re *tubaab* [white European] because they guard Europe’s borders... But they’re still African because you can still pay them to break the law.”¹⁴⁰ Ndary’s comment reflects the widespread notion among many Senegalese that what makes a person “African” is their proclivity to transgress legal boundaries, which stems from a consciousness of, and at least a perfunctory aversion to, corruption. It also reflects the idea that European interventions had turned Mauritanian Africans into “*tubaabs*,” a confusion that then legitimized racial profiling and discrimination.

¹⁴⁰ A 2009 report issued by Social Watch found that Mauritanian guards “clearly and emphatically [pointed out] that they perform[ed] their jobs at the express request of the Spanish Government” (76).

In addition to the state profiting from mobility partnerships that stipulated detention in third countries, Mauritanian guards also extracted money, phones and other valuables from detainees. In the previous chapter, we heard from one *refoulé* named Mas, who, instead of leaving directly from the Senegalese coast, transited through North Africa prior to departure. The harsh treatment he experienced at the hands of Mauritanian border guards while trying to enter the country was typical. In much the same way, migrants who were forced back to the Mauritanian coast were subject to the same practices of “*dépouillement*” (or stripping of their money, phones, or other assets) by officers of the state.

There was little migrants could do to resist these extortions because, as Mamadou put it, “You’re going to prison and there’s nothing you can do about it. If you argue with them, they will point the rifle right here between your eyes. They don’t give a shit about you because they’re hungry.” Mamadou underlined the selective nature of economic distribution in places like Mauritania. More often than not border guards and members of the national police had either not been paid in some months, or not paid very much. As a consequence, they extracted their own unregulated rents from the border “economy of the bush” (Roitman 1998: 304; see also Grégoire 1991).

The situation was not much different in Morocco. *Refoulés* who were unlucky enough to have washed up on their shores or to have been pushed back by maritime patrols described Moroccan police as “working for Europe.” Even though Morocco ratified the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families in 1993, with Mauritania to follow in 2007, neither of these countries had very good track records when it came to dealing with their immigrant, or transiting, population (UN

Convention 1990).¹⁴¹ Senegalese migrants were not required to obtain a visa to enter Morocco, but that did not stop the police from harassing them. A 2014 Human Rights Watch Report suggests Moroccan forces routinely abuse sub-Saharan migrants by “robbing [them of] money and objects of value, such as phones; burning their personal property... and using excessive force against migrants when apprehending them. In some cases, officials destroyed or confiscated passports and other documents without returning them” (HRW 2014: 18).

When Ibrahima’s boat became marooned off the coast of the Western Sahara in 2006, he and his fellow passengers were promptly removed to a detention facility, though he was unclear as to where exactly it was located.

When we arrived in Morocco [Western Sahara], the military police escorted us to an immigration detention center. As soon as we got there that first night, they lined us up and ordered all of us to get undressed. We were all standing there naked, and each one had to put his clothes next to him. After that, they made each of us spread our arms and legs to see if we’d hidden money anywhere on our bodies. If they didn’t find anything, they would tell you to put your clothes back on. The frisking continued up until the early hours of the morning. Me, I stayed for two hours like that, completely naked, with nothing on my body while I waited for my turn.

Being naked and physically searched was degrading and humiliating for Ibrahima. It further reinforced the idea that he and his boat mates were ultimately exposed with not even a thread of cotton to shield them from the groping hands of Moroccan police. “It was a tactic,” he said later. “To scare us. But you have to struggle and hope it will end.”

As a partner to European mobility accords since the early 2000s, Morocco, like Mauritania, had a significant stake in detaining migrants at the time when clandestine boats were washing up on their shores. The Moroccan government had been resistant for some time in accepting EU overtures to mobility partnership because, officials argued, such agreements offered no clear

¹⁴¹ Many nations have signed such Conventions only to violate them later. In this respect, Mauritania and Morocco are not exceptional.

advantage to Morocco. In 2002, however, after receiving €70 million from the EU for border management, Morocco suddenly became a willing collaborator. In 2003, Morocco instituted Law 02-03, or the Migration Act. Modeled on the 1945 French immigration ordinance, Law 02-03 promised the protection of migrants' rights, including access to an interpreter, legal representation and respect for due process.¹⁴²

And yet, the problem became one of implementation, or how to put Law 02-03 into practice. Understaffed processing centers, inadequate legal representation, and brutal police forces meant that Law 02-03 was something of a “façade” that spoke of migrants' rights but did little to protect them in any concrete way (Global Detention Project: Morocco). Instead of protection, what ended up happening was strict punishment for irregular migrants in Moroccan territory, as well as the establishment of “*zones de rétention*” (detention centers) where an irregular migrant could spend up to six months without access to a lawyer (Khrouz et al. 2009). As Maodo described his prolonged detainment:

After the Moroccan coast guard picked us up, the police took us to a camp where we stayed for two months and twenty days. Everyone was really sick of it because we couldn't call our families to tell them we were okay. We couldn't go out either. Even if you wanted to use the bathroom, the police escorted you because they were afraid you'd try to escape. If someone escaped, it would have created problems for all of us. So no one even tried. As we were friends, nobody wanted to leave without the others, as a proof of our solidarity.

Despite its impressive record of detaining clandestine migrants, Morocco did not have any dedicated immigrant detention facilities. Rather, irregular migrants were held in military

¹⁴² The French 1945 Ordinance was famously modified in 2003 by then-Minister of the Interior, Nicolas Sarkozy, to include a broader definition of who is subject to penal sanction for facilitating the entry or settlement of an irregular migrant in France. With this modification, not only people on French soil, but anyone in the world, could be prosecuted for aiding or attempting to aid an irregular immigrant in France, in other Schengen states, or in any other state that is party to the 2000 UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime, which is to say all 180 member states (at the time), except the thirteen—including Bhutan, North Korea and Somalia—that chose not to sign the Convention and would therefore be exempt from Sarkozy's law. (Article 21, N°1, Ordonnance n° 45-2658 du 2 novembre 1945; revised version at http://www.gisti.org/droit/reformes/2003-entree-sejour/Ordo_45_consolidee_09-juillet.pdf).

barracks, police stations and gendarmeries, as well as ad hoc spaces in remote locations close to land borders, such as Laayoune and Oujda, or other penal detention centers where they shared cells with convicted, and sometimes violent, criminals.

Many of the *refoulés* I talked to explained Moroccan abuse as stemming from racist sentiments. “The *Maures* [Moors], like the *Naars*, don’t like black Africans,” Maodo said. “They think because they have lighter skin, they’re better than us.” While this assessment was relatively widespread, other *refoulés* said it was about more than race. According to Dolé, Moroccans “worked for Europe” because it was in their best interest. As the recipient of development aid, Morocco was eager to prove its worth when it came to managing migrants as cheaply as possible. This often required forgoing expensive and time-consuming rituals like legal representation, healthcare provision and adequate detention facilities. “*C’est du business*,” he said. It’s business.

Like its southern neighbor, Morocco frequently misrepresented the number of migrants transiting through its territory and detention centers. According to Mehdi Lahlou, Morocco claimed to have stopped 26,000 people from attempting to migrate clandestinely to the Canary Islands in 2004 (2005: 7). That same year, authorities reported arresting 5,400 clandestine migrants in southern Morocco alone (*ibid.*: 8). And yet “double-counting” often occurred particularly when migrants, who were detained and deported to the border, then returned on their own. There was no systematic identification system in Morocco that would allow border officials to keep accurate data on the presence of migrants. But elevated numbers, on some level, demonstrated effectiveness, which then ensured continued aid. In 2001, nearly 7,000 irregular migrants were held in Moroccan detention centers (IOM 2005: 42). The following year, Morocco signed an accord with Europe that enabled technological integration with Spain’s SIVE program

and deposited €115 million into Moroccan coffers (Law 2014: 134).

In addition to allowing states like Morocco to profit from migration management regimes, detention in North Africa was also understood by some Senegalese migrants as a way to keep potential laborers in a holding pattern. “They want to keep us here...” Dolé said.

... waiting for the next opportunity to leave. I know I’ve never lived in Spain, but I know they need workers. And we keep trying to go. If you get there, you thank God, and you do anything to survive. You work in whatever way you can. You have to make money to support your family. But it’s not “good” work and it’s not “good” money. Believe me, I have friends there. I know what they [the Spanish] pay. They would never pay a *tubaab* so little. They wouldn’t be able to. So they make deals with Senegal or Morocco. They send money to the state and that money never reaches us. It’s used to keep us here. Here, but always ready to leave.

While many of the young men I met passionately refused to attempt another clandestine journey, others continued to harbor fantasies and financial assets that could be summoned on a moment’s notice. “Here in my pocket,” Alioune said, “I have 300,000CFA. I’m only waiting for another boat to leave.”

Detention in Spain looked altogether different. *Refoulés* often invoked a sense of gratitude when describing the care that Spanish authorities took to feed and shelter them. When Ndary described his time in Spanish detention, he said, “They gave us *la liberté totale!*” Similarly, Papis was duly cognizant of the attention he and his boat mates received. However, like many others, he was less inclined to cooperate with the authorities.

When we arrived along the coast of the Canaries, the Salvamento [Salvamento Marítimo, Spain’s maritime search and rescue operation] came to our aid. They gave us water to drink, food to eat, and clean clothes. For those who needed medical attention, the Red Cross was there, too. Afterwards, they took us to Tenerife for interrogation. They asked us where we came from, but we refused to respond out of prudence. We didn’t want them to know because they could send us back. We stayed in the camp for two weeks without speaking. But still, they treated us so well! We ate well each day, and they always had new clothes for us. We were truly at ease in the camp, and we walked about freely. Truly, they

treated us very well the whole time. We were convinced they would release us into Spain.

In this narrative, Papis mentions the strategic reluctance of Senegalese migrants to speak. He and others were operating under the assumption that if they successfully stymied Spain's attempts to identify them, they would be offered transport to the Spanish mainland and set free (Ifekwunigwe 2013: 228).

Refoulés often recounted stories of trying to subvert Spanish attempts at identification because they knew that ascertaining the nationality of migrants was crucial to legal processes of repatriation. For that reason, before arriving on the shores of the Canary Islands, wallets were frequently divested of identity documents such as ID cards or driver's licenses. Some were destroyed during transit, while others were left at home, a process that Antje Ellermann, in her study of resistance among undocumented immigrants in Germany, calls "identity-stripping" (2010: 414).

Clandestine migrants could also evade the state by "pretending to come from countries unwilling to collaborate [in the repatriation process] with [European] authorities" (Van der Leun 2003: 108). As we have seen in Papis's account, Senegalese migrants in detention center interviews and judicial proceedings could, and often did, refuse to speak. Of those who did speak, some pretended they did not understand Wolof, which made it all the more difficult for them to be identified. Several *refoulés* I interviewed spoke Sosé or Mandinka and could therefore claim to be Gambian, a state whose president had been stubbornly opposed to the repatriation of irregular migrants from Spain. Demba, a *rapatrié* from 2006, had family in The Gambia, and so he "spoke Mandinka and knew the culture." He also knew that Gambians were less likely to be repatriated. Although The Gambia had signed a mobility partnership with Spain in 2006, President Yaya Jammeh was less than accommodating when it came to respecting it. In 2008, a

Spanish plane with 100 Gambian deportees on board attempted to land at Banjul International Airport in The Gambia and was forced to return to Spain because the authorities refused to let the repatriates disembark (Kebbeh 2013). Like others, Demba used the “small tactic,” as he put it, of pretending to be someone else in order to try and confound the system. Like other “illegal aliens [in Europe who] attempt to frustrate governments policies that aim to identify and control them” the young men I met also attempted to disappear into the “foggy social structures” of indeterminable identity (Broeders and Engbersen 2007: 1594; see also Bommers and Sciortino 2011). Clandestine migrants knew that if they couldn’t be identified, they couldn’t be sent back to Senegal. Thus whenever possible, they appropriated inscrutability and illegibility as a weapon against the liberal state.

Identification is crucial to the exercise of modern liberal sovereignty because it binds the subject to the state through biopolitical regulation. As John Torpey argues in *The Invention of the Passport*, modern states are able to police their populations by establishing explicit bureaucratic relationships with them (1999). The passport, for example, is embedded in a system of biopolitical surveillance that tracks and controls a subject’s movement. As Ellerman points out:

While much has been written on the dehumanizing consequences of the denial of membership, it is important to recognize that the abrogation of rights at the same time *makes possible* certain acts of resistance such as identity-stripping. Simply put, individuals who possess the rights of citizenship have entered into too many bureaucratic relationships with the state to retain the choice to render themselves unknowable... Thus, it is the absence of rights of the undocumented migrant that is the source of her capacity for resistance (2010: 414).

Whereas one of the prevailing images of migrants in the media suggested that they were passive victims unable to negotiate the juridical landscape inherent to modern liberal societies, here we find that they in fact were not “docile bodies,” but were capable of confounding state power

(Broeders and Engbersen 2007: 1603). Their authority was located precisely in the fact that they were external to the state.

The paradox of liberal state power is that the state is able to control populations *only to the extent* that it has provided those populations with rights. The ability of the modern state to monitor and control its populations is based on the right to inclusion, which is effected by way of bureaucratic identification. States confer rights, or benefits, to those whom it recognizes and identifies. Undocumented immigrants challenge the state precisely because they lack such institutional recognition. They can resist forcible removal by operationalizing this bureaucratic loophole (Van der Leun 2003). In this way, “the denial of rights... ultimately constrains state power” (Ellermann 2010: 417). This is not to suggest that undocumented migrants always superseded the state. Rather, their exclusion became a kind of “weapon of the weak” (Scott 1985).

Perhaps counter-intuitively, withholding rights is not always a manifestation of increased or more efficient state control. Withholding rights can also lead to a decrease in the state’s ability to control populations within its territory. Liberal states can exclude criminal offenders by putting them in prison, but those subjects are still *recognized* as subjects whose rights have been suspended. For clandestine migrants in Spain, who had no rights to begin with, they existed *outside* the state altogether. As such, there is a way in which the state is not able to control those whom it excludes. Clandestine migrants, or others the state does not recognize as having rights at all, could therefore check state power through not recognizing themselves.

In 1998, Giorgio Agamben famously theorized the camp as “an absolute space of exception” that defines modern sovereign power (1998: 20). Drawing on the Aristotelian notion that human beings who exist outside the polis are necessarily dangerous, Agamben proposes the camp as a

space of inclusive exclusion whereby detained bodies are stripped of their political identity and are reduced to “bare life.”¹⁴³ For Agamben, the camp is significant, not simply as a mechanism of spatial confinement where the law has been suspended, but because it is evidence of how the exception (or the suspension of law) establishes the rule (or the normal order of things). In this way, the figure of the migrant, who has been abandoned by law and is expelled to the detention camp, comes to define, through his negative exclusion, those who are positively included in the polis. Just as the exception defines the rule, the camp defines the polis.

As a piece of political theory, Agamben’s argument is compelling. However, it does not precisely account for the ways in which contemporary capitalism also plays a role in the establishment and growing institutionalization of the modern camp. Today, camps, prisons, and detention centers are increasingly administered and run by private contractors, contributing to a growing prison-industrial complex (De Georgi 2006; Rhodes 2004). Underpinning this industry is also a moral economy that evaluates different levels of belonging, which then confers different kinds of rights. In his examination of medical refugees in France, Didier Fassin argues that European citizens are recognized as having political rights, and medical refugees and migrants are recognized, at least rhetorically, as having “biological” rights (2005). For Fassin, modern detention camps do not so much reflect the separation of the political (*bios*) and the biological (*zoē*), but a blurring of the two. “[D]eprived from their human rights [*bios*] by lack of citizenship, they can only claim to stay alive, most of the time confined in camps” (367).

For Agamben, because bodies in the camp have no political identity, they are reduced to “bare life.” As such, they have no rights. Their only “right” is to exist as biological entities—things that live and breathe. And yet, here we see migrants doing more than just living and

¹⁴³ “Anyone who cannot form a community with others, or who does not need to because he is self-sufficient, is no part of a city-state—he is either a beast or a god” (Aristotle’s *Politics* book 1 chapter 2 line 1253a 28-30).

breathing. They are attempting, through “small tactics,” to establish an avenue for escape, and they do this *by way of* their negative exclusion. In other words, they use the space of exception (or their exteriority to the state) as a way to escape it (Bailey 2009).

Conclusion

This chapter opened with Massamba’s reflection on the security apparatus of the Spanish government, which had been engineered and implemented to “stop the flow” of irregular migrants to the Canary Islands. As he put it, border patrol personnel were just “doing their job” in capturing and detaining him. This reflects the sad irony of the situation: because Massamba lacked sufficient opportunities in Senegal and sought those opportunities elsewhere, his existence and his striving actually generated economic opportunities for those working in, and profiting from, border surveillance in Europe and Africa. This was the bitter pill of migration control. It was, for many *refoulés* not simply that they had been detected and detained that was so maddening; rather, it was the recognition that their detection and detention were part of an industry that reinforced enclave economies in Europe and sustained predatory states in Africa.

As a part of transit, arrival was not the end of the journey. Instead, clandestine boat migrants were faced with and resisted, in whatever way possible, myriad forms of state control at various junctures. Before setting out, as the previous chapter showed, migrants had to contend with and evade border officials and coast guard patrols. At sea, the primary objective was to avoid being detected by SIVE in Spain or Frontex joint-patrol operations in the waters off West Africa. For those who arrived in Spain, many resisted the state’s attempts to identify them by refusing to speak or destroying ID cards and papers, signifying a new kind of “strategic ‘identity politics’” (Broeders and Engbersen 2007: 1603). And for those who were shipwrecked off the coast of

North Africa, dealing with military police in states like Morocco and Mauritania became an urgent matter of knowing when *not* to resist.

As migrants interacted with border officials in Mauritania and Morocco, they faced the spectacularly strange malleability of borders. North Africa was not Europe, *per se*. And yet, it was also not purely North Africa either. As Ndary reflected, “They [the police] *are* the border.” In this way, the border itself transcended the territorial (Andrijasevic 2010: 153). It became portable, carried, as it were, by the officials who enforced it, and by the bodies who were subject to it. As many of my participants suggested, the border was not a *place*. Rather, more like Michel de Certeau’s concept of a *space*: the border was a power relation that was practiced and experienced without being bounded by a fixed location (De Certeau 1984). “[T]he border,” as Eva-Lotta Hedman points out, “is not merely—perhaps not even primarily—a territorial one. Instead, the border appears to be experienced, in critical ways, as a social reality in the everyday negotiations of (il) legality” (2008: 370). For many of the *refoulés* I met who transited or were detained in Mauritania or Morocco, border spaces were dangerous because you never knew where, and in whom, they were going to surface. As such, they required the savvy ability to work with the fundamentally unexpected.

Although such a dynamic suggests that African states, to some extent, have been “incorporated” into broader Europe, the EU’s relationship with third countries in Africa is nevertheless an ambivalent one. On the one hand, the “external dimension... is now viewed at the official level as one of the most important prerequisites for an efficient IBM [Internal Border Management]” of Schengen territories (Guild et al. 2008: 14). On the other hand, border control was, and continues to be, a site of both political cooperation and contestation between EU member states and third countries.

We should not assume that the European Union held the upper hand in advocating stronger controls, and that African states were passively accepting European policies. Rather, states like Senegal, Mauritania, and Morocco were also reshaping agendas based on their own desired outcomes. “Senegal has managed to reposition the dialogue to more closely consider its own interests, by preventing any movement or agreement on migration issues unless the government is expected to benefit” (Van Criekinge 2010: 3; see also Aubarell et al. 2009; Chou and Gibert 2010). Like Morocco and Mauritania, Senegal also stood to gain from bilateral mobility partnerships, which would essentially remunerate the state for cooperating with Europe on matters of migration control. And Senegal used its position to good effect, though as we will see in Chapter 7, none of the *refoulés* I spoke with saw any of those benefits downstream where they lived and continued to strive for a better life amid increasing hardship.

Also, the jury is out on the actual efficacy of contemporary border control arrangements. On the one hand, there is some difficulty in maintaining joint patrol agreements with third countries over the long term. African governments like Senegal have, at various moments, been faced with growing domestic discontent over bilateral agreements, which were interpreted by many Senegalese as a shameful acquiescence to EU pressure. For this reason, Senegal has periodically suspended its mobility partnerships with EU member states and has, more generally, been reluctant to sign agreements with the EU at large (Chou and Gibert 2010). On the other hand, when migration routes relocate to other less-patrolled areas, the logic of long-term patrolling breaks down.

Claire Rodier has made perhaps the most passionate and critically engaged analysis of the contemporary border control industry (2012). At the heart of border controls, she says, there are two contradictions. First, the more borders disappear (in the globalized free-trade economic

community of our times), the more they must be monitored. Second, the less effective border controls are, the more new innovations are required. It is the second contradiction that is of primary concern here. Of all the resources that have been invested in control regimes— Frontex, SIVE, EUROSUR, Operations Hera and Seahorse, bi-lateral mobility agreements, joint-police operations, the construction and maintenance of detention centers in the EU and North Africa—it is their *lack* of success in actually controlling population movements that give them an endless exigency. Their ineffectiveness means that border controls “*se multiplier*,” or multiply themselves (Rodier 2012: 10).

While the migration control industry may seem like a novel development in global governance, externalizing borders and border control has a history located in the Cold War, when the “functionality” of African states was directly linked to their ability to defend their borders (Reno 1997). Whereas US or EU-backed regimes were charged with ostensibly defending liberal interests in geopolitically contentious places before the fall of the Soviet Union, today the practical policing of borders is being offshored to the developing nations that actually generate those irregular migratory flows. Neither is immigration control a new policy gambit. Rather, immigration enforcement and national sovereignty have been inextricably linked since the nineteenth century. Whereas Max Weber concluded that the modern state monopolizes the use of legitimate force, the state also monopolizes “the legitimate means of movement” (De Genova and Peutz 2010: 10; Torpey 1999: 1). The difference is that the Soviet Union is no longer the enemy: today, migrants are often framed as criminals and terrorists and are thus constructed as threats to national security.

The language of national security, however, belies a deeper project; that is, one of “constantly revolutionizing the instruments of production” (Marx and Engels 1988 [1848]: 212).

In other words, migration management is part of market expansion in advanced capitalist societies. Migration control consumes, but also produces, large amounts of capital. In addition to the innovation of detection technologies and the militarized fencing off of states, the proliferation of detention centers, *zones d'attente* (holding zones), transit camps and deportation prisons in Africa and Europe underlies a growing industry in “managing the undesirables” (Agier 2011; Clochard et al. 2003; Golash-Boza 2009; Hernández-León 2013; Martinière 2015).¹⁴⁴ As Didier Fassin argues, “The camps correspond to a specific response to problems of public order by instituting small territories of exception. What justifies these local states of exception is an emergency that makes the gathering up of people appear as a practical solution” (Fassin 2005: 379). In this case, the emergency is construed as a “wave” of irregular migrants from the global south invading and disrupting the global north.

For that reason, “global detention capacity” is on the rise (Sampson and Mitchell 2013: 101). This development is due, at least in part, to the outsourcing of camp provision and maintenance to third countries—what some call a “remote” migration control approach (Zolberg 2000: 73). As we have seen, migrant detention camps have been offshored to third countries, which has contributed to their multiplication. But the point to underline here is that camps do not simply multiply because there are more people that need to be detained in them; they are part and parcel of the perpetually disturbed and uncertain social climate—the “emergency” in Fassin’s words—that makes the expansion of capital markets through detention camps possible. This “state of emergency” is linked to the privatization of migrant detention centers in Europe. In Britain alone, private security companies (e.g. G4S) now manage many of these detention centers, and have come under increasing scrutiny for exploiting detainees (Fang 2013; Rawlinson 2014).

¹⁴⁴ For individual country profiles, see Global Detention Project, www.globaldetentionproject.org.

Offshoring camps to North Africa may not generate capital for European industries, but it is a cheap alternative to detaining migrants in Schengen.

This dissertation has so far aimed to dispel the stereotypical image of clandestine migrants as either victims or criminals and instead has tried to see the ways in which they have made calculated decisions within meaningful social worlds. I have also been at pains to dispute the poverty-driven explanation for clandestine migration and instead have tried to frame clandestine migrants as resistant actors. In Chapter 2, we saw how deciding to leave in a boat was often framed as an act of resistance, or *lutte*, against a negligent state that refused to take account of its youth. In Chapter 3, aspiring migrants like Abdoulaye articulated his spiritual preparations as part and parcel of a Sufi tradition that linked mobility with resistance. And in Chapter 4, migrants became “warriors” as they spiritually and physically battled the vagaries of transit. In this chapter, we have seen how migrants struggled with the border controls they faced. These struggles did not necessarily incite physical transgression or evasion, however. Rather, as Ibrahima said, “You had to resist the temptation to think [the police] could hurt you, no matter how brutal they were. If you’ve lived through passage in the ocean, you can face anything.”

PART III
Return

TËNGÉEJ (Rufisque)



Group Interviews, Tëngéej, 2013

19 May 2013. Seydou and I arrived in Tëngéej at 10am.¹⁴⁵ We met up with Pape Ndiaye at the gas station along the N1, and from there he directed our taxi into the labyrinthine heart of his neighborhood. The taxi maneuvered through the sandy alleyways around women roasting groundnuts or selling baguettes filled with *ñebbe* (stewed beans). We stopped at a boutique on the corner where I bought several sachets of cold water for us, while Pape and Seydou stood outside talking. They'd been working together for years building and outfitting fishing pirogues in Soumbédioune, the artisanal fish market in Dakar. Seydou fabricated custom wooden fish holds, which were fitted inside a boat's hull. And Pape hewed large round acajou logs into curved planks with an adze, which were then attached to a pirogue frame. Earlier that morning when I met up with Seydou, he told me that we were going to see the "Minister of Foreign Affairs" of Tëngéej." "That's what people call Pape Ndiaye," he said. "Because he knows so many young men who tried to leave."

As I came out of the boutique, cradling several icy bags of water in my hands, I noticed Pape and Seydou facing each other speaking quietly. They were both tall with the same build that

¹⁴⁵ Seydou was my research assistant. And Tëngéej is the Wolof name suburb for this Dakar suburb; in French, it's called Rufisque.

came from marine construction. ‘Cut of the same cloth,’ I thought. They were similarly uncomplicated in their demeanor, as if in any given place, no matter what the circumstances, they would be totally at home. In this way, Pape and Seydou were very Senegalese.

When we got to the compound that morning, there were already thirty young men sitting on several wooden benches in the only shady spot of the courtyard. We greeted each other in the customary way by asking, “How are the people of your house?” and “Are you in peace?” in repetitive bursts, then pausing for silence, then resuming the same line of questioning, then falling silent again. This continued for four or five cycles until Seydou broke the spell. He stood up and introduced me, which was really more of an elaborate genealogical description of how I came to be sitting there that day. Seydou was careful to describe how and when we had met (in Dakar several months ago), how we had begun working together (after I asked him), and who he was (the son of a fisherman, and grandson of a *tirailleur*). He then proceeded to describe my family (one sister and mother), my background (American researcher), and what I had come to Senegal to do (talk to people like them about *la migration clandestine*). Seydou then pointed to Pape and explained that they had worked together for many years, and were like brothers. As such, because I was Seydou’s sister, I was Pape’s sister, too. This process did more than identify me; it located me in a social universe that bound me to Seydou, and through Seydou to Pape, and through Pape to the *refoulés* sitting there. I felt sure that without this social vouching I would have remained a stranger to these men and would thus have been unable to talk to them respectfully.

While Seydou spoke, Pape’s phone rang once, then again, and again. Each minute there seemed to be another person entering the compound, talking to Pape quietly and then taking a seat with the others. What I did not know, but was starting to guess, was that a formidable ripple

effect had been set in motion as word spread quickly through the quarters and out into the distant boroughs. I could almost hear it: “There’s a *tubaab* who’s talking to *les clandestins*.” Pape’s telephone was both the catalyst and the barometer of what was about to happen. By noon, there were over seventy *refoulés* crowding the now blazingly hot inner courtyard. I leaned over and told Seydou I didn’t think I’d be able to interview everyone that day. “I had no idea there would be so many,” I said. Seydou smiled, “Your Minister of Foreign Affairs is hard at work.” For a moment, we both gazed at Pape, who was, once again, on the phone speaking sternly into the receiver, giving directions to more *refoulés*.

Seydou and I decided to organize everyone into groups of ten that would then come back at a later date for longer group interviews. Over the next several hours, we conducted the survey questionnaires, took down people’s phone numbers, and compiled Groups A through G. As the swell of bodies slowly thinned out, the heat of the afternoon grew increasingly unbearable. Pape went to buy cold water for everyone at the boutique, which helped a little. Even so, by five o’clock, none of us had eaten anything, and I thought I was going to pass out. And still more *refoulés* showed up. So we made Group H. Then Group I. When the sun started to descend, I told Seydou and Pape that I needed to go home. They looked almost surprised. “But there are more people coming,” Pape said. “They just called me.” One of the lingering *refoulés* who was sitting on the bench said, “Ah, these guys will come at all hours. They don’t sleep. They are warriors!”

When Seydou and I went back a few days later, part of Group A showed up as planned. But then so did part of Group B and Group C. In fact, as we went through the list of names, there were people from almost every group in attendance. And some were newcomers who’d just heard about the *réunion* (meeting) and wanted to participate. Most said they wanted to be

interviewed with their pirogue mates and friends, something which the crudeness of my “grouping strategy” had failed to accommodate. Others said they decided to come today because they knew they wouldn’t be able to come later. Some thought I was leaving soon and wanted a chance to talk to me before I did. As for the newcomers, several of them couldn’t make it to the first big meeting because they had been working, and others had just heard about it from their siblings or friends. All in all, there were twenty-five *refoulés* sitting in the shade, when originally there were supposed to be no more than ten. It was at that point that I decided to abandon the idea of structure.

Ad hoc as it was, this group had a mind of its own. They politely rebuffed my questions by simply redirecting them. When I asked, “How did your family feel about your return?” Khadim answered, “*Tukki ba foofu? Risque le, billaay. Waaye wara dem.*” (I swear to God, traveling there is a risk. But we had to go.)

Here, right here, in this group, I can tell you that no one wanted to leave. We all wanted to stay here. Because when you leave your family it breaks your heart. There were some who ran after the pirogues yelling, ‘*L’aventure!*’ But they were not real men. *Sont des faux clandestins* [They were fake clandestine migrants]. Because to go in the pirogue, it’s a sacrifice. There are waves four or five meters high. And there are people getting sick everywhere. And then the food or water runs out, and you sit like that for days and days not knowing when it will end or if you will die. It’s not *l’aventure*. It’s hell.

Several *refoulés* nodded in agreement. Khadim echoed what I’d been hearing from other *refoulés* about the suggestion that clandestine migration was, at least in part, an adventure. For him and others, it was a burden, not a holiday. Adventure was “a comfortable chair and a free coke,” Khadim said. Legitimate transit with a visa and a plane ticket—the “comfortable chair” option—was largely off limits for Khadim and most of the men I talked to because, although they could have afforded the plane ticket, none of them had the thousands of euros it would have cost to buy

a visa.¹⁴⁶ “*Alors, on devait le risqué. Mais ce n’est pas des vacances, quoi. Ceux qui’il en parle comme ça, sont soit des menteurs soit des stupides. C’est vrai ou faux les gars?* [And so we had to risk it. But it’s not a vacation. Those who talk about it like that are either liars or they’re stupid.]”

Ibra interjected a hand and said, “Listen, you have to be an optimist to go to Spain in the pirogue.” He explained that the journey itself was so debilitating that one needed to possess an inner fortitude. It was not something for the faint of heart.

If I could have stayed, I would never have even looked at a pirogue. No one wants to say goodbye to his mother and not know if he will see her again. But there was no choice. Because here in Senegal, life is hard. And when they sent us back, they handcuffed us and put us in the plane. There were police officers with guns on board, watching us. Like we were criminals! Chained together like dogs! And we only left to support our families.

I told them that I’d heard that the Minister of the Interior at the time broke off the repatriation deal with Spain in 2006, the year it was concluded, because of the shameful conditions in which Senegalese migrants were sent home. “Ha!” Ibra laughed. “We saw him on the television looking big. But this man was a liar, I’m not afraid to say it.” Ibra explained that the Senegalese government had only suspended flights until they could prepare the airport in Saint Louis. “It’s a military airport. Far away from the capital. No press. No visitors. Strictly off limits. Then, the planes started coming again.”

But why go to all that trouble? “Because people were angry,” Youssoupha added.

When they saw the *clandestins* in the papers and on the television, Senegalese people began to protest. Why were these young men being sent home in handcuffs? They had not killed anyone. They had not robbed anyone. But they were treated like dangerous criminals. When a mother sees her son on television being escorted off a plane in restraints, tied to all the other prisoners, she will begin to wail. And this sound travels all the way to the presidential palace! Even

¹⁴⁶ The *refoulés* I met knew very well that because they were young, uneducated, unemployed, and relatively poor African men, they would never have qualified for a visa at one of Europe’s embassies. The only other option was to purchase a counterfeit visa, which was so expensive as to be out of reach for most.

the president himself will hear it. He cannot sleep because he has been shamed. And so those first *refoulés* were dangerous because they showed what our government is capable of. And the whole world could see it. So they took us to a place where no one was allowed. They hid us from sight.

Over the next few weeks, Seydou and I made several trips to Tèngéej to meet with Pape and talk with whichever “Group” decided to show up. Similar to the first reunion, the following assemblages would discretely but firmly direct the conversation. One meeting might find us discussing the pressures to support family members: what age a *refoulé* had to drop out of school, how many siblings he had, how inadequate work was, how many friends had made it to Spain and now sent money home. Ousseynou explained how his desire to leave was prompted by seeing his neighbors’ improving conditions.

When you see the beautiful neighborhoods in the city where the rich people live, you don’t want what they have because you are not like them. Those families have always been rich, and their sons are educated, working for banks in Europe or the US. Or they are ministers for the government, and you know they were educated for this kind of work. And that is not your life. What God has given you is different. And you must work with what God has written for you. You are poor, but you have honor.

But when your neighbors move into nice houses, when it’s your childhood friends you grew up with, who are just like you, a mechanic or a tailor, and they build a beautiful home for their mothers... That’s hard. You start to think, ‘He’s no different than me.’ But now his family has a house, and inside there is a room where there are bags and bags of rice. And each Tabaski, he buys five or six sheep to kill and they give the meat to your family because you couldn’t afford a big sheep, it’s *hard*. You want what they have. Of course, because you’re the same.

Others agreed that if it weren’t for the promise of being able to support their families in the same way as their peers, they would not have tried to migrate clandestinely. As Omar put it, “It’s a sacrifice you have to make. And if you succeed, you say *Alhamdulillah*. But if you don’t, you know that’s how God wanted it. But you have to try.”

The conversation then turned to boat passage: how many days at sea, at what point the GPS failed, when the water ran out, when food became scarce, how high the swells were, how many sick aboard, how many dead buried at sea. Individual narratives were woven together, memories collectively joined. At several points, the young men argued, contradicting details of the distance, or the number of *bidons* [jerricans of fuel] needed for transit. Other times, they agreed on the practicalities of being aboard a twenty-five meter vessel with over one hundred other passengers and needing to pee or share food. After a while, they seemed less intent on speaking to me, and more interested in speaking to one another, contesting and acquiescing in turn. A pair of *refoulés*—one tall and muscular, the other short and thin—began teasing one another, boasting of their strength in tirelessly emptying buckets of water from the boat. It was a mercifully light moment as we all laughed at their mocking performances of bravado. Ousseynou said, “We are all brothers. We grew up here [in Tëngéej] together and we lived through *le drame* [the drama of boat passage] together. Even now, when you think about it, you have to make yourself light, not heavy.”

The last group Seydou and I interviewed was more interested in talking about repatriation. Babacar started out by explaining that, for some, the idea of being sent back from Spain was better than repatriation from Mauritania or Morocco. “Some of my friends were *échoués* [shipwrecked] in Mauritania,” he said. “And they had many problems.”

For them, getting home was not easy. My cousin was in Nouadhibou for a month in detention, and the guards were really brutal. They said they were waiting for enough people to arrange a bus caravan to the border. But really everyone knew that they kept migrants to impress the Spanish. When he was there, a minister from Spain came to look at the center, and he counted the number of people in each cell. After the minister left, they loaded everyone in a bus and took them to the border. But it’s very far, and there was no food or water on the bus. When they got to Rosso [on the border with Senegal], they just left everyone there. Some of the guys didn’t have money because the guards had taken it. How were

they supposed to get home? So you see, Mauritania is like Senegal: they are Europe's *chiens de garde* [guard dogs].

The discussion of forced return then inclined suddenly toward the venality of the state. Moussa was emphatic:

Gouvernement bi ñoom ñu jàpp nu. [It was the government that trapped us.] It's imperative to tell the truth! Here in Senegal, they ignored us before we left and then they betrayed us when we got to Spain. They sold us for twenty million euros and a stack of visas, but we never saw any of that. Here in Tëngéej, nothing has changed. They told us to go to Thiès. We put our names on a list and then waited. But to this day, nothing has come of it. *Ils ont bouffé l'argent et donc ils ont perdu la crédibilité.* [The state ate the money and thus it lost its credibility.]¹⁴⁷

“Yes, that's why we manifested in the streets when Ablaye Wade tried to change the constitution [in 2011],” Djibril interrupted.¹⁴⁸ “After stealing everything, he wanted to put his son in power.

The same man who ate millions of euros!”¹⁴⁹ With that, the gathering erupted in a loud collective tisk, which, in Senegal, involves sucking air violently through one's teeth and signifies

¹⁴⁷ In French, *bouffer* is a colloquial verb, which translates roughly as “to eat.” More specifically, to *bouffer* is “to gobble up,” “wolf down,” or generally “devour” without restraint. As such it has the taint of inelegance, and connotes insatiable and greedy consumption.

¹⁴⁸ In the run up to the 2012 presidential election, Abdoulaye Wade proposed two controversial constitutional amendments. The first would have changed the number of votes necessary to win a presidential election from fifty percent to only twenty-five percent of the vote. The second proposal would have created a vice-presidential post, which most people saw as Wade's way of setting up a path to succession for his son, Karim Wade. These proposals were dropped almost immediately afterwards, as people took to the streets in protest. Rallies were coordinated by M23 (*Mouvement du 23 juin*, The June 23 Movement), made up of opposition parties and civil society organizations, and *Y'en A Marre* (Fed Up), a youth movement spearheaded by journalist Fadel Barro and hip hop artists Fou Malade, and the rap duo from Keur Gui Crew, Thiat and Kilifeu. A third issue of contention was whether Wade should be allowed to run for a third term in 2012. A year after being elected in 2000, he proposed, and the Constitutional Council adopted, an amendment that imposed a two-term limit on all future presidents. He was re-elected again in 2007, which ostensibly should have been his last term. However, in 2011, he argued that the amendment should not be retroactively applied, and the Constitutional Council ruled in his favor, thus allowing Wade to run in 2012.

¹⁴⁹ The former president's son, Karim Wade, was recently indicted by the Cour de Répression de l'Enrichissement Illicite (CREI) (Anti-Corruption Court) in Senegal for the embezzlement of \$1.4 billion from Senegalese coffers, which he had transferred to offshore companies in the Virgin Islands, Panama, Morocco and France. From 2009 to 2012, he was appointed Minister of International Cooperation, Air Transport and Infrastructure (2009-2010), and later Minister of Energy (2010-2012), which earned him the nickname of “Minister of the earth and sky.” For his embezzlement, he was fined \$280 million, sentenced to six years in prison (some of which he has already served since being incarcerated in 2013), and has announced his candidacy for president in the upcoming 2017 election (Ba 2015a; 2015b; 2015c; Ndiaye 2015). Amazingly, the father, president of Senegal for over a decade, was never prosecuted for his own illicit dealings and is now enjoying retirement in France.

severe disapproval. Several *refoulés* grumbled, “*Eh, goorgui* [the old man] was a thief!” “He betrayed us!” “Senegal is not a monarchy!”

Pape, who had been kneeling against the side of the wall, stood up slowly. “*Eh, les gars, def leen ndank* [Guys, take it easy],” he said, motioning with his hands as if to slow down a fast approaching car. “Remember, she’s our guest.” When the grumbling subsided, Pape nodded at me and then knelt down against the wall. “It’s okay,” I said. “I’d like to know what people think about the accords between Spain and Senegal.” Djibril said it was no more than a ruse to trick the *refoulés* into coming back quietly.

And we did for a while. We waited for Plan REVA, which to this day has never led to anything. ANEJ said they gave out some loans for a few *groupements d’agriculture* in Louga and Kaolack, but I promise you, if you go to Louga or Kaolack, no one will know where these *groupements* are working. Where are the REVA projects? Nowhere. They don’t exist. And here in Tëngéeg, we are fishermen, not farmers. What about us?

Moussa interrupted:

The important thing about the accords that you need to understand is that the Spanish government did not want to return us. They needed workers, people to build and cultivate. It was Ablaye Wade who told Spain to return us, to put us on planes and handcuff us like animals. Now why would he do that? [Pause] Because he was *malin* [wicked]. But he was also smart. He told Spain he needed us, *les jeunes* [the youth], to develop the nation. And then? He developed his bank account. It was a very good deal for him. *Mais ce n’était que de la poudre aux yeux pour nous* [But it was all smoke and mirrors for us].”

Later in the taxi ride home, Seydou was quiet. I stared out the open window of the back seat while he scanned the survey questionnaires we had conducted that first day in Tëngéej. “Some of these do not have birthdays,” he said, leafing through the questionnaires. I turned to look, and shrugged it off perhaps too quickly, saying that some people didn’t know their birthdays. “I will call them later and find out,” Seydou insisted. “Please don’t bother, Seydou. You’ve already

done so much. It's not that important," I said. "Yes it is," he replied. "If it's on this paper, it's important."

While he seemed an unlikely assistant—he was, after all, a marine carpenter and had no formal training in social science research—Seydou was nothing if not committed and detail-oriented. That he and Pape would take multiple days off from work to organize these meetings in Tëngéej and elsewhere had less to do with me, and more to do with the place they called home. Even though neither Seydou nor Pape had ever so much as contemplated clandestine migration, they both witnessed how it had changed their communities. It was for that reason that they insisted on trying to get as many people as possible for me to interview. As Seydou said, "We have to make your research strong. Then people will know what happened here." I wished I could have shared his optimism, or the idea that the knowledge alone of "what had happened" would change anything for the people I'd met. It was, and continues to be, with profound ambivalence that I reflect on my fieldwork and remember people like Seydou and Pape Ndiaye who helped me, and people like Omar, Youssoupha, Babacar, and so many others who told me their stories. That I feel a sense of responsibility is to be expected, and is something I can live with. That I am unsure of what to do with that responsibility is less tolerable. Not that anyone expected me to "do" anything besides write this dissertation. But somehow it feels like short recompense for the investments that others put into this project. Whenever I thanked Pape Ndiaye, Seydou, or the many *refoulés* who took time out of their workweek to help, more often than not they simply replied, "*On est ensemble.*" We are together.

VI. EXPULSION



Îles des Madeleines, 2012

“When we landed [back in Senegal], they gave us
10,000CFA [\$20] and a sandwich and told us to go home.

Me, I couldn’t even eat the sandwich.”

(Papis)

Introduction

Return began with expulsion.¹⁵⁰ It began when clandestine migrants were forcibly removed and transported, by various means, to another territorial context wherein the presumption was that they would quietly make their way home. For some, expulsion was a random, though selective, game of chance. It echoed all the familiar risks of clandestine migration: the investments of hope, the hazards of passage, and the attempts to stymie interception and identification at the point of arrival. For others, expulsion left no room for chance. It mirrored the conditions to which migrants would return: the wholesale invisibility experienced by many *refoulés* in West Africa. Like transit and arrival, expulsion was also an embodied experience. Having failed at his attempt to gain entry to Europe, Papis, whose epigraph opens this chapter, was forced to return home discouraged, shaken and penniless. In part, his disillusionment stemmed from the knowledge that his body had not only been removed, but had been, in some sense, erased.

This chapter explores the personal and collective experiences of expulsion. It attends to the land-based and air-borne processes of repatriation of clandestine Senegalese migrants from Mauritania, Morocco and Spain. In so doing, it reveals the underlying ruptures of forced return: the fundamental tensions between visibility and erasure, the embodied experiences of exclusion and removal, and, for the young Senegalese men I met, the irreconcilable difference between what was gambled and what was lost. By exploring the spaces of removal and invisibility, this

¹⁵⁰ There is some debate on the legal and historical dimensions of terminology with respect to forced removals. Daniel Gordon defines expulsion quite narrowly as “distinct from *refoulement*... [and] targeting instead those [who are] legally resident but who have in some way transgressed [the law]” (2005: 203). For others, the distinction between deportation and expulsion refers to either the return of a person to a particular state (deportation) or the ejection of a person without stipulating a receiving state (expulsion). To complicate matters, there can be national differences in usage. Whereas in the United States, the terms deportation and exclusion have been replaced by removal, in the UK deportation encompasses “a range of practices... including removal... and judicial deportation” (Anderson et al. 2011: 549). Importantly, these differences are not merely semantic but often refer to the extent to which immigrants can legally appeal an expulsion order. That said, Jean-Marie Henckaerts argues that both deportation and expulsion indicate roughly the same phenomenon in current usage and underline a state’s “intention and... effect of securing the removal of a person or persons against their will from the territory of that State” (1995: 4). For that reason, I use expulsion, deportation, and removal interchangeably in this chapter.

chapter also reveals the extent to which expulsion was not simply a matter of the deporting state exercising its sovereign prerogative to expel unwanted populations. Rather, expulsion also implicated the sovereignty of return states like Senegal.

The shape and texture of expulsion depended not just on the deporting context, but also on the context of return. Flights from Spain were routinely described as consummately demoralizing and humiliating, and yet, *refoulés* almost never invoked Spain as the arbiter of their removal. Rather, expulsions from Spain were seen as the bidding of the Senegalese president, who allegedly demanded the return of “his” citizens back to West Africa. In a different way, expulsions from Mauritania and Morocco were described as coercive extraditions whose brutality was tacitly condoned by the inaction of the Senegalese government. If North African authorities were overly harsh in their handling of non-citizens, such severity was explained as the result of an unspoken indifference on the part of Senegal. In both the Spanish and North African cases, the Senegalese state was blamed alternately for its meddling intercession or passive negligence. In that way, expulsions were not seen as the result of European or North African authority, but as the exercise of Senegalese brutality.

The existing literature on deportation tends to focus on how, or to what extent, expulsions reify and reinforce the sovereignty of the deporting state. Saskia Sassen argues that in order to understand how contemporary sovereignty functions in an increasingly globalized world, we must look to the border and the body, which are the two primary sites of migration regulation and the performance of state authority (1996: 64-67).¹⁵¹ At the border, a state’s power over entry asserts the centrality of territorial control as a fundamental feature of sovereignty. At the site of the individual, regulatory enforcement assumes the passivity of the immigrant-receiving state

¹⁵¹ Sassen’s exact terminology is “the border” and “the individual.” I propose to use “the body” as a way to talk about the often physical effects of migration regulation on individuals.

and acts against the intruding body as a threat (Musolff 2012). While such theorizations are helpful for situating immigration policies in a global context, in most cases the question of what deportation means to the sovereignty of the return state remains largely unexplored. Moreover, despite Sassen's call for looking to individual bodies as sites for the expression of sovereignty, explorations of what expulsion means to the people who confront it are rare.¹⁵²

With its focus on the role of the deporting—that is, European or American—state, the scholarship on deportation tends to fall along one of several analytical lines. Some scholars point to the fundamental contradictions between liberal ideology and readmission policies, arguing that liberal states undermine their commitments to human rights when they forcibly return irregular immigrants to illiberal regimes (Cassarino 2007; Grant 2005; Minter 2011). Others maintain that immigration policy at large, and repatriation in particular, is a way for states, whose sovereignty has been challenged by globalized economies, to “renationalize” politics (Bosworth 2008; Fekete 2005; Sassen 1996, 1999). Matthew Gibney's famous “deportation turn” elucidates how and why expulsions are on the rise across the global North (2008). And yet, though it may well be escalating in aggregate figures, expulsion can also be an arbitrary and ambivalent project, summoned with extreme force one day, and executed indifferently (or ignored) the next (Gordon 2005; Roig and Huddleston 2007; Sciortino 2000). In fact, some comparative research shows that expulsion trends are far from uniform, but are actually mixed depending on the national context (Weber 2014).

On the one hand, expulsions have been characterized as a kind of macabre spectacle of power, wherein the state “shows” its muscle both to the world and to the nation, and thus accrues

¹⁵² Some exceptions include Peutz (2010), who explores the experience of deportees “returned” to Somaliland. Schuster and Majidi (2015) and Drotbohm (2015) analyze the shame and stigma associated with forced return. And Coutin (2010) examines how US legal processes that criminalize Salvadoran immigrants have long-standing consequences after deportation is concluded. For an exceptionally fine analysis of the social and psychological dimensions of living in a constant state of “deportability,” see Talavera et al. (2010).

a kind of political capital in the international and domestic sphere (Bigo 2005; Hedman 2008; Hof 2015). On the other hand, expulsions are often far from absolute, and are limited by a host of internal forces, such as ethnic lobbies, judiciaries and civil society (Bloch and Schuster 2005; Broeders and Engbersen 2007; Ellermann 2006; Gibney 2008; Joppke 1998). In much the same way, external restrictions, such as international relations, also limit the power of states to carry out expulsions unilaterally (Caporaso 1993; Chayes and Chayes 1995; Koslowski 1998). For that reason, a host of scholars have examined the role of readmission agreements and mobility partnerships between European and African states in contributing to a political landscape of power brokerage and concession (Baldaccini 2009; Bouteillet-Paquet 2003; Cassarino 2014; Chou and Gibert 2010; Di Bartolomeo et al. 2010; Lokku and Herrgott 2009; Panizzon 2008; Peers 2014; Reslow 2011; Van Criekinge 2010). Others have seen expulsion as part and parcel of the European project to foster internal cohesion and social integration within the Union (Feldblum 1998; Geddes 2000). And relatedly, expulsion has been one way for states to manage anxieties, consolidate global power and perpetuate the sense of a security crisis in a post-9/11 world (Bloch and Schuster 2005; Cross 2011; De Genova 2007; Guild et al. 2008).

At its very core, expulsion reinforces the politicization of who belongs inside and who belongs outside the national space (Barker 2013; Calavita 2005; Kalir 2015; Walters 2002). Through his forced removal and exclusion, the illegal migrant is a vehicle for “perpetuating monolithic normative notions of national identity for citizens themselves” (De Genova 2002, 425; see also Anderson et al. 2011: 556; Bosworth 2008: 202; Gibney and Hanson 2003: 14; Walters 2002, 2015). Like Georg Simmel’s “stranger” of the early twentieth century, irregular migrants today codify the normative through their exceptional foreignness (Simmel 2010 [1908]; see also Bauman 2003). Removing the immigrant thus produces the national. And yet

deportation practices can also generate contentious debates among citizens in immigrant-receiving states about the very nature of citizenship itself (Anderson et al. 2011). In this way, deportation does not simply exclude or subtract populations from territories; it is “actively involved in *making* this world” (Walters 2010: 97).

While such arguments are helpful for thinking through European investments in regimes of deportation, and what expulsion means for the construction of European sovereignty and identity, this chapter takes a slightly different approach. The *refoulés* with whom I spoke consistently articulated their forced return *not* as the result of Spain having expelled them. In fact, they often mused on the paradox of Spain needing able-bodied laborers to work in its construction and agriculture industries. Rather, their expulsion was seen as the direct result of Senegal demanding their forced return. In this way, it was not European but Senegalese sovereignty that was at stake. It was the Senegalese state, and Abdoulaye Wade in particular, who was solely responsible for both their expulsions and the conditions under which they were repatriated. If, as a means to consolidate electoral support in the deporting state, the symbolic value of expulsion outweighs its practical utility in terms of migration control, then what does it mean to the electoral politics of the state accepting those who are expelled?¹⁵³ Though at the time of the first mass expulsions in 2006 most *refoulés* did not know about the readmission agreement conducted between Spain and Senegal, a topic I cover in more detail in Chapter 7, they nevertheless had the sense that Senegal had forced their return out of corruption and malice. From their standpoint, the Senegalese state had abused its sovereign power because it demanded their return not to protect them, but to entrap them. “*Gouvernement bi ñoom ñu jàpp nu,*” as Moussa put it. “It was the government [of Senegal] that trapped us.”

¹⁵³ As Schuster and Majidi put it: “[D]eportation has more symbolic than real intentions [as] governments are more concerned with the perceptions of their electorate than pursuing effective policies” (2013: 235). See also Castles (2004).

In the context of repatriations from North Africa, the unwillingness of the Senegalese state to step in and prevent well-documented abuses against transiting migrants mystified my participants. Such ambivalent practices on the part of the Senegalese state irrevocably altered *refoulés*' conceptions of Senegalese sovereignty and reconfigured the state as an illegitimate actor in their eyes. Though the state may well have been "strong" enough to force their return from Spain, or "weak" enough to allow it from North Africa, it was in aiding and allowing these expulsions that the state in Senegal became, in their eyes, fundamentally fraudulent.

This chapter is divided into two sections: random removal, and erasure. The first section attends to the ways that removal was understood and managed by *clandestins* as they faced uncertain outcomes. If the literature on deportation tends to prefigure the practice of removal as a monolithic and uncompromising exercise of sovereign power, this section reveals the ways in which expulsions can be ambivalent and even arbitrary. The second section examines the ways in which expulsion not only removed bodies but made them invisible. It reveals how sovereign power in Senegal erased *refoulés* from public sight, and thus contributed to an atmosphere wherein sovereignty and visibility would become two increasingly contested social phenomena, a topic I cover in more detail in the next chapter. This chapter suggests that through alternately hiding or neglecting *refoulé* bodies as they were expelled, the state undermined its own legitimacy.

Random Removal

One afternoon, the Spanish authorities called us. Each *clandestin* had been given a number, which was registered on his shirt. I was number seventeen. They lined us up and called out one through sixteen. When they got to seventeen, they stopped, telling us that they would call us later, the next time. They took the sixteen people and sent them to Valencia... [Later], they... attached us with a long chain that went

from man to man. It was at that moment that I knew we were trapped and would be sent back to Senegal.

This extract from Abdoulaye's portrait, reveals how the process of selection—for entry into Europe or expulsion—was profoundly random. For him, his future quite literally came down to whether his number was called or not. Being number seventeen, and not sixteen, meant that he would not be going to Valencia. In this way, expulsion was, at its heart, an arbitrary project. Abdoulaye reflected on the random chance that his number was off by just one digit, saying, “I was wearing the wrong shirt.”

Though it was impossible to know for sure why other *clandestins* had escaped this fate and had been given the freedom to enter Europe legally, many *refoulés* understood their being “chosen” for removal as a manifestation of divine providence. As Abdoulaye put it, “It was God's will that I was returned to Senegal. Each person's life is written a certain way in the Qur'an, and there's nothing you can do to change it.” While his comment may suggest a fatalistic approach to possible futures, Abdoulaye, like many others, saw opportunity in imagining, and being open to, the unknown. Before realizing that his number was “wrong,” he held out the radical hope that he might be among the lucky ones. He articulated this hope as a pious enterprise. “I had to believe it was possible that they would set me free. A state is powerful, yes,” he said. “But God can do everything.”

In other cases, *refoulés* blamed their detention mates for revealing their nationality and thus sealing their expulsion. Youssoupha, one of the *refoulés* in Tëngéej, described how a man in his pirogue who spoke a little Spanish had been seen “flirting” with a detention official in Tenerife.¹⁵⁴ “This boy was dreaming,” Youssoupha said, shaking his head. “Of course, the officer promised him a ticket to Valencia if he gave us up. And what did he do? He took the

¹⁵⁴ I found Youssoupha's choice of words interesting and perhaps not accidental. In French, as in English, “to flirt” with something is both to court favor or attention from a person and to risk a dangerous outcome.

chance, but it didn't end well. As soon as he told the man we were Senegalese, they shipped us to Porte 23 [Fuerteventura] where the tribunal judge gave us our repatriation papers. Then, they put us on the plane.”

Forced removal from Spain was contingent on identification.¹⁵⁵ Unidentifiable immigrants constituted the “‘unmanageable’ cases with which immigration authorities [had] difficulty coping” (Broeders and Engbersen 2007: 1598). On the level of practicality, not being able to determine a person's nationality made it difficult to know to *where* they should be returned. Additionally, the expulsion powers granted to European Member States like Spain were, and continue to be, limited by the “liberal constraint” (Boswell 2007; Hollifield 1992; see also Joppke 1998). What this means is that European democracies must contend with a host of constraining forces—such as international human rights laws, domestic lobbies and regional mobility regulations—with respect to the treatment of irregular migrants and asylum seekers. For this reason, as Joanne van der Leun's work in the Netherlands reveals, undocumented and unidentifiable migrants within liberal democratic societies “are constitutionally rather invulnerable to expulsion” (2003: 108). The resulting system is one wherein the use of “soft coercion” and voluntary compliance are some of the only options at hand (Ellermann 2010: 413).

But the “soft” approach yielded unsatisfactory outcomes because, as we saw in the previous chapter, clandestine migrants were less than willing to oblige Spanish officials when it came to identification. As a result, Spain reformed the Aliens Law in 2009, which increased the detention period from 40 to 60 days (Hernández-Carretero and Carling 2012: 410). The hope was that a longer period of detention would enable authorities to identify and deport irregular immigrants (Carling and Hernández-Carretero 2011). The problem for Spain became how to incentivize

¹⁵⁵ See Chapter 5.

voluntary compliance for those who had nothing left to lose if they did not cooperate, and everything to lose (e.g. a chance to be released into the EU) if they did.

Enlisting the help of Senegalese residents in Spain was, by all measures, a relatively successful tactic. *Refoulés* told me stories of Senegalese businessmen posing as state officials who came to “*waxtaan ak ñun*” (have a conversation with us). Some, in an effort to appear accommodating, asked the *clandestins* if they had family in Spain whom they could visit. As Papis recounted it, “They [the Spanish authorities] brought a Senegalese man who acted as translator. We didn’t want to talk to him, but he was an elder, so we had to.” But it was a ruse, his friend Mamadou interjected. “This man said that they were arranging bus transport for us and needed to know where we wanted to go. What part of Spain. But it was a trick to get us talking. Once a couple of us responded in Wolof, he stood up and said something in Spanish to the police. Then he left.” There were other stories of Senegalese “officials” who encouraged migrants to board planes, saying they were headed for Madrid, when in fact they were going back to Senegal.¹⁵⁶

Removal was a kind of game of chance—replete with charlatans, duplicities and betrayals, as well as unexpected opportunities. Some *refoulés* maintained that, even if a *clandestin*’s identity was revealed, that didn’t automatically guarantee deportation. Rather, some migrants were simply “chosen” to receive temporary papers. The logic behind this process of choosing was painfully opaque to migrants. “I have friends who traveled in different boats, and they were given visas to live in Madrid or Barcelona,” Samba told me. “Only God knows why.”

Christina Boswell argues that there is often a “split” between a government’s rhetoric and its policy when it comes to immigration control. “[G]overnments frequently make quite bold rhetorical claims about what they are doing to reduce immigration. But, in practice, they keep

¹⁵⁶ <http://afrol.com/articles/19559>.

open a number of routes to ensure that certain sectors are guaranteed a supply of foreign labour” (2014: 47). Even harsh policies in the law books can be “patchily implemented,” which results in, among other things, ambivalent expulsion practices (ibid.). Though he was eventually expelled, *refoulés* like Abdoulaye witnessed, experienced and interpreted the ambivalence of expulsion procedures as part of a random and unpredictable landscape of possible eventualities that no one could foresee.

In a conversation I had with Papa, a relatively recent *refoulé* from 2011, he described his expulsion as “an accident.” He had been among the first boat migrants to arrive in the Canary Islands in 2006, and perhaps because Spanish controls were not yet as severe as they would become, he was given a €100 and a temporary visa to “visit family in Madrid.” This family turned out to be a close friend from Dakar with whom he stayed for several months. After obtaining an ID and a health card in Valencia, he returned to Madrid where he first sold bags, belts and DVDs on the street. After that, he got a job as a painter, which paid him €35 per day. Later, as he became more established, he got a “steady” job as a waiter in a restaurant. “I lived like a Spaniard,” he told me. “I had a girlfriend and an apartment. I went to work every day, and I got along with everyone. Like normal. I speak perfect Spanish. And I sent money home each month to my mother.” As he described it, the restaurant owners were so pleased with his service that they offered him an official labor contract, which would have effectively sponsored his legal residency status. Unfortunately, before that could happen, the restaurant went out of business, and Papa once again had to look for work. He was selling oranges on the sidewalk when two members of the national police approached him. When he failed to provide them with working papers, they took him to the local precinct. “They looked at my name, my health card, and then they sent me to the larger station in Madrid. I was detained there for twenty-four days. On the

twenty-fifth day, they put me in the airplane and brought me back to Senegal. I had to leave everything behind. I lived in Spain for five years.” For Papa, the threat of removal from Spain may have been omnipresent, but its execution was “accidental.”

Expulsions did not look any less arbitrary in the North African context. In speaking of his expulsion from Morocco, Maodo said, “Sometimes they let you go. Sometimes they put a gun to your head. You never know.” After having endured nearly three months in a Moroccan camp, Maodo and his boat mates were taken to the Mauritanian border.

[The Moroccans] put us in two buses to depose us at the Mauritanian border. We were about four kilometers from the actual border when the guards forced us to get off the bus. From there, the Mauritians came after us and chased us back into Morocco. But then, the Moroccans chased us away again, too. Then they made us lie down on the ground, and pointed their rifles at us. As it was the hour of Timis prayer (between 6:45 and 7PM), they told us they would let us pray before killing us. And there were people at the border filming us, even though the police harassed them. I think someone made a phone call because shortly afterwards, the buses came back to retrieve us.

Being chased back and forth across the border was not at all uncommon. In a 2014 Human Rights Watch report on the treatment of sub-Saharan migrants in Morocco, the authors report that migrants were often chased from one side of the frontier to the other by respective national border guards. In the case of deportations to Algeria, Morocco would frequently deport migrants in the middle of the night precisely to avoid this tennis match. That such expulsions to the Algerian border were “usually carried out between 9 p.m. and 2 a.m. and the fact that the migrants were not handed over directly to Algerian authorities suggest that expulsions [took] place unofficially” without legal representation, police reports, or any type of due process (HRW 2014: 25). Especially problematic was the fact that, once the sun rose, migrants were often faced with more Algerian soldiers brandishing their guns and telling them to go back to Morocco. No one, it seemed, was willing to accommodate them.

When Moroccan authorities carried out such deportations, they violated both their own constitutional laws as well as broader international conventions to which the Moroccan state is signatory. Article 22 of the Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers, ratified by Morocco in 1993, prohibits the collective expulsion of migrants. And according to Article 30 of Moroccan national immigration law of 2003, irregular persons are not to be expelled without first determining the country to which they will be returned. Moreover, Article 30 of the Moroccan constitution stipulates, “Foreigners enjoy the same fundamental freedoms recognized by Moroccan citizens.”

Several of my participants recounted how mass deportations frequently followed on the heels of Spanish officials’ visits to detention centers. As we saw in Ndary’s portrait, migrants were often detained in places like Guantánamito (Mauritania) only so long as to show visiting Spanish partners that the Mauritanian authorities were doing their job. “But then some guys were liberated right after the Guardia Civil left,” Ndary said. “The guards didn’t say anything. They just let some of the prisoners go, maybe ten or twelve. Just like that, without explaining. The next morning, they put us in a truck and took us to the Senegalese border.” Several mysteries attended his expulsion. First, the arbitrariness of being selected either for release or expulsion was beyond intelligibility: Ndary could not understand why the guards had liberated some and not all of the detainees. Secondly, being deposited at the border with Senegal was also interpreted as random act. “[T]hey just left us there in the desert, with no way to get back home.”

According to the Global Detention Project, in 2006 alone, 11,600 migrants were “intercepted in the water or arrested by local police and taken to Mauritania’s border with either Mali or Senegal to be expelled” (Global Detention Project: Mauritania). Lacking any legal procedures for rendition, Mauritania authorities summarily transported and unloaded transiting migrants at

the Senegalese frontier, and left them to negotiate with, and frequently bribe, border guards on their own. Some studies echo the accounts of my participants, who reported being denied access to food or water during the 700km journey from Nouadhibou to Rosso, which took roughly ten to twelve hours (Amnesty International 2008). Even Abou Diop, Police Commissioner with the Ministry of Interior in Senegal deplored Mauritania treatment of Senegalese nationals. In a 2013 talk we had, this is how he characterized the situation:

It's true that it's terribly difficult in Mauritania. They have expelled many migrants by sending them to Rosso at the border and leaving them there in the middle of the desert. Just two weeks ago [in 2013], the Minister himself went to Mauritania to find solutions to resolve this situation. He also met with Senegalese citizens in Mauritania. But Mauritania, she says, "Yes," but she turns her back all the same. In the end, she does what she wants.

From Rosso, where *refoulés* were forcibly expelled back into Senegal, they then had to figure out a way to get home via bush taxi or bus, even when many of them had been stripped of their remaining funds. In Chapter 4, we saw how Iran relied on the solidarity of his boat mates, who each contributed "a little" so that he could pay the fare to return home.

Unlike "liberal" democracies in the EU, whose license to unilaterally deport unwanted immigrants was constrained by domestic and international legal and civic pressures, regimes in North Africa could expel unwanted populations with relative impunity. Mauritania and Morocco, for example, were not required to uphold due process for managing migrants, nor were they obliged to establish time limits when it came to detention (Choplin 2010; Choplin and Lombard 2008). The general public in Senegal was well aware of the deplorable treatment that migrants experienced at the hands of North African authorities. And yet, when the Senegalese state could have stepped in, it chose to do so only in select cases. Maodo's story of expulsion could have ended badly had it not been for the Senegalese ambassador in Rabat.

After the buses came back to get us, at that point, the Senegalese ambassador [Ibou Ndiaye] in Morocco found out what was going on. When we returned to the detention center, he came to see us every other day. He talked with us and told us things would be okay. He demanded an audience with president Abdoulaye Wade in order to tell him about our situation. And it was on the news, too. In Spain, some of my friends saw the video of us at the border, and they called my family in Dakar to let them know. At that moment, the president called the King of Morocco, Mohammed VI to tell him that he [Wade] would send a plane to repatriate us. But the King said no. He said it was his duty to send us back himself.

Though he was grateful, Maodo did not understand why president Wade had intervened on his and his compatriots' behalf. It could have been that the film footage of the *clandestins* being intimidated and threatened at the border, which was circulating widely in the news and on the internet, was embarrassing enough to pressure Wade into action. It could also have been that Ambassador Ndiaye's prodding convinced the president to step in. As Maodo explained, Wade's motivations were unclear because they actually contradicted a history of inaction on the part of his government when it came to protecting Senegalese citizens in North Africa. "Usually, *le vieux* just ignored us."¹⁵⁷ There are many other Senegalese who suffered in Morocco. And Wade did nothing to help them."

During my fieldwork (2012-2013), daily newspapers decried the deplorable situation of Senegalese migrants "trapped" in Morocco.¹⁵⁸ Several journalists and opposition politicians accused government officials of sitting on their hands when it came to dealing with the migrant issue in North Africa. Public opinion in Senegal regarding Moroccan police forces in 2012 was deeply influenced by a history of contentious, and sometimes deadly, confrontations between

¹⁵⁷ "*Le vieux*" in French and "*gorgui*" in Wolof both mean "old man," and were commonly used by Senegalese youth to refer to and critique the president. People often said that, as an "old man," Wade was no longer capable of ruling the country effectively. Rather, it was time for him to retire and spend his remaining days on earth praying and preparing himself spiritually for the hereafter.

¹⁵⁸ <http://makaila.over-blog.com/article-maroc-rdc-le-forum-social-senegalais-s-insurge-contre-la-detention-et-les-expulsions-des-africains-118157490.html>.

Senegalese migrants and Moroccan police. The most well known, and the ones that newspapers revisited repeatedly in their exposés, was the incident at Ceuta and Melilla.

Over two weeks in late 2005, hundreds of sub-Saharan migrants, who had been living in makeshift encampments in the forests surrounding the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla in Morocco, rushed the tall barbed-wire fences with improvised ladders and cardboard suits, prompting a dramatic response from Spanish and Moroccan authorities (Baldwin-Edwards 2006; Collyer 2007).¹⁵⁹ Fourteen people were killed, and at least two thousand were arrested and taken by bus to the Algerian border (Collyer 2007: 675).¹⁶⁰ Because the official border with Algeria was closed, officials were said to have simply deposited the migrants in the middle of the desert and told them to walk to Algeria. Other migrants were transported to detention camps in the south to await deportation via nearby military airports. That same year, dozens of migrants were “trapped” in the land-mine desert between Morocco and the Western Sahara after having been allegedly deposited there by Moroccan security forces (Smith 2005).¹⁶¹

After his boat ran out of fuel in 2007, Mansour was unsure as to where exactly they had washed ashore. “Someone told me it was Mauritania,” he said. “When we arrived, I had no

¹⁵⁹ The exact numbers are surprisingly conflicted depending on which report or news article you read. Human Rights Watch put the number of people attempting to reach Ceuta and Melilla over two weeks in 2005 at 2,000 (<http://www.hrw.org/news/2005/10/12/spain-deportations-morocco-put-migrants-risk>). Amnesty International puts it at roughly 1,500 (Amnesty International 2006). And a report conducted by the Conseil Consultatif de Droits de l’Homme (CCDH), states that between 28 September and 10 October 2005, there were nine separate assaults on the Spanish enclaves in which at least 500 clandestine migrants participated and fourteen died (CCDH 2005: 25). A report for *Jeune Afrique* cited that 3,000 sub-Saharan migrants were repatriated after the incident (Ali 2005).

¹⁶⁰ <http://www.hrw.org/news/2005/10/12/spain-deportations-morocco-put-migrants-risk>.

¹⁶¹ It is a pattern of abuse that continues today. Moroccan authorities routinely and somewhat arbitrarily detain, displace and deport sub-Saharan migrants who are stuck in transit within their borders. In 2015, the EU Ambassador to Morocco, Rupert Joy, publicly commended Morocco for abandoning the practice of deporting migrants to the border (Chaudier 2015). And yet, five days later, on 10 February, 1,200 migrants, who had been living in camps outside Melilla were summarily rounded up and deported to over a dozen different cities, some along the remote Algeria-Morocco border (<http://www.medias24.com/SOCIETE/152733-Gourougou-des-mesures-radicales-et-illegales-selon-le-Gadem.html>). Ironically, the operation started only hours after the Moroccan government had officially announced the “exceptional” regularization of close to 18,000 irregular immigrants living in Morocco, 6,600 of whom were Senegalese (<http://www.maroc.ma/fr/node/20187>). The message seemed clear: protection was reserved for those lucky enough to gain official recognition by the state; detention and deportation would continue for everyone else.

money left. Not a penny. I was obliged to walk to the point of exhaustion, and then I hitchhiked home.” He explained that this was a dangerous option because the Mauritanian police were constantly on the lookout for Senegalese migrants. “They will arrest you and put you in prison without hesitating.” Ibrahima’s experience was similar. After being detained in the Western Sahara by the Moroccan police, Ibrahima and his boat mates were driven by military convoy to the border with Mauritania and deposited in the middle of the desert.

The main problem was how to get to the Senegalese border as fast as possible. Mauritania is a difficult country where having black skin is not accepted. Plus, because we lacked any papers, the police could have harassed us. From the border, we started walking and then, when it was too hot and exhausting, we hitchhiked to Rosso at the Senegalese frontier [in total, a 650 kilometer journey]. I took the money I’d hidden in my belt loop and paid for transport to Saint Louis. From there, we got a *sept-places* back to Dakar.

The point to underline here is not that Moroccan or Mauritanian forces were brutal—that much seems evident—but that their brutality was seen by *refoulés* as the result of the Senegalese state intervening only randomly, or not at all. Senegal’s de facto policy of indifference with regards to the welfare of its citizens abroad was seen as an extension of its policy of indifference at home. As Moussa articulated it, “Here in Senegal, they ignored us before we left and then they betrayed us when we got to Spain.”

Erasure

The word *banish* rhymes with *vanish*. Through banishment or deportation there is the literal threat of invisibility. Not only when the event is concretized, but in the anguish and uncertainty leading to that. Made invisible. Made meaningless. Superfluous. To others. To ourselves (Randall 1987: 471).

Visibility figured prominently in the way *refoulés* described their journeys and their returns. Being invisible was not altogether unwelcome at times, as we saw in the last chapter, when boats tried to evade detection. In fact, being *clandestin* necessarily implied moving through particular

spaces undetected and unseen. But being forcibly returned or “banished,” as Margaret Randall points out, was also a kind of “vanishing.” In this case, invisibility was not mobilized as safeguard to evade capture, but was imposed on *refoulés* as a mode of erasure.

Once the repatriation process in Spain was underway, migrants were “trapped,” as Abdoulaye phrased it. Their bodies were bound together with chains that went “from man to man,” restricting their mobility and making individual escape impossible. The experience of being handcuffed was painfully demeaning for the young men I met: it symbolized their ontological transition from dignified humans into “dogs” and “criminals,” as Ibra said. From there, migrants were removed from detention centers under the supervision of armed police officers, who then accompanied them on the flights back to Senegal. The assemblage of gendarmes, physical restraints and loaded weapons contributed to a dizzying sense of disequilibrium.

In a conversation I had with a group of *refoulés* in Soumbédioune, the artisanal fish market in Dakar, descriptions of repatriation took on an overwhelming tenor. For Ousmane, the experience of being handcuffed and forced to board the plane was nightmarish.

At the airport, I was very confused. Like I was dreaming. I was chained and handcuffed, waiting to board the plane. And I turned around and saw the guns in their [the officers'] hands. And I saw the plane that would take me back to Senegal. ‘They’re going to force me to board,’ I thought. And right at that moment, there were others on a plane to Valencia... [pause]. I don’t know, *ça m’a tellement frappé* [it really shocked/unsettled me]. I just couldn’t understand why. And the more I thought about it, the sicker I felt. I wanted to vomit, but I controlled myself.

In this passage, removal was physically nauseating. Others added that the dehumanizing experience of removal was not confined to the moment of departure, but was all the more consummated after they landed.

In the days following their repatriation, it would become clear that the Senegalese state had deliberately “*machiné*” or “plotted” to hide returning clandestine migrants from public sight and scrutiny shortly after the repatriation flights began. Carrying 99 Senegalese migrants, the first return flight landed in Dakar in May of 2006 to a host of television reporters, print journalists and video cameras. On the evening news and in the morning papers, images of young men descending the aircraft in handcuffs shocked the Senegalese public. Caught off guard, Wade’s administration quickly adjusted their tactics and went on public record condemning the mistreatment of Senegalese citizens by Spanish authorities. Minister of the Interior, Ousmane Ngom, wasted no time in appearing on television, recriminating the shameful and appalling conditions under which Senegalese sons were sent back to their *patrie*, and immediately suspended the readmission agreement that had been reached between the two states (McLean 2006).¹⁶² Citing “technical reasons,” authorities in Dakar forced Spain to cancel two flights that would have repatriated roughly 100 migrants to Senegal in September.¹⁶³

Several months later, the flights resumed, this time destined for the smaller military airport in Saint-Louis.¹⁶⁴ As the *refoulés* in Tëngéej described, suspending the readmission agreement was only a political tactic used to buy time to prepare Saint-Louis’s Dakar-Bango airport, which was, importantly, both off limits to the press and far from the capital. Re-routing repatriation flights in this way allowed the government to facilitate “*le pont aérien*,” or airlift evacuations, under the cover of secrecy and out of range of the press.¹⁶⁵ Youssoupha said, “The first *refoulés* were

¹⁶² <http://afrol.com/articles/19559>.

¹⁶³ <http://www.news24.com/Africa/News/Spain-cancels-migrants-flights-20060914>.

¹⁶⁴ Though a report from the BBC suggested that flights began again as early as 13 September. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/5342844.stm>.

¹⁶⁵ As Papa Demba Fall notes, the “with the discreet support of the Senegalese police, [such an] aerial ballet... permitted, in June of 2007, the return of almost 200 clandestine migrants who had arrived in the Canary Islands” (2010: 31).

dangerous because they showed what our government is capable of. And the whole world could see it. So they took us to a place where no one was allowed. They hid us from sight.”

Once they had landed, the *refoulés* were lined up and given 10,000CFA (\$20) and a sandwich under the intimidating eyes of the Senegalese police. For most, the money was just enough to get home. Some, like Papis, were so disgusted they threw the sandwich away. The Spanish authorities had been more generous, giving each *refoulé* an envelope with €50 before they left. Though there were stories of Spanish officers abusing migrants during return flights, none of my participants had been physically harmed on board (Diop 2011). Rather, they were adamant about the care the Spanish authorities took in providing food, shelter and medical services during their detainment, and the euros they distributed prior to the return flight. Demba said, “The Spanish guards on Tenerife told us that they wanted to liberate us. They told us Spain had work. They even started helping us fill out paperwork to apply for work permits, but they told us, ‘It depends on your government.’ And then look what happened. It was Senegal, not Spain, that forced us to return.”

Adama agreed. Like others, he accused Wade’s regime for demanding the return of Senegal’s *jeunes*. “He said he needed us to build the economy, to build the country. But still we are here and there is no economy, no country to build!” he said with a tisk. *Refoulés* also insisted that the handcuffs and chains were administered at the request of the Senegalese state. “They [the Spanish] did not want to do it. It was Wade who ordered them to shackle us like animals!” Adama said. Whether Adama’s or other *refoulés*’ interpretation of the facts were objectively correct or not, what is most telling is that they used the conditions of their forced return as a way to critique and ultimately challenge the legitimacy of Wade’s regime, and, more broadly, the

legitimacy of politics in Africa. As Lamine, one of the Soumbédioune *refoulés* said, “Here, it’s not a democracy. We don’t have democracy in Africa.”

The vigorous critique of Senegal’s handling of repatriation fell along three primary lines: First, the state had alternately ignored their security in North Africa or forcibly pressured Spain for their return. As Moussa described it, Spain needed workers, but it was president Wade who “told Spain to return us, to put us on planes and handcuff us like animals.” Secondly, the physical constraints were interpreted as the excessive machinations of an immoral regime. Such constraints were, according to *refoulés*, demanded by Senegal as a way to demobilize and dehumanize potentially aggravated youth returning under less than consensual circumstances. And thirdly, the secretive relocation of forced removal was seen as a way to defuse public reaction by keeping their return a secret. As Nathalie Peutz has explored in her work with Somali deportees, “The deported themselves are made to vanish, figuratively and sometimes literally” (2006: 219). In fact, it was often the “hiding” of their bodies in Saint-Louis that generated the most ire among my participants.¹⁶⁶ “The authorities were ashamed,” Moustapha said. “They knew what they were doing was wrong. But they did it anyway. And that’s why they are not legitimate anymore.”

Many of the *refoulés* I talked to understood sovereignty through the lens of visibility. For them, a legitimate sovereign may well monopolize the use of force, but when it used that force to render people invisible, it refused the obligatory path of mutual recognition upon which its legitimacy was based. As Max Weber famously wrote, it is not simply the monopolization of force that substantiates sovereignty; it is the monopolization of the *legitimate* use of force (Weber 1946: 78). Such legitimacy is not immediately endowed, but must be earned or ironed

¹⁶⁶ In her work with Somali deportees, Nathalie Peutz also finds that respondents were “careful to state that it was not the deportation they contested but ‘the way it was done’—covertly, with restraints (flexi-cuffs and tranquilizers), and by European charter airline that profited from their transport” (2007: 183-184).

out through processes of recognition between states and subjects. When the Senegalese state refused to “recognize” its citizens by hiding them from sight, it undermined its own ability to then call on those citizens for legitimation later on. After their return, the *refoulés* I met simply continued operating not so much in open resistance to the state as outside the state altogether, a topic I take up in more detail in the next chapter.

Conclusion

Expulsion is a spectacular performance of power. It brings the force of sovereignty to bear on unwanted bodies and reinforces the putative linkage between territory and rights. From the standpoint of the departing state, expulsion affirms sovereign power by materializing the circumference around which sovereignty seeks to penetrate and embrace the populations it recognizes, while rejecting and extracting the populations it doesn't. From the standpoint of the return state, expulsion reifies the notion of sovereign ownership of citizens (Mann 2015). But when expulsion randomly erases people, through either neglect or coercion, it can also unseat a state's legitimacy in the eyes of its citizens. For the young men I met, sovereign power in Senegal took living bodies and rendered them invisible by secreting them back into the country under a cloak of opacity. The regime may have had the coercive power to remove and to erase, but such power came with a cost, as we will see in the next chapter.

This chapter has argued that the experience of expulsion from Spain, Morocco and Mauritania reshaped clandestine migrants' conceptions of sovereignty in Senegal. Focusing on the stories of the migrants themselves reveals not only how deportation was experienced in the moment, but how it served as a social critique of legitimate authority in Senegal. In this way, examining the role of the return state in the repatriation of clandestine migrants reorients the

discussion on deportation and sovereignty in Africa. It asks us to ponder the social nature of legitimacy as a prerequisite for sovereign authority.

For the young men I met, sovereignty created spaces of removal and erasure, which the body was required to negotiate. But what this chapter has also shown is how Senegal may well have reinforced its sovereignty vis-à-vis other international actors, but in doing so it lost credibility at home. As a social product, expulsion was understood as a state enterprise. By handcuffing its citizens and sending them back, the state compromised its legitimacy, which is at least one reason why Abdoulaye Wade is no longer in power. What this also points to, however, is not just a growing political malaise among disaffected youth who ousted a corrupt president in 2012; what is happening among *refoulés* today is a reformulation of resistance that seeks not to engage sovereign power, but finds its own legitimacy through *dis*-engaging from the state altogether.

When we talk about sovereignty, we often see it as monolithic, totalizing, unequivocal. And yet, when it comes to expulsion, sovereign power is not always so emphatic; in fact, expulsions are often ambivalent projects. Like sovereignty itself, expulsions are enabled and constrained, often simultaneously, by a host of forces that may be disharmonious. This is not to suggest that sovereign power is not real or strong, or even at times overwhelmingly coercive. But like conceptions of the state which forget that administrations and bureaucracies are populated by people, we can sometimes lose sight of the ways in which power is above all *social*. Janet Roitman has observed, “While the state penetrates regional spheres in its quest for alliances, adherents, retainers, and dependents, its mode of expansion and control is by no means unidimensional” (1990: 694). Not only do people have conflicted desires, so too do states. Clandestine migrants interpreted this ambivalence as part and parcel of the risk they took in a field of possibilities whose outcome was anything but assured.

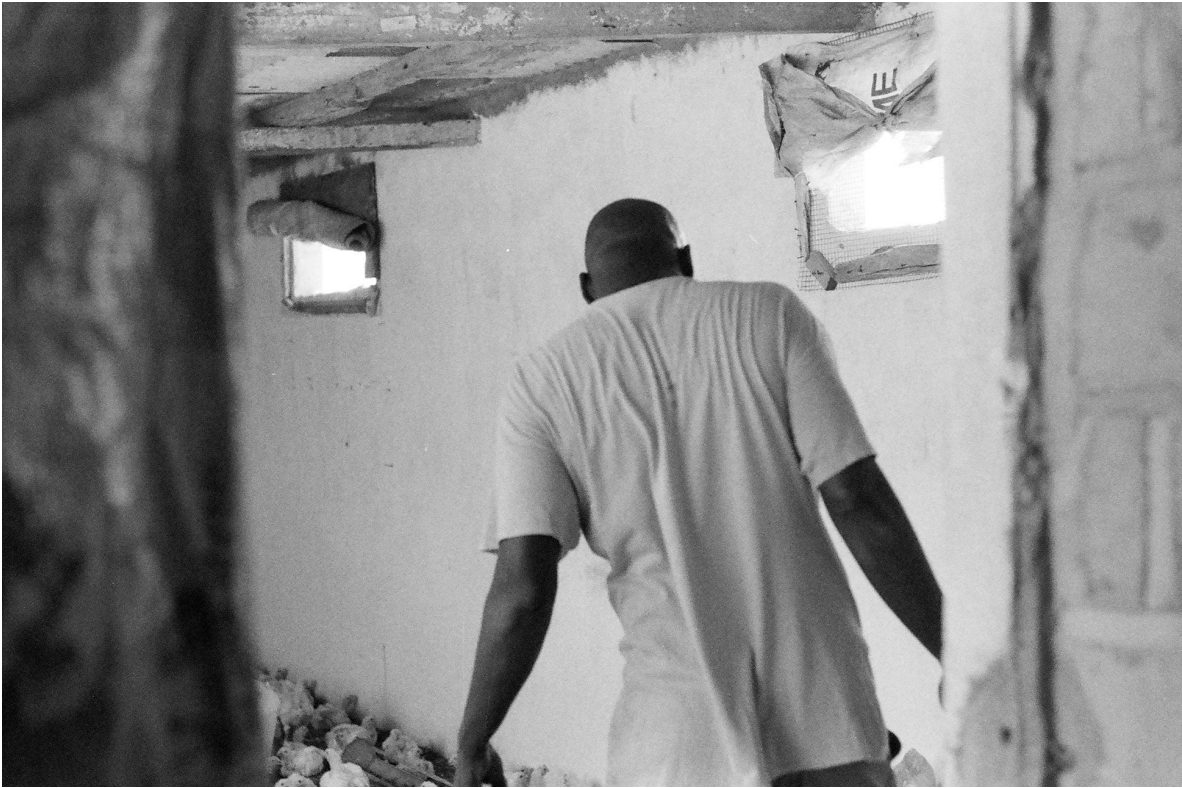
Because expulsion was often random, it lacked any formal logic that *refoulés* could understand, and was thus based on chance alone. And because expulsion was also erasing, it invalidated the lives it removed. It rendered them profoundly insignificant, relegated to unseen airports and borders where facing agents of the state was ultimately degrading. It sanctioned their nonconsensual transportation back across territories they had invested with radical hopes and imaginings of success.

If, as we saw in the previous chapter, detention is one of the “new strategies of nation states to discipline the space and movement of unwanted migrants,” it is often only a precursor to expulsion (Broeders and Engbersen 2007: 1602). In fact, expulsion is now regarded as the single most important feature of a successful and effective migration policy.¹⁶⁷ And yet, like the hyper-technologization of the border, whose “controls are more numerous but... not really effective” (Bigo 2005: 77), deportation is little more than a chimera of control. In the context of the European Union, deportation policies help Member States, as well as the Union at large, to consolidate and confirm reflections of power on the international stage. Mechanisms of deportation, including ministerial dialogues, readmission agreements, and actual expulsions allow states “to obtain more financial means, more social power, more legitimacy as they can pretend to solve the problem in a scientific way” (ibid.: 68). States, whose territorial edges have been blurred by globalization, are increasingly interested in reifying and buttressing these edges through the symbolic performance of securitization (Bosworth 2008; Fekete 2005, Sassen 1998). Symbolic though they may be, however, such performances did have real consequences for the young men I met. As the *refoulés* of Tëngéej described, expulsion was handcuffs and police surveillance; it was a ride in the back of a pick up truck to the border; it was demeaning and dehumanizing.

¹⁶⁷ See the Inventory of Agreements Linked to Readmission: <http://rsc.eui.eu/RDP/research/analyses/ra/>.

Through expulsions, we can begin to see the outer contours of sovereignty, which monopolizes the power to decide where and under what conditions populations live and are recognized or rendered invisible. In this way, expulsions can actually contribute to a divestment of engagement from civil publics, reinforcing the sense that migrant bodies are randomly desirable and undesirable both from the perspective of the departing state and the return state. For the young men I talked to, return did not begin when your boat was shipwrecked off the coast of North Africa. Nor did it begin when you were holed up in a Spanish detention center, thinking there may be a chance for you to slip into the European night. It began on planes, in the backs of trucks, or on foot in the middle of the Sahelian savanna. The following chapter will explore how forcibly returned migrants were not ready-made *refoulés* upon return. Rather, *refoulé* identities and strategies for survival were the emergent products of a process of becoming.

MOUSTAPHA



Moustapha, and His Baby Chickens, 2013

The first time I saw Moustapha he was standing high above me looking down from the roof of his house. After being led through the labyrinthine alleys of Thiaroye, sometimes through passageways no wider than a person, and stepping over sheep who dozed while tethered to stakes in the sand, or dodging young girls who walked with buckets on their heads, I was finally told to wait in the narrow shadow of neighboring houses while Karim, a *refoulé* I had just met, went to check if Moustapha was home. I could hear Karim asking, “*Moustapha, mungiy nii?*” “He’s upstairs,” a voice answered. Karim waved at me to come around the corner. When I looked up, I saw Moustapha above, back lit by the sun and looking down seriously at us with a red-white-and-blue wool cap on his head. ‘This is the man I’ve spent months trying to find,’ I thought to myself. ‘And now here he is.’

I had read about Moustapha in the paper, and had even watched a YouTube clip of him at a ministerial conference on migration where he openly criticized Senegalese NGOs for profiting from clandestine migration. He appeared to be the proverbial fly in the soup, the man who quietly attended dignified meetings, but then talked about corruption when the microphone was passed to him. And yet for all his exposure, this president of the *Association des Jeunes Rapatriés de Thiaroye-sur-Mer* (Association of Repatriated Youth of Thiaroye, or AJRT) was, at least for me, a hard man to find. Although AJRT had a website, which listed both an email address and phone number, Moustapha answered neither.¹⁶⁸ In the case of emails, it was not uncommon for people in Senegal to ignore virtual correspondence. But his phone number was also outdated, the likely result of frequent SIM card changes that are a natural part of using cell phones in West Africa.

I also tried asking around. During a 2012 interview with Yayi Bayam Diouf, founder of the *Collectif des Femmes Pour la Lutte Contre l'Emigration Clandestine* (COFLEC), or Women's Collective Fighting Against Clandestine Migration in Thiaroye, I inquired if she knew of Moustapha or AJRT. My assumption was that two organizations working on issues of clandestine migration in the same locality would surely know each other. She replied casually that she'd never heard of Moustapha or the association, and then quickly moved on to tell me how Senegalese *refoulés* did nothing but sit around all day drinking *attaya* and complaining. "*Ils aiment que la facilité* [They only want what's easy]," she said.

I was beginning to wonder if AJRT was yet another "fictive operation" that seemed to thrive in Senegal's byzantine and clientelistic development landscape. Maybe AJRT was like the *Boulangerie Pastef*, an artisanal bakery in Mbour that had allegedly been established as part of a

¹⁶⁸ <https://ajrt.wordpress.com/>.

French-Senegal partnership to employ *refoulés*, but that no one I talked to had ever heard of.¹⁶⁹ Or maybe it was like the ephemeral constellation of *associations des rapatriés*, which seemed to form one day and evaporate the next, and whose presidents were featured in daily newspapers, but whose names meant nothing to the young men I worked with. After following various leads that ended up going nowhere, I had grown increasingly accustomed to phantom projects and people. But then Moustapha's name had come up in a conversation with Karim, who was more than happy to escort me to the president's door.

I followed Karim up a narrow set of exterior stairs to the top floor, then down a short covered corridor, at the end of which a roofless veranda bleached in the afternoon sun. Young men sat in the shade, deftly mending gossamer piles of nylon fishnets with long plastic shuttles. Laundry lines spanned the length of the roof, mimicking the ocean's horizon in the distance. Just below the cinderblock retaining wall, houses clustered around the alleyways, their corrugated rooftops layered one on top of the other like a pile of books that had been thrown to the ground. Makeshift television antennae poles leaned with the breeze coming off the ocean, and twisted homemade electric wires streamed from official conduits and dangled high above open courtyards.

Although I didn't know it at the time, that first visit with Moustapha was a kind of test. If I had been unsure of his existence, he would tell me later that he was unsure of my intentions. "I thought you were like all the other researchers and journalists who come here asking questions, and then go back to their country, and we never hear from them again." It was not the first time I'd heard this critique of Western researchers. After the rush of clandestine departures from West Africa had flooded Spanish shores in 2006 and 2007, a reverse flood of journalists, social scientists and NGO workers had descended on Senegal, where, Moustapha said, people "made

¹⁶⁹ I explore this bakery more fully in Chapter 7. See: <http://petitecote.net/pour-lutter-contre-l'émigration-clandestine-molconec-et-pasteef-mettent-en-place-une-boulangerie-artisanale-à-Mbour>.

their careers” on migration. He described an offer he’d gotten from an Italian journalist and director who wanted to make a film on clandestine migration. “His name was Max,” he said.

He wanted me to go to Italy to work on the film with him. But I refused. Because who was he filming for? For Thiaroye-sur-Mer? No. He was doing it for himself. Max said he would pay me. First he would take the money, and then he would pay me. But what would the association [AJRT] and the youth of Thiaroye gain from it? Nothing. So, I refused.

Even two months ago, SNTS [*Société Nationale des Télécommunications du Sénégal*] contacted me.¹⁷⁰ The general secretary, Saliou Ndiaye, told me that they wanted to send me to Europe for twenty-one days to tour around and give conferences on clandestine migration. But I refused that, too. If I could do it in the name of AJRT, then I accept. But I’m not going to do it for SNTS. Me, Moustapha, I don’t work for them; I work for the youth of Thiaroye-sur-Mer.

Since our first meeting in April of 2013, and in all my subsequent conversations with him, Moustapha has been singular in his focus. He has not wanted to talk about his life, his family, or his childhood. He has been reluctant to talk about why he twice migrated via pirogue to Spain (once in 2006 and again in 2007), or what his personal circumstances have been like since his return. All he seemed to care about was being an advocate and *combattant* for *les jeunes* of Thiaroye-sur-Mer. “They elected me as president,” he frequently repeated. “They put their trust in me, so that makes me responsible for them.” One way this responsibility manifested was in campaigns aimed at discouraging younger brothers and neighbors from attempting boat migration. “We, the *refoulés*, we tell them how dangerous it is,” Moustapha said.

But it’s not easy to convince them. If you come to someone and tell him not to board a pirogue, even though you’re trying to rescue him, if you come with empty hands, it will be very complicated.

You can explain the risks and tell them what it’s like to be in a pirogue. You can tell them that to face the waves in the middle of the ocean at two or three in the morning is to face a different kind of struggle. You may know where you depart, but you can never know if you will arrive. You can describe how some cannot eat,

¹⁷⁰ Also known as SONATEL, SNTS is Senegal’s “national” telecommunications company. I put “national” in scare quotes because the French multinational Orange (formerly France Telecom) owns a controlling stake (42%) of SNTS.

how others get sick. You warn them that they will have to fight against the cold and hunger, and that some among them will not know how to face these kinds of hardships and may “crack” psychologically. But when they live here and cannot survive with dignity, what is death?

Imagine: today, it’s you who must take care of your mother and family. But you cannot. You might have some small money saved, but each day finding work is getting harder and harder, and with the growing family expenses, you know your small money will not last. Then you will have no money and no security. So instead of becoming the supporter, you become a dependent of the family. No one would ever accept living in this kind of condition. No one would ever accept his honor being stolen, because a person without honor is nothing. Even me, Moustapha, I preferred to take my chances and risk it in the ocean rather than stay here without honor.

If you become a man and you cannot take over after your father, nor can you take care of your mother, and your children cannot go to school, or they get sick and you are unable to buy them medicine: *tu vis dans le pétrin* [Literally: You live in the kneading machine/Your life is a mess]. With such pain, it’s better to take a pirogue.

Moustapha reflected on how clandestine migrants “are not afraid of death. Now they go to Morocco or Libya to cross. And they still die. If the state were to tell the truth, they would admit that they know people are still dying on the Moroccan coast. But they do nothing.” Just six months previously, his wife’s younger brother and nearly thirty other *clandestins* had drowned when their pirogue sank off the coast of Tangier. “And they say clandestine migration is over,” he laughed bitterly.

My wife’s brother, he was here in Thiaroye just last year to play a football match. He was number 10. His name was Bara Gueye. He was 21-years-old. A really good player. But he’s dead. He left his wife here and a little daughter. Now their life is very hard. As president of the association, it’s my responsibility to take care of them. But without means, how can I do that?

As we sat on the floor in his single room, he leaned back against the bed. Propped up on the headboard were laminated photographs of Moustapha’s previous life as a fisherman captaining a pirogue, a studio portrait of his wife, and several images of his children. On the wall was a large framed portrait of Seydi Ababacar Sy, who was the son of Elhadji Malick Sy and General

Khalifa for the Tijani brotherhood in Senegal from 1922-1957. A small television sat next to the window. Perfumes and body sprays were lined up neatly on top of the chest of drawers.

Children's toys crowded the corners, and stacks of cooking pots piled high on top of the armoire.

Like most bedrooms I'd seen in Senegal, this small chamber no bigger than two hundred square feet seemed to be the repository for all of this family's belongings.

When we were deported, we got nothing but 10,000CFA [\$20] and a sandwich. Since we created the *association*, we have received no financial assistance from the state, even though it's largely because of our public awareness campaigns that clandestine migration in Thiaroye is over.

You can go from Dakar to Yarakh to Thiaroye, Kayar, Mbour, Zinguinchor—everyone will tell you that he has received no help whatsoever. That's why, when we explain to our younger brothers what we lived through, we hope they will listen to us and look reality in the face. But it's hard when we have no alternative to offer them.

Moustapha explained that AJRT was created in 2007, a year after he and so many others were repatriated from the Canary Islands. If AJRT's formal mission was to educate state officials and the larger public about the precarious living conditions of *les rescapés* (survivors of clandestine migration) and the families who lost someone at sea, Moustapha's quotidian task was, bluntly put, to agitate *les pouvoirs*, or the powers at be. For this reason, his relationship with the state was notably acrimonious.

Ever since the association was registered, the state has blocked us. They have made agreements with the foreign embassies in Dakar not to allow us inside. If we wanted to apply for a visa to go to Europe to seek out partners, the guards at the entry will turn us away. We are not allowed to enter. Because the state, Wade's regime, told them that AJRT wasn't legal. But I have all the papers here that show we are registered as a legal association here in Senegal. So why then can we not apply for visas to develop partnerships with other foreign associations? They'll never let us do this because they want us to stay trapped here, electing presidents and staying eternally poor, at their mercy and at their service.

Moustapha explained that, despite its official rhetoric, the state had no real incentive to stop irregular flows. As it happened, migration was a surprisingly lucrative way to accumulate wealth for those in positions of power. Like modern gatekeepers, deputies and ministers across the political hierarchy extracted profits at the intersection of migration control and development in Senegal. Immobilizing him and the leaders of AJRT ensured that the state could continue to profit from clandestine migration.

Everyone knows that clandestine migration injected billions of CFAs into the bank accounts of state officials. Ousmane Ngom, the ex-minister of the interior under Abdoulaye Wade, went to Spain to sign an accord to control migration flows. Since then, billions [of CFAs] have been eaten.

But those billions were supposed to be used for projects that would help *rapatriés* re-insert themselves in society. Today, not a single *refoulé* has seen even so much as a penny. If they had distributed the funds equally between the nine thousand *rapatriés*, as the Spanish government had estimated when they calculated how much to send, each person would have a little over three million CFA [\$6,000]. But we got *dix milles et un sandwich*.¹⁷¹

We're not fooled and we're not stupid. Everyone knows what happened. The Spanish government allocated those funds so that we could stay here in Senegal under better conditions. But the old regime seized the money, all the while telling us to stay here. The state was the principal beneficiary and we were the losers.

Moustapha rose quickly and motioned for me to follow him. He pushed aside the fabric sheet covering the doorway and walked to the far retaining wall of the roof, ducking beneath the clothes now hanging on the laundry lines. Pointing out to the water, he said, "You see that boat

¹⁷¹ Here, Moustapha claims that 9,000 Senegalese migrants were returned to Senegal by force. As I mentioned in Chapter 1, definitive repatriation figures can be difficult to locate. Frontex reported that, in 2006, repatriations from the Canary Islands totaled 6,076, of whom some unspecified number were returned to Senegal (2006: 12). According to Roos Willems, more than 4,600 West African migrants of various nationalities were repatriated from the Canary Islands to Senegal via charter plane in 2006 (2008: 278). Likewise, the authors of "Migrations: Que Fait le Sénégal?" reported that in 2006, 63 flights repatriated 4,681 youths to Dakhar-Bango de Saint-Louis's International Airport (Diallo et al. 2007). Statewatch suggests a slightly higher figure, with 4,863 Senegalese nationals being returned from the Canary Islands through October of 2007 (<http://www.statewatch.org/news/2007/apr/02spain-dinghy-deaths.htm>). According to Coumba Sylla, between 2006 and 2008, 6,931 Senegalese clandestine migrants were repatriated (2008). Despite the fact that Abou Diop, Senegal Police Commissioner and Director of Territorial Surveillance at the Ministry of Interior, promised, on several occasions, to provide me with the figures collected and managed by the Senegalese authorities, the figures were never forthcoming. See Chapter 1, footnote 3.

there?” In the distance, a medium-sized vessel motored slowly south. “That’s Frontex,” he said. “They’re still here. They think they can stop clandestine migration, but it still continues.”

Moustapha seemed from time to time to vacillate between claiming that AJRT was responsible for halting clandestine migration out of Thiaroye, and alternately suggesting that this kind of mobility was unstoppable. When he argued the latter, he drew on histories of colonialism and early emigration to the metropole as a way to critique contemporary border policies.

The fight we initiated against clandestine migration doesn’t mean that we are going to eradicate it altogether because no one can do that. We just want to play our part to try and minimize it. But the irony is that the Spanish, Italians, Lebanese, Arabs, they all immigrated here. The French migrated to Africa to colonize countries like Senegal. And for a while our grandfathers were able to migrate to Europe for work and then come back here to retire. It’s our grandfathers who fought in the war [WWII] and helped rebuild Europe afterwards. But once Europe didn’t need us anymore, they closed the door. Now those days of legal migration are over. Now there is no way out [of Africa] except by pirogue. With these Frontex boats, migration just moves elsewhere. But Senegal and Europe both made a lot of money from controlling our movements and keeping us trapped.

I looked across the water where the boat had now passed behind the ridge of a neighboring roof. Behind us, the young men still sat in the shade, working on the fishing nets. “*Kii samay doom*,” Moustapha said. “These are my kids.” He explained that though he had only three offspring of his own, he was “father” to as many as forty orphans whose own fathers had perished at sea. “They come here every day. Sometimes they work in fishing, other times, they’re mobile merchants. They do whatever work they can to help their mothers. I tell them, ‘Now you’re the head of the house. Every day, you must *lutter* to survive.’”

Moustapha led me to an unfinished room across the corridor where several younger kids chatted around a pot of *attaya* cooking on a propane tank. Amadou, Moustapha’s youngest son, jumped up and followed us to the far end of the room where his father opened a door and motioned for me to enter. Inside, 250 baby chickens scurried around a large pen covered with

wood shavings. I looked at Moustapha, surprised, and something approaching a smile crossed his face. “This is my *poulailler* [henhouse]. I just started it. They should be ready to sell around Korité [the end of Ramadan, which was about twelve weeks away].” Chicken was an expensive meat in Senegal, usually reserved for special occasions, and Moustapha estimated that he could get maybe as much as 3,000CFA (\$6) per hen depending on how big they got. Amadou stood in between his father’s legs, holding onto a plastic shuttle. “He wants to be a fisherman like his dad,” Moustapha said. “But first we need a boat.”

As we stood there in the chicken coop talking, I told Moustapha that I was glad to have finally met him, but that it had not been easy. “I visited COFLEC one day this past December,” I said. “And I spoke to woman named Yayi Bayam Diouf.” Naively, I asked him if he knew her. Without looking at me, he said yes, he knew Yayi very well. “Well that’s odd,” I said, “because she said she’d never heard of you.” This was to be expected, he explained. “Of course she denied knowing me. It’s not in her best interest to have any affiliation with me or the association.”

Listen, one must have the courage to tell the truth. And the truth is that when the mayor of Las Palmas came to Thiaroye to place the first stone for an education center to be built, he said in his speech that this center, financed by the Spanish government for between 60 and 80 million CFA [\$120,000-\$160,000], would be for the youth of Thiaroye. After their training, these youth would be able to apply for visa contracts to work in Spain temporarily. I was there at the ceremony; I heard him say it. But since that day, this education center has been run by Yayi and has uniquely served young girls. Even me, the president of AJRT, I do not have the right to set foot in that place. If I did, I would be taken to the gendarmerie. You are lucky you got a chance to visit the center, but no [male] migrant is allowed. So, I ask you: this funding served to accomplish what? Who benefited from it? And to think, these women in the center are not survivors of clandestine migration.

But why would you be arrested, I asked. Because, he said, “Yayi and the other NGOs that make money on clandestine migration don’t like what I have to say.”

Why is it that the NGOs, the associations, and the countries touched by clandestine migration won’t have an open and public dialogue where we can all

sit around a table and try to find solutions, and try to figure out what happened to all that money. To my mind, it's totally absurd to give funding to a person and then never follow up to see how the money was spent. Even at the bank, you get a receipt that tells you how much you got on what day and at what hour. But why don't we do the same with NGOs? Instead, they operate with impunity. They use the money however they want and no one comes asking about it afterward.

Europeans should be wary of dealing with people like this, people who know nothing of clandestine migration and yet who come to them to extort money. They make their living on the backs of the *refoulés*. They hide all the money in their accounts and if you come to them to ask for help, they chase you away.

Today, whenever a boat arrives in the Canary Islands or when it departs from Morocco, the authorities call me and say, "Moustapha, did you know about a boat leaving?" Why do they call me? Because I am here on the ground working with people in the community. When a boat leaves, or when a group of young men goes to Morocco, I know about it. But those who work for NGOs like COFLEC don't know where the migrants go or how they get to Morocco or Spain. On the contrary, they board planes to Europe with their visas and they turn clandestine migration into a business. Europe gives them money, which they put in their pockets, and then they hold a press conference saying they did this or that to stop boats from leaving. But it's a total sham.

Let's say you give me money to construct an education center. I buy a piece of land where I build a two or three-story building. Instead of finding *clandestins*, I get three or six people, young people with no affiliation—a tailor, a metal worker, a mechanic—who stand in as students. When you come to visit, I introduce you to them and tell you they are survivors who were victimized by clandestine migration, even though it's a total lie. And you say, "Ah, Moustapha, what a good job you've done!" After your visit, I put the house up for rent and I deposit the money in my bank account every month. That's how it's done.

When you think of how much money has been invested in this sector, it is unimaginable to see these people enriching themselves. This is why we should audit all these NGOs to see where the money went. I'm not afraid to say this. I'm not afraid of being arrested and I'm not afraid of dying. I lived through clandestine migration and there is nothing on this earth worse than that. Seeing your friends die right next to you, and not knowing if you will drown yourself. No, I'm not afraid of the police, or the state, or the NGOs. All those people who go to Europe and talk about clandestine migration and come back with their pockets full, they're imposters.

As Moustapha described it, the problem was not simply with the Senegalese state or NGOs, but with private individuals as well. Following the 2006 surge of clandestine migration, Senegal

was suddenly awash in foreign partners who frantically offered funding opportunities for organizations working on issues of migration. No one on his team had the fluency or the skill to draw up a “professional” project to re-insert *les jeunes refoulés*, so he and several other AJRT members pooled their resources and paid a professional project manager to research and design a proposal to build a school. This project researcher agreed to provide them with a blueprint to take to an NGO for funding. But before they saw any of the project study, the manager made off with the deposit and the plans. Moustapha explained, “Up to the present moment, we don’t know where the files are that we deposited.”

Stories of corruption, broken promises, imposters, subterfuge, and individual greed abounded. In 2006, AJRT began talks with the deputies of fifteen EU states (including Spain, Greece, Germany, Italy, France, Sweden and Austria), who came to Thiaroye-sur-Mer to discuss plans for a funding initiative aimed specifically at helping *refoulés* in their locality. Ironically, on the day of the meeting, the mayor of Thiaroye himself was in Belgium meeting with ministers on development projects tied to clandestine migration and therefore could not attend the reunion in Thiaroye. Moustapha described how there were close to a thousand Thiaroyois, including AJRT members and their families, crowded in the hall when the deputies arrived.

After the discussion, they asked us what we wanted to do, and we proposed several projects. One project would have provided *refoulés*, most of whom were fishermen and had sold their boats to pay the pirogue fare, with the necessary means to re-enter the fishing industry. They agreed with this plan and told us that they would donate fishing boats and engines to the community. We drew up the plans and took them to the representative at the EU headquarters in Dakar. Since then, we’ve seen nothing. The deputies made a lot of promises, but that’s all. They made a big show of coming to Thiaroye-sur-Mer, with their long procession of chauffeured embassy cars escorted by the national police through town.

If you ask anyone here in Thiaroye what they think of those deputies who wanted to build schools and donate fishing boats, they’ll tell you that they were fast talkers and liars of the highest order. What I mean to say is that whether it’s

Senegal, the NGOs, or the EU, they haven't done anything for the youth of this country. They are nothing but thieves.

As one might imagine, such incendiary rhetoric, which Moustapha was not shy about using liberally, got him into hot water with the authorities. He routinely received “menacing phone calls” from anonymous sources who threatened him physically if he didn't keep quiet. “They would tell me, ‘Moustapha, you have to shut up. So what if the unemployed youth want to migrate clandestinely? Let them go.’” Such a laissez faire approach ensured the continued stream of migration-development revenue coming in from Europe. “If clandestine migration ends, so do their jobs,” he said. When Moustapha realized this, he went on national television. “So they didn't like it when I discouraged youth from leaving because that threatened their bank accounts. But then when they saw me on national television, on Walfadjri or SenTV or RFM, talking about how the state was corrupt and the big NGOs were thieves, you should have heard the phone ring!”

When the threatening calls didn't work, the state sometimes preempted Moustapha's public appearances. If you were to insult a state official on the radio or the TV, he explained, they would let it air, but it would take less than two days before the police called you in for questioning. But if you talked about clandestine migration, “they did everything to shut it down beforehand. That's how afraid they were.” He described how, on one occasion, he did an interview with SenTV, but before the program aired, it was blocked by the state. “The journalist called me up and said the minister of the interior ordered him to strike it from the program. He [the minister] knew that I was telling the truth, but he didn't want people to hear it.”

Bribery was also an option. In 2008, he was contacted by “a Senegalese organization,” he said, reluctant to reveal the name of the NGO.¹⁷² The representative explained to him,

¹⁷² He later revealed that this “organization” was COFLEC.

“Moustapha, listen. Actually, you have nothing. You’re not working. And so we’re going to give you 7,500,000CFA [\$15,000] if you agree to be quiet. Either that, or we can give you a visa and you can go to Europe.” Intractable as ever, Moustapha refused. It wasn’t the first or last time he would be offered a visa in exchange for his silence. Ministers from the notoriously corrupt FNPJ (*Fonds Nationale pour la Promotion de la Jeunesse*) proposed a similar arrangement.¹⁷³ As

Moustapha recounted:

The authorities called me to their office on avenue Bourguiba and the deputy said that we were going downtown to the Ministry of the Interior headquarters. When we got there, I met with the Mr. Ngom and he said that I talked too much and that I needed to leave Senegal. If I agreed to dissolve AJRT, he said, they would give me a visa to Spain. Now, these were the visas that Spain had allocated in 2006 as a way for *refoulés* to migrate legally with labor contracts. And here they were offering me one to shut me up. You see how these visas were manipulated? It was a con. No one knows who got them and for what price. But I refused. If I had accepted, it would have been a betrayal of the spirit of AJRT and all the youth of Thiaroye.

After this tactic, I received phone messages for almost two months. People called me at all hours, whispering threats. But I’m not scared of them. Because I live here in Thiaroye-sur-Mer and we are Lébous. Maybe if I travel, I have to be careful, but here in the village, everyone knows me and everyone knows when a stranger is among us. Here, there’s nowhere to hide.

On other occasions, he was approached by people who proposed to “share the profits.” One organization, he explained, had suggested that he could fly to Europe as the president of AJRT, hold a conference with European delegates to ask for funding, and then return to Senegal to split the spoils with them. “They didn’t want to give the money to the *refoulés*,” he said. “They wanted to keep it for themselves. It’s appalling!” In contrast to others who could be bought off or silenced, Moustapha insisted that someone needed to speak about things as they really were. “*Il faut oser le dire*.” One must dare to say it.

¹⁷³ See Chapter 2 on FNPJ corruption.

When I visited Moustapha again in 2014, we sat in the same room and he leaned against the same bed while we talked. I asked him about his chickens, and he said they'd had a bad storm, which killed most of them. We got up and walked to the now empty *poulailler*. Pointing to the windows that he had covered in plastic, he described how one night the wind had shredded the coverings, which then allowed the rain to enter. "Once they got wet and cold, they died," he said. With something as simple as a real window, he could have made a small profit on those chickens. Instead, it was *foutu*, wasted. "But *Allahu Akbar*," he said. God is the greatest.

As usual, he was full of stories: one about how Youssou Ndour, the Senegalese music star, received five million CFA (\$10,000) in 2012 from the Minister of Culture to produce a public service announcement on clandestine migration in Thiaroye, and each participant/actor—many of whom were Moustapha's neighbors and *refoulés*—got no more than 5,000CFA [\$10] for their trouble. He also told me how his brother died in 2012 after a Spanish fishing boat ran down his pirogue. The Spanish boat had been fishing illegally at night close to Île de Gorée, and so they had their lights turned off and didn't see the pirogue until they had collided with it. The next day, the Spanish authorities came to the family's house and offered an insulting 20,000CFA (\$40) for his life. "My brother's son, the boy sitting there, he spends most of his time here now."

Moustapha was also full of surprises. Though he may have lost his chickens, he had established something of a pigeon safe house in the corner of the rooftop veranda. He explained that his older son, Malick, had adopted a pigeon from a friend down the way whose family had gotten fed up with feathers and shit everywhere. "From then on, we just started accumulating birds. Now people know we keep them, so they'll come to me and say, 'Moustapha, I have a pigeon for you.' My boy likes them. He takes good care of them. It teaches him to be responsible." And though Moustapha denied caring about the birds and said it was strictly for his

son, you could see from the way he looked at them and occasionally fussed over their territorial disputes in the coop that he was happy to have them around.

Few people care about pigeons. Most people think they're bothersome at best, and disease ridden at worst. Similarly, few people really think about *refoulés*. No wonder then that Moustapha would be drawn to both: the neglected, the overlooked, and the stigmatized.

After lunch, as we sat on the roof drinking attaya and watching the pigeons, Moustapha reflected on what would have happened if he'd taken the \$15,000 bribe.

Maybe it's very hard, but I am going to continue the fight. Because we have almost a thousand members [in AJRT]. They elected me as president. Am I the strongest? No. Am I the most educated? No. But they have faith in me. That's why they chose me. Everything I do, I do for Thiaroye-sur-Mer. And everything I do, I do it with honor.

If someone gives me something for the association, that's for the association. It's not for Moustapha. I didn't create the association; *les jeunes* did. They tried to reach Europe by putting their lives at risk and were repatriated. Truly, what they lived through is terrible and sad. So I have to continue fighting for them.

Moustapha waved his hand in front of him as if swatting away some invisible object.

Maybe 7.5 million CFAs is something. I have my family, my wife, my kids. That would have helped me to give my kids an education. I could have fed my family. But this money, if I had taken it, what would they say tomorrow? Moustapha's treachery. He shut his mouth, and for what? Money. Is it because of money that they elected me as president? Does this money belong to me alone? No. So even if I die of hunger, I'm staying here. Me, Moustapha, I'm staying.



Office of AJRT, Thiaroye-sur-Mer, 2013

VII. BECOMING *REFOULÉ*



Soumbédioune_2, Dakar, 2013

“Even if death comes today, I would say that the life I have lived
[since the voyage] has been a bonus. Being in the boat has enabled me to fear nothing.

Even if a lion approaches me, I will not run. I will stay because what

I lived through was harder than that.”

(Ibrahima)

Introduction

By definition, return implies a kind of finality. It intimates a state of being that has, in some sense, come full circle. The Greek tale of Odysseus describes a man who, after battling the Trojans for ten years, must spend an additional decade confronting and overcoming sirens, whirlpools, cannibals and pirates on his cursed journey back to Ithaca. The story of Odysseus is emblematic of the hero's journey: he undergoes departure, transit and return—or, in the language of ritual processes, separation, liminality and re-incorporation (Van Gennep 1960; Turner 1969). Odysseus's homecoming completes the triad in a clean and uncomplicated way.

And yet, return is rarely so definitive and uncomplicated. Writers and scholars in exile have explored how return can often be problematic and even elusive (Aciman 1999; Hoffman 1989; Kafka 1971; Levi 1995 [1965]; Rushdie 1992; Said 2000; Wiesel 1982 [1968]). In his short story, "Home-Coming," Franz Kafka describes a son's return to his father's farm where, standing outside the kitchen door, he is suddenly immobilized by a sense of dread. Though the landscape is familiar, he is not part of it anymore. He is *alien*. Every object seems "preoccupied with its own affairs," as if his presence is both unimportant and potentially shameful (1971: 493).

Return can be complicated because it manifests the possibility—indeed, the likelihood—that departure and transit have changed the subject in some way. Like Kafka's returning son, Senegalese *refoulés* re-entered their social worlds not as the same young men, but as qualitatively different. Through their experiences, they had acquired knowledge, and thus new statuses within the social fabric of their communities. Additionally, by actively repurposing their experiences as markers of courage, resistance and piety, *refoulés'* individual subjectivities were reshaped and discursively constructed within an evolving vernacular of struggle, value and spiritual striving. The *refoulés* in this chapter suggest that between Odysseus and Kafka, there is

a spectrum of return, as experiences and statuses often overlap and co-exist simultaneously.

Moreover, return did not necessarily end after *refoulés* made their way home. Rather it continued to shape horizons for these young men in what Gilles Deleuze would call a process of “becoming” (1995: 170-171). According to Deleuze:

Becoming isn't part of history; history amounts only [to] the set of preconditions, however recent, that one leaves behind in order to 'become,' that is, to create something new... Men's only hope lies in a revolutionary becoming: the only way of casting off their shame or responding to what is intolerable (Deleuze 1995: 171).

Instead of seeing return as a discrete moment that neatly tied up the loose ends of a subject's peregrinations, this chapter explores return, and forced return in particular, as a process that, for many, continued to unfold long after the temporal conclusion of the event. Deleuze's concept of becoming will help us reveal how forcibly returned clandestine migrants in Senegal negotiated (and continue to negotiate) their re-integration in a post-expulsion context. Put otherwise, this chapter attends to how *refoulés* made choices even while being “caught in a constricted and intolerable universe of choices that [remained] the only source from which they [could] craft alternatives” (Biehl and Locke 2010: 321). Such negotiations were not limited to the moment of setting foot back on Senegalese soil. Nor were they limited to initial encounters with family and community. Instead, they took place over many months and years, and continue to inform how *refoulés* conceive of themselves today. The existential pressure that Kafka's prodigal son feels as he stands before his family's kitchen door is a moment that does not precisely or concretely end.

Broadly speaking, the recent scholarship on deportation and forced return does not attend to these social, temporal and spiritual dimensions because, at least in part, most studies focus on the immediate post-expulsion moment.¹⁷⁴ Therefore, what happens years later is often not examined. Some scholars see the link between criminality and deportation as a novel mode of penal

¹⁷⁴ See Coutin 2015.

discipline. As Susan Coutin points out, deportation is above all a “hallmark of sovereignty” and extraterritorial incarceration (Coutin 2010: 207). Coutin and others have highlighted how immigrants face deportation as a result of having broken the law in the host country (Coutin 2010; Hasselberg 2015; Peutz 2007). For immigrants who have grown up abroad, deportation can be a clumsy shuffling of bodies whose attachments to “countries of origin” have been complicated by family histories of mobility and exile. Such research asks what return means when one is relocated to a place that is completely or partially unfamiliar (Drotbohm 2012, 2015; Peutz 2006; Schuster and Majidi 2013). For example, Nathalie Peutz’s deportees, who were returned to Somalia, faced significant challenges because many of them grew up in the United States, spoke only English and were unfamiliar with cultural norms in their new home (2006). In short, they were “returned” to a place they did not know. Relatedly, deportees often struggle with social isolation because their deportation is frequently a mark of criminality in communities of return (Brotherton and Barrios 2009; Drotbohm 2015; Hagan et al. 2008; Khosravi 2009).

Another analytical approach to deportation focuses on the familial consequences of forced removal. Deportation can produce uncertainty not only for individuals but disruption for entire families as parents are separated from children (Drotbohm 2015). In this way, deportation is linked to “the intimate politics of gender and family” (Dreby 2012, 830).

Some research takes a more historical-structuralist approach by focusing on deportation as part of the project of global capital that seeks to render labor ever cheaper and more flexible (Calavita 1998; De Genova 2007; De Genova and Peutz 2010). According to Nicholas De Genova, it is in making labor “deportable” that contemporary expulsion practices increase labor’s exploitability (2010). In the case of Spain in the mid-1980s, Kitty Calavita has shown that immigration law promised integration, but required exclusion. “[R]ather than controlling the

number of immigrants entering Spain,” Calavita writes, “these laws focus primarily on defining levels of social and economic inclusion/exclusion... [and] are crafted in such a way that the predictable consequence is to marginalize Third World immigrants and consign them to the extensive underground economy” (1998: 530). For Calavita, this approach is neither arbitrary nor even “ineffectual” in terms of policy, but rather is embedded in post-Fordist neoliberal exigencies that require a “flexible” labor force that can be easily summoned, deployed, and quickly released either through deportation or through sequestration in the informal sector.

European states have found it increasingly advantageous to outsource social service provision to what might be called “global care chains” (Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2002). In her study of informal live-in care workers in Austria, Sandra Gendera points out how European welfare states are able to sustain their programs through the use of “a flexible, transnational migrant workforce[which] reduces the burden on the existing long-term care system and the need to further enhance the development of alternative affordable and responsive service sectors” (Gendera 2011: 111). Indeed, after the recent economic crisis in Europe, flexible cheap labor is even more prized. Lena Näre underlines how, in refusing to regulate immigrant labor relations, the Italian state “creates informality and irregularity” among Eastern European domestic migrants (2011: 69). And Emmanuelle Hellio’s work on the importation of North African women to Andalusia’s strawberry farms reveals how industries in Spain capitalize on “precarious” labor that is temporarily legal but always under threat of deportation (2008: 191). In a maddening Catch-22, such situations actually disable migrants from being able to demand fair working conditions and adequate pay.¹⁷⁵ But it is this constant revolution in the means of production that

¹⁷⁵ See the film *Corvéables (Disposable Labor)*, produced by Tracing Movements (2015) <http://tracingmovements.tumblr.com/#110253395350>, and *The Invisible Workforce*, produced by Tracing Movements (2011) <http://tracingmovements.tumblr.com/post/20113813776/the-invisible-workforce-view-film-online-in-the>.

keeps both social welfare and Spanish strawberries accessible and cheap for European consumers (Marx 1976 [1867]). As Nicholas De Genova and Nathalie Peutz argue, one cannot examine migration outside of its “histories of labor subordination” (De Genova and Peutz 2010: 6).

In addition to being analyzed as an intrinsic part of late capitalism, the experience of deportation has also been characterized as social and temporal impasse. On the one hand, by “[bringing] the dynamics of spatial and social mobility to an end and [producing] a kind of social and individual standstill, [deportation] is an experience of radical deceleration, individualization [and] atomization” (Drotbohm, quoted in Khazaleh 2015). On the other hand, deportation can also be a kind of “corridor” or process that involves various actors, agencies and locations, and which does not have a fixed end point. In an introductory article for a recent special issue of the *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* dedicated to deportation, Heike Drotbohm and Ines Hasselberg underscore the confluence of actors and spaces that constitute the “deportation corridor,” and suggest that deportation itself “is a process that begins long before, and carries on long after, the removal from one country to another takes place” (2015: 551; see also Pian 2010b: 92).

If forced return is a process, then we might also think of it as kind of becoming, a constantly unfolding set of emergent possibilities. As Naveeda Khan describes it, such a process of becoming entails aspiration, “which is not directed at achieving an ideal form... but rather at sustaining the striving toward one” (2012: 9). As the men in Chapter 4 revealed, “casting off” or “leaving behind” the intolerable conditions of existence meant imagining the possibility that a fishing pirogue could deliver them to a different future. One that was honorable. One in which they could care for kin members and fulfill their spiritual obligations. Faced with the ensuing “intolerability” of forced return, *refoulés* then had to re-imagine what becoming honorable in the

context of failure might look like. Importantly, becoming honorable for *refoulés* was not a process that had a fixed end point but was part of an “aspiration to continual striving” (ibid.).

Like previous chapters, visibility is a central motif here. Being invisible to the state was often articulated as a motive for departure in Chapter 2. Embracing concealment during transit, in Chapter 4, was both requisite to successful passage and a mark of divine providence. In Chapter 6, being hidden from public sight during forced expulsion was experienced as erasure of self and body. And long after return had concluded, visibility and concealment became a contested terrain within the context of social re-integration. In order to explore this terrain, this chapter is divided into four sections. The first section, Disgust—Desire, explores how *refoulés* were appalled by the diversion of Spanish development aid, which was allocated in exchange for their repatriation, while at the same time some were continually seeking recognition as development actors. The second section, Privation—Resistance explores how *refoulés* cultivated their social and political sensibilities as indices of what had been lost and what could still be claimed. The third section, Shame—Courage, explores how some *refoulés* faced stigmatization upon return to Senegal while at the same time embracing a newfound sense of fearlessness. The final section, Despair—Faith, looks at the ways that returned migrants experienced trauma and desperation, and also used those experiences as part of novel articulations of spiritual devotion.

Disgust—Desire

In 2006, roughly 6,000 Senegalese clandestine migrants were forcibly repatriated from the Canary Islands (Frontex 2006).¹⁷⁶ Returning home was a shock, in part, because as we saw in the last chapter, *refoulés* did not expect to be handcuffed and forced onto planes. At the time of their

¹⁷⁶ As I have repeatedly suggested, these were official figures provided by Frontex, even though other sources, and people I talked to in Senegal, claimed that the numbers were significantly higher. See Chapter 1, footnote 3, and Moustapha’s portrait.

descent in Saint-Louis, most *refoulés* in 2006 did not yet know about the readmission agreement that had been concluded between Spain and Senegal that same year. When they did learn of it, many felt redeemed. Their attempts to seek a better life elsewhere had not gone unnoticed. The hope was that now, with the €20 million (\$26.6 million) allocated to Senegal for “development” projects intended to re-insert repatriated migrants, they would finally be able to secure steady employment and provide for their families.

As part of the negotiations, Spain also committed to giving Senegal an additional €15 million (\$20 million) per year over the following five years. Spain would further establish labor recruitment offices for temporary job contracts that migrants could legally obtain with Spanish industries.¹⁷⁷ 4,000 work visas had been allocated to Senegal for exactly this purpose.¹⁷⁸ “The idea, at the time, was that we would benefit from the accords,” Moustapha said. “But in the end: what happened to the visas? The state sold them. And what happened to the money? The state ate it.”

Initially, when news about the visas began circulating, *refoulés* were hopeful that they could secure legal labor migration for one of their relatives, perhaps a younger brother. Having already attempted to enter Spain illegally, *refoulés* were not allowed to re-enter for a period of three years.¹⁷⁹ But information about how to apply for the visas was murky and, some argued, purposefully deceptive. In late 2006, several hundred *refoulés* protested at the gates of the Presidential Palace out of frustration. This mass demonstration was part of growing national

¹⁷⁷ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/6039624.stm>.

¹⁷⁸ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/6208744.stm#map>. However, as we saw in Ndary’s portrait, the Spanish Prime Minister at the time, Frederic Zapatero, denied having made any commitments in terms of actual numbers.

¹⁷⁹ President Abdoulaye Wade himself was rather unclear on this stipulation as he initially advertised during his bid for reelection that the work contracts would be available for the *refoulés*, an assertion he later had to retract. The director of the FNPJ then stepped in to “hush up the scandal” by offering to administer visas to family members of *refoulés* (Pian 2010a: 8, fn. 19).

resentment over the state's inaction.¹⁸⁰ Abdou from Soumbédioune recalled:

We stormed the gates. And then they told us to go to CICES [the *Centre International du Commerce Extérieur du Sénégal*, or International Foreign Trade Center of Senegal]. When we got there, there was a colonel in a small office. They said he was the one managing the visas. But we saw what was going on. They had a deal with FNPJ. It was those people who manipulated everything, giving visas to their friends, their cousins...

The *refoulés* were told to put their name and contact information on a list, but after that, nothing happened. In fact, most started to believe that the visas were not intended for the *refoulés* at all, but were being distributed to those who were politically connected.¹⁸¹ Stories of the visas being sold, sometimes for as much as 2,500,000CFA (\$5,000), also circulated (Kandji 2008).¹⁸²

In a 2013 conversation I had with Abou Diop at the Ministry of Interior, he admitted that government officials had done “what they pleased” with the work visas.

Even the ministers profited from the misfortune of these people. Migrants were traumatized, the government was without power and the ministers did what they pleased. No one cared about these migrants. The visas were given or sold to people with [financial or social] resources. Those who had access to resources, they went abroad. For everyone else, they stayed here. For me, this is a real social bomb that the government is sitting on.

In Diop's re-telling, the government was “without power” when it came to controlling how its ministers operated. However, it might be more useful to think about how the fate of the Spanish visas actually helped to reinforce state power in Senegal.

Agents of the state frequently extract rents as a way to subsidize their formal remuneration, which can be erratic or downright nonexistent. As Janet Roitman has argued with respect to wealth creation in the Chad Basin, “illicit” practices of accumulation do not contribute to a

¹⁸⁰ Protests had already broken out in Yarakh in June, when several *refoulés* were arrested and detained for weeks. See Faye (2006).

¹⁸¹ Carling and Carretero-Hernández write, “In Senegal, there were widespread allegations and press reports that contracts had been allocated on the basis of nepotism or political interest, or even sold” (2011: 51).

¹⁸² Years later, the rumors still circulated. According to a 2012 piece in *Le Quotidien*, a daily newspaper in Senegal, *refoulés* had recently been telephoned by people posing as agents of ANEJ and told that the distribution of Spanish visas had started up again, and all they needed to do was make a payment of 300,00-400,000CFA (\$600-\$800) to receive their visa to Spain (Faye 2012).

weakening of the state power because “while subversive to the integrity of official regulatory authority, they are nonetheless vital to the production of rents and redistribution” (1998: 298). In Senegal, upholding a bureaucracy of ministers, and tacitly condoning their extractive activities, has its advantages. First, ministers and administrators on the official payroll operate, in part, as architects. They are the spokesmen of the state and thus help to produce a veneer of institutional structure, particularly in the eyes of international partners and donor states like Spain. Secondly, some portion of the wealth that these architectural spokesmen generate flows up, which is to say, to more powerful patrons in the bureaucratic hierarchy. The distribution of the visas solidified alliances and consolidated state power through the channels of social relations. In this way, the Senegalese political apparatus was buttressed by the “wealth” that the *refoulés* had generated. And, as we saw in Moustapha’s portrait, the state could utilize this *refoulé* wealth to leverage potentially unruly political actors at home by offering them visas in exchange for their silence.

As Anaïk Pian points out in her research on the *Association Nationale des Rapatriés d’Espagne* (ANRE), or the National Association of Repatriates from Spain, after the protests of 2006, ANRE was formally set up at the request of Abdoulaye Wade in a strategic move to absorb the dissenters into the state apparatus (Pian 2010a). Shortly after its inception, ANRE’s twenty delegates, including the president, received Spanish visas and work contracts for their family members as well as development funds provided by IOM (International Organization for Migration) as part of a program to re-insert *refoulés* socially and economically in Senegal.¹⁸³

¹⁸³ Founded in 1951, the intergovernmental organization known today as the International Organization for Migration (IOM) has 127 member states (as of 2010) for whom it advises and directs programs on matters of migration control. IOM is second only to the United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR) in size and scope, though unlike UNHCR, it has no “protection mandate.” Because the organization is beholden only to its stakeholders (i.e., individual states), it has been characterized as something of a juridically “ambivalent” organization (Georgi 2010: 47).

Varying between one and four million CFA each (\$2,000 and \$8,000), these IOM grants helped the ANRE delegates set up small businesses in Dakar. But these grants, and the personalities to whom they were attached, also became symbolic of political co-optation in the eyes of Senegalese *refoulés*. “Those men, they work for the state now,” Abdou said. “And the association ‘president’? He made a big treachery. He bought an apartment building in Dakar to rent out and then left for Spain.” Though this is conjecture, it remains a salient critique of power sharing and resource distribution in Senegal.¹⁸⁴

The climate surrounding the distribution of Spain’s €20 million aid envelope in 2006 was equally opaque. According to official discourse, the money would be used to fund Plan REVA (Diallo et al. 2007; Fall 2010; IOM Bulletin 2007; Kasse et al. 2007; Pian 2010a; Spain-Africa Plan 2009-2012; Tall and Tandian 2010).¹⁸⁵ As Ndary described in his portrait, Plan REVA was an agricultural stimulus program, which would ostensibly invest the Spanish aid money in modernizing farming practices in Senegal both as a way to decrease food imports and to absorb the mass of unemployed youth, including *refoulés*.¹⁸⁶ The idea was that REVA would re-insert those who had already made the journey, while discouraging potential candidates by providing job security.¹⁸⁷ And yet, as Ndary and the *refoulés* in Tëngéej pointed out, few people saw any tangible results. Several *refoulés* from Soumbédioune had protested openly against President Wade’s handling of the situation.

¹⁸⁴ According to Jean-François Bayart, such “reciprocal assimilations” accomplish at least two things (2009). By securing alliances that are mutually beneficial, they extend state power not through the capillary infrastructure of roads, communication systems, and bureaucratic satellites but through the rhizomatic infrastructure of social relations. At the same time, they effectively quash opposition by offering “political sinecures [or] financial largesse” to a rebellious elite in exchange for their acquiescence (Englebert 2002: 99).

¹⁸⁵ [http://www.panapress.com/Spain-grants-Senegal-\\$24-million-to-fight-illegal-migration--13-501840-68-lang1-index.html](http://www.panapress.com/Spain-grants-Senegal-$24-million-to-fight-illegal-migration--13-501840-68-lang1-index.html).

¹⁸⁶ Recall from Chapter 2 that 67% of the Senegalese population is under 25.

¹⁸⁷ One criticism was that with such a strict focus on agriculture, REVA would not benefit other vocational profiles, such as masons, fishermen, tailors, car mechanics, etc.

Ousmane: Me, I went to the Presidential Palace to face Ablaye Wade. Many of us were there to protest. We said, “Here at home, there’s no work. So we made the decision to go where there’s work. But you returned us here.” And when they told us to go to one office to put our names on a list for development projects... nothing [happened]. No projects, no jobs, no nothing.

Adama: I went to the palace too that day. First, Wade said that he hadn’t received a single penny from Spain. And we listened. Then, he opened a small door, and each protester was given 10,000CFA or 15,000CFA outside the palace gates.

Abdou: He told us about his Plan REVA. But it was just *wax, wax, wax* [talk, talk, talk].

Adama: He stood there saying he didn’t receive anything! But everyone knew he lied. Everyone knew that the Spanish had signed a blank check for 13 billion CFA. Ask anyone and they will tell you: Wade used that money for his reelection.

After a while, REVA began looking like nothing more than a “discursive gesture” (Pian 2010a:

6). The common refrain became: *Il nous a fait rêvé avec son Plan REVA* (He [Wade] made us dream with his Plan REVA). More gravely, government officials were accused of squandering the aid for political purposes or personal enrichment.¹⁸⁸

Further, it was unclear what government agency was actually in charge of managing the funds. ANEJ claimed to have established fifteen industrial bakeries across the country as a result of Spanish *refoulé* aid (Gueye 2007).¹⁸⁹ But FNPJ was supposedly in charge of administering funds for Plan REVA, even though the director in 2012 claimed that his organization “had not received a single *franc* from the Spanish government” (Berriah 2012). Other government ministers lamented the lack of transparency in the process and admitted to people being misled, projects being “mismanaged,” and funds being mysteriously misplaced. According to Daba

¹⁸⁸ It was commonly argued that the Spanish Euros had paid for Wade’s reelection campaign. In 2007, a crowd of repatriated migrants openly heckled Wade during his stump speech in Kayar, accusing him of selling their forced return in exchange for the “jackpot” of 13 billion CFA (Gueye 2007). *Refoulé* protests also broke out in Yarakh (Faye 2006). And, with respect to Wade’s agricultural plan, REVA managers admitted to being politically pressured to select land that was located in zones that were home to important constituencies but were agriculturally unproductive (Pian 2010a: 7).

¹⁸⁹ In another account, a representative of ANEJ stated unequivocally: “We have nothing to do with that money” (Berriah 2012).

Thiaw, manager of the Division of Orientation and Placement at ANEJ, “[At] one moment, there were young people registered at ANEJ, or under the direction of the Ministry of Employment, and they were swindled” (Faye 2012). In a similar tone, Abdoulaye Thimbo, administrator for FNPJ in 2012, admitted that even though Spain had allocated 1.5 billion CFA (\$2.5 million) in agricultural supplies and equipment, and 23 farms for young repatriates had been established, “[The] project was not well managed. The objectives of insertion [for youth]... were not obtained” (Faye 2012). No one seemed to know where or to whom the money had gone. In 2012, six years after the first migrants were repatriated, the mayor of Thiaroye-sur-Mer, Ndiaga Niang, was quoted in the daily newspaper, *Le Quotidien*, saying:

After their repatriation, the clandestine migrants were invited to talk with the president... In order to support them, certain projects were studied. But up till now, we are still in the study phase. These projects have not been executed nor implemented... I am saddened by this abuse of authority. I can only verify the facts... [and] on the ground, I have not seen a project implemented to reinsert these youth [in the economy] (Faye 2012).

In this way, municipal governments, *refoulés* and the public at large were all in the dark.

Others argued that the funds were never intended for the *refoulés*, or their reinsertion. In a 2013 conversation I had with Serigne Mansour Tall, a migration scholar, urban planner, and UN-Habitat program director at the UNDP headquarters in Dakar, he disputed the idea that Spanish development aid—or any aid for that matter—was intended for *refoulés*. “That money was for Frontex,” he said bluntly.¹⁹⁰

It was for surveillance. And in one year [2006], they completely closed it [Atlantic passage] down. You know, Frontex; it costs a lot of money! Maybe some of that money was meant for a little education [for *refoulés*], but it ended there. To grow tomatoes, you don’t need a lot of expertise; you just need to be physically strong... No, the money was for surveillance. To put planes in the air and boats in the water, to pay maritime patrol personnel, etc... And when they [*refoulés*] came back, they were given 10,000CFA and a sandwich. It’s true, that’s not very much. But the state is not obliged to reimburse people who have broken

¹⁹⁰ Personal interview, June 17, 2013.

the law... Besides, Spain had its own [budgetary] problems. They said, ‘Yes, we’ll invest money in reinsertion programs,’ but all they cared about was repatriation.

For Tall, the funds were meant to help Senegal comply with Frontex operations and objectives, not to help those who were forcibly returned.

But the wording is often misleading. In 2011, Europe’s 4.4 billion CFA (\$7.3 million) financial envelope to Senegal included funds for migration programs. As Dialigué Faye reports, “In a document distributed to the press during the third Euro-African summit on Migration and Development, which took place in Dakar on 23 November 2011, the press service of EU delegates noted that 2.6 billion CFA [\$4.3 million] had been reserved for the national clandestine migration management program” (Faye 2012). When *refoulés* hear this, it may sound like the money will be devoted to job creation, financing, and other programs designed to discourage clandestine migration. And yet, as Tall pointed out to me, migration “management” more frequently means border control rather than economic development.

To complicate matters, in 2006 and 2007 local NGOs in Senegal began vigorously maneuvering for a place in the growing migration-development market sponsored by a host of European partners eager to control clandestine migration. The subsequent atmosphere of competition resulted in migration becoming “big business,” as Moustapha put it.¹⁹¹ Faced with the glutted stage of development actors, an increasing number of *refoulés* like Moustapha began accusing Senegalese NGOs of profiting from foreign funding. In other words, it was not simply the Senegalese state generating revenue from the return of clandestine migrants through the allocation of Spanish aid and visas. It was, in Moustapha’s words, a problem with the way NGOs and development projects worked in Senegal. In his portrait, he painted a rather grim picture of migration-related associations as being invested in the continuation of clandestine departures

¹⁹¹ Charles Piot has recently argued that West Africa in general has become dominated by “NGO fervor” (2010: 133).

because, as he put it, “If clandestine migration ends, so do their jobs.”¹⁹² Though this type of assessment may seem exaggerated, it was widely shared among *refoulés*.

Of the 178 NGOs and civil society organizations registered with the *Conseil des ONGs d’Appui au Développement* (CONGAD), or the Council for Development NGOs in Senegal, many work on issues of migration. One of the more high-profile associations is COFLEC based in Thiaroye-sur-Mer.¹⁹³ Since its inception in 2007, COFLEC’s founder and president, Yayi Bayam Diouf, has cultivated lucrative relationships with a host of European donor institutions that have been eager to intervene in the clandestine migration phenomenon.¹⁹⁴ Thanks to the investments of foreign donors, COFLEC’s *centre de formation* (education center) in Thiaroye is now home to a variety of commercial enterprises, which, in 2012 generated \$70,000 in annual revenue (Gano 2012).¹⁹⁵ COFLEC’s success has largely been the result of Yayi’s deft ability to craft a strategic and media-friendly message aimed at arresting clandestine departures and helping the widows, mothers and orphans of migrants lost at sea to recover financially. Importantly, COFLEC’s target population was women, not *refoulés*. As pointed out in Chapter 1, nongovernmental organizations, like COFLEC, have increasingly stepped in where the state has left off so that the West African landscape has become dominated by what Charles Piot has called “NGO fervor” (2010: 133; see also Mann 2015). Not only are young men keenly aware of the presence and power of NGOs in Senegal, which serves as a regional hub for development organization headquarters, they are also aware of being “the wrong gender,” Moustapha said.

¹⁹² It should be noted that Moustapha and other *refoulés* more generally, were not critical of all Senegalese NGOs and civil society organizations, some of which they saw doing good work. Rather, they leveled their critiques specifically at those local NGOs working on issues of combatting clandestine migration.

¹⁹³ See Moustapha’s portrait.

¹⁹⁴ Examples are BENETOU (France), Habitafrica (Spain), and the Spanish Commission for Assistance to Refugees, the latter of which represents, according to Hannah Cross, a “blurring between humanitarian crisis and labour migration” (2009: 176).

¹⁹⁵ By Western standards, this may not seem like a substantial sum of money. But we should remember that, in 2010 38% of the national population in Senegal lived on less than \$1.90 per day (see the World Bank Poverty and Equity Databank: <http://povertydata.worldbank.org/poverty/country/SEN>).

In the press, and in official discourse, the Spanish aid to which organizations like COFLEC had access, was articulated as way to help re-insert forcibly returned migrants into their communities. But, in fact, the objective was altogether different. The mission of COFLEC and other Senegalese programs largely left *refoulés* out of the frame of intervention because, as far as European donor states and institutions were concerned, once returned, migrants no longer posed a threat. They were a problem that had, for all practical purposes, been solved. The focus then became to arrest future clandestine departures. And although the literature suggests that public awareness campaigns were ultimately ineffective in reducing clandestine migration, they nevertheless became the official policy mantra (Carling and Hernández-Carretero 2011).

One might think, in fact, that the best way to combat illegal migration would be to foster economic development. What the literature shows, however, is that as a country's development index increases, so too does its rate of out-migration.¹⁹⁶ If that is the case—that economic development increases out-migration—then it may very well be, from a policy standpoint, that improving economic conditions is actually counter-productive to migration control because it provides people with the financial means necessary to migrate. In fact, World Bank poverty data for Senegal show that from 1990 to 2010, those living on less than \$1.90 a day remained relatively constant—between 5.1 and 4.5 million people, or 48.6% and 37.6% of the population. However, in 2005 the poverty trend dipped to 3.8 million. Not coincidentally, that was the year that boats began leaving en masse. As Jérôme Audran argues, economic “development” in Senegal is actually strategically controlled by donor institutions and foreign states with a vested interest in keeping migration rates low, or at least within a certain margin (2008). This would confirm the suggestion that economic development, at least in the short term, enables and fosters international migration.

¹⁹⁶ After a certain point, however, in-migration begins to trend upwards.

The mismatch between formal rhetoric and practical implementation left many *refoulés* to conclude that the “*détournement*” of development funds was yet another example of *l’escroquerie tout court*, or total fraud, this time at the local NGO level. And they would not be alone in their assessment. As Philippe Poutignat and Joceylne Streiff-Fénart point out, “[T]here has emerged a form of brokerage in which ‘developers of local social projects’ involved in relations of dependence seek to appropriate the resources provided by the income of migration management” (2010: 216). The atmosphere of opacity and competition surrounding the provision of development aid to Senegalese NGOs only increased the suspicions of corruption and conspiracy that circulated among *refoulés*.

In addition, there were often accusations of people “posing” as *refoulés* in order to access funds. Though COFLEC did actually exist, as did most of the NGOs in CONGAD’s registry, the same could not always be said for other development associations in Senegal. On the one hand, there was a legitimate consortium of civil organizations whose presence on the migration scene in Senegal had been relatively consistent over the years. On the other hand, a spontaneous bevy of NGOs seemed to have sprouted up overnight in the fertile soil of migration control in the mid-2000s. Some of these associations had noble intentions, and others were purely opportunistic.

In Moustapha’s portrait, I briefly mentioned the mystery of a disappearing bakery. I’d read a newspaper story in 2012 about the establishment of *Boulangerie Pastef* in Mbour, a mid-sized fishing town about two hour’s drive from the capital.¹⁹⁷ Mbour had benefited from an impressive history of successful *émigrés* who were responsible for the new roads, the well-equipped hospitals, a dazzling mosque, and other public works around town. The bakery, which was co-financed by the French government, was supposed to employ repatriated migrants. And yet,

¹⁹⁷ Established in 2012, this *Boulangerie Pastef*, may have gone out of business, though it was hard to know because no one I spoke with had ever heard of it.

when I asked a group of *refoulés* in Mbour about it, and about the association president, one Mamadou Ndiaye, who spearheaded the bakery project, they smiled at me pitifully. “You should be wary of what you read in the papers,” Naby said. “It’s not always true. We live here in Mbour, and I can tell you that there is no such bakery. There is no such Mamadou Ndiaye, president of such-and-such association for repatriated migrants.” He continued:

Here’s how it works. You’re not a *refoulé*, but you start an association and call it *Association des Rapatriés de Mbour*, whatever. Then you make a petition for financing to the French government, or a French NGO. Maybe you have a cousin who works at the French Embassy and he can get you a meeting. You tell them that baking bread will stop *les jeunes* from embarking in the pirogues. France gives you *financement*, and when they come to visit the bakery several months later, you call your brother or your friend who works in a local *boulangerie*. You give him a *tranche* [a slice] of the money and he acts like he’s a *refoulé* when the mayor and the press and the French delegates show up taking pictures. Then, when they leave, you buy yourself a visa and *paff!* Off you go to Europe.

Similarly, a group of *refoulés* I met in Saint-Louis recounted a story of one *faux clandestin* (fake clandestine migrant), who, after successfully marketing himself to a foreign funding agency, was given a grant to conduct public awareness campaigns discouraging clandestine migration in the Saint-Louis neighborhoods. As the story goes, the man took the money and bought a visa to Europe. He was now working in Germany as a hotel clerk. Similarly, as we heard in Moustapha’s portrait, it was easy enough to fabricate something like an “education center” and then rent it out once the financial partners had gone back to Europe. Regardless of their truth or falsity, what these stories reveal is the perception of a development landscape characterized by competition, opacity, suspicion and distrust.

These stories also reveal a tension between the visible world and the world of the unseen. People appeared to be one thing—a *refoulé*, an advocate, a baker, a mother-victim—but really they were something quite different (see Khan 2012: 139). And Spanish visas or development aid appeared to be for one purpose—to stop clandestine migration, re-insert *refoulés* and rebuild

communities—but really it was to enrich politicians, consolidate power and create new social and political alliances. The true nature of such phenomena, and the sources of their power, remained obscure.

Stories of subterfuge revolved exclusively around the corruption of Senegalese actors. In all the conversations I had with *refoulés* about the diversion of development funds, not once did anyone accuse European or American partners of any wrongdoing. Rather their critiques centered on specifically Senegalese modes of accumulation and obscurantism. “You know, Africans,” Ibrahima said. “They can’t be trusted. The *tubaabs* come here to help us, and what do we do? We say, ‘Oh, thank you, thank you,’ to their faces and when they go back to Spain or New York, we fight each other to eat it.” Ibrahima was not the only one who shared this sentiment. *Refoulés* described Western donors as being of pure motive. Conversely, Senegalese agents, whether they worked for the state or a local NGO (or both), were motivated purely by their appetites.

It should not be surprising then that all things bearing the mark of officialdom were approached with skepticism. The world where people gained official recognition from the state or the press seemed to be a world that unfolded in the clarity of day, under the bright lights of television cameras. But actually it was a world filled with duplicity and deceit where people fabricated stories to get attention and money. Where they said one thing and did another. As such their official status and the enterprises they operated were suspect in the eyes of those who worked and struggled in the margins. In this way, what was *visible* was questionable, even potentially illegitimate. *Refoulés* would tell me, “Oh, those associations are fictive. Those people never went in the pirogues. Look at them now, they’re more visible than we are.” Visibility then

was linked to conceptions of corruption. In other words, the visible world was one that could not be trusted.

Perhaps because of the perceived venality at home, *refoulés* articulated an active desire to engage the outside world in developing their communities. The prevailing attitude was that little would improve if left in Senegalese hands because, as Ibrahima pointed out, people were more inclined to take care of their own social networks and leave everyone else to fend for themselves.

Local NGOs were also, in the eyes of *refoulés*, highly undemocratic as presidents were typically self-appointed, or hired by an elite board of members. Inasmuch as he was elected by his compatriots, Moustapha defined himself as a “different” kind of Senegalese development actor, one who worked, first and foremost, on behalf of his constituency. Such as it was, his work as the president of AJRT was his “function” after his return. Rather than sit idly by, he found an alternative avenue for becoming *un guerrier*, a warrior, in his community. Though he lacked the foreign endorsements and professional accouterments that typically attended public awareness campaign meetings—usually daylong *réunions* provisioned with plastic chairs and tents, microphones and PA systems, food and printed banners—his campaigning against clandestine migration was, in his words, “more effective.” Often going door to door, he and his AJRT associates conducted their battles *à la base*, or at the grassroots level. “I talk to *les jeunes* face to face,” he said. “Not through a microphone.” He disdained and therefore avoided interacting with the state, except to criticize it. He was also duly cautious of close relations with Senegalese NGOs because, like Ibrahima, he saw most of them as self-serving. Instead, he set his sights on cultivating relations with partners *ailleurs*, or elsewhere.

In a similar way, Ndary also sought relationships outside the Senegalese state and local NGOs. For him, working for the international NGO CARITAS brought a new sense of purpose to his life after return.¹⁹⁸

CARITAS trained me and now I am a “certified organizer.” My role is to organize and host meetings with local communities. I get the debate started. I give the groups advice on how to implement their programs and achieve their objectives. We talk things through and figure out a plan of action. This is the work I love. You could say that it’s like a journalist’s vocation... For me, it’s no longer important to go abroad to find another life. What’s important to me is to stay here and work with what I have... to develop the country.

What’s more, with headquarters in Rome and not Dakar, CARITAS was also “more accountable” than Senegalese NGOs, he said, because it was run by Europeans. For Ndary, entering the world of NGOs also brought other intangible benefits. It meant being recognized as a social organizer in his community. He was the link between his village on the Senegambia savannah and the wider world, a status he carried with visible pride. Now he worked “night and day” for development. He also he managed several training teams that would fan out through the rural hinterlands spreading the message. It was, in his words, the work of the future.

Privation—Resistance

If the forced return of clandestine migrants to Senegal in the early to mid 2000s can be thought of as a kind of scale, it might easily be seen tipping in favor of state officials and powerful NGOs. Migrants had spent their life savings, and often the savings of their families, to cross the Atlantic. And when they were returned, it was with *mains vides*, or empty hands. The repatriation spoils were quickly divided up among a closed circle of elite actors, leaving little to nothing for the *refoulés* for whom the proceeds were putatively intended. As we have seen, being dispossessed of their “rightful” share prompted some to protest either at the gates of the

¹⁹⁸ CARITAS is a Catholic charity organization with operations all over the world.

Presidential Palace or in the streets of their local villages. Over time, it also contributed to an evolving vocabulary of moral accountability that can be heard even today with respect to the political handling of national problems.

C'est pas normal, was a phrase I heard on a daily basis. Though this translates literally as, "It's not normal," when people in Senegal say it, most often they mean that something is morally objectionable. They use it to characterize the unreliability of municipal bus service in Dakar. They use it to reference the president's inability to keep basic food prices low. And *refoulés* used it to frame the state's negligence when it came to providing opportunities for economic development. It was *pas normal* to be expected to live in such conditions, Moustapha reflected.

But if the surge in clandestine migration in the mid-2000s was, in part, a response to such negligence, as migrants took to the ocean as a way to escape intensifying privation at home, then why did they stop leaving in such numbers? Certainly, Frontex's coastal patrols had a significant impact on departures. And repatriation did act as a deterrent, as migrants were less inclined to spend their good money on journeys that would ultimately be wasted. But there was also the sense among the majority of *refoulés* that their journeys had directly profited a regime that was seen as morally corrupt. If their attempts to leave Senegal were initially articulated as a kind of resistance against such corruption in 2006, then it was their obstinate refusal to leave that would become the new mode of struggle after their forced return. For Moustapha, it was easy math: "If we left again, [the state] would just sign another readmission agreement with Spain or Italy and send us back. Why would we want to make the president more money?"

Most of the *refoulés* I met shared this conviction. Though their coffers had been emptied by previous attempts to reach the Canary Islands, many said that even if they had the money, they wouldn't go. Even for those like Abdoulaye who received free passage in exchange for

captaining the pirogue, departure was no longer an option. “Nothing scares me anymore,” Abdoulaye reflected. “Not hunger, not thirst. I know that *incha’Allah* each day will bring me a way to feed my family. But I’m not leaving again. No one could convince me to. Even if my mother walked in right now and said, ‘Abdoulaye, you have to go,’” I would say ‘I’m sorry mother, but I’m staying right here.’”

As part of their refusal to leave, *refoulés* again took up the struggle of trying to make ends meet within a climate of economic uncertainty that bore all the signs of getting worse before it would get better. Not only was the economy performing at a marginal growth rate of 3.3% annually since 2006, the president of the country seemed to be growing increasingly out of touch.¹⁹⁹ In 2009, IMF Resident Representative to Senegal, Alex Segura, was about to leave his three-year assignment in Dakar and return to Barcelona when he was invited to dine with president Wade. After dinner was over, Wade handed Segura a “parting gift.” Rushing to make his flight, Segura did not have a chance to look at the gift until he was on his way to the airport, but soon realized what Wade had handed to him: precisely €100,000 and \$50,000 in cash. That Wade would present an IMF representative with a gift of public funds was no small thing. But that he would do it to the man who had openly denounced Senegal’s mismanagement of public finances was almost laughable (Gueye 2008). In an independent investigation conducted by the IMF, the Acting Ethics Officer reported that Wade claimed it was an African tradition to give farewell gifts, though he acknowledged that “the amount provided was a mistake.”²⁰⁰

The following year, in 2010, Abdoulaye Wade unveiled his \$27 million monument to the “African Renaissance” in Dakar. Standing at over 50 meters high, the bronze statue of a man

¹⁹⁹ Senegal had been steadily outperformed by other similar sub-Saharan economies (i.e., those without substantial natural resources.) Additionally, economic growth in Senegal is characterized by its volatility, as we saw in Chapter 1.

²⁰⁰ <https://www.imf.org/external/np/sec/pr/2009/pr09369.htm>.

holding a child aloft in his left arm and a barely clothed woman in his right was the catalyst for major riots in Dakar and throughout the country.²⁰¹ Not only was the price tag exorbitant in a country where most people struggled to eat every day, but the fabrication was completed by North Korean tradesmen. “At least they could have given those jobs to Senegalese workers,” Ibrahima said. To add insult to injury, president Wade claimed that because the statue was his idea, he retained intellectual property rights over it and was thus entitled to 35% of the proceeds from the tourism it generated. He claimed that the funds would be invested in his philanthropic association to build schools for primary education (Sow 2009). “But we all know what happened to the money,” Dolé said. “*C’est un voleur*, full stop! *J’ai pas peur de le dire*. [He’s a thief, full stop! I’m not afraid to say it.]”

Among Senegalese, the statue generated a bitter humor that was still palpable in 2011 when I conducted pilot work. Though it had been nearly a year since the initial protests had died down, people continued to criticize Wade for his flagrant abuse of power embodied in the “pharaonic” effigy (Diagne 2009). On the one hand, people said you couldn’t escape the statue: no matter where you went in the city, it was always there, peeking over the horizon like an unshakable spectator. This only galvanized the sense that Wade himself, and his increasingly autocratic rule, were similarly inescapable. On the other hand, people played with the symbolism of the icon, imparting new readings to its overwhelming presence in the capital. In the figure of the bronze monument, which in some sense epitomized Wade’s rule, there was something of both the “grotesque and obscene” (Mbembe 1992: 4). “It’s a small man who needs a big statue,” it was said. The allusion to the president’s physical endowment was not accidental. The perversity of the expenditure, and the fetish of power it symbolized, were undermined and domesticated

²⁰¹ <http://www.rfi.fr/contenu/20100403-manifestation-opposition-senegalaise-contre-le-monument-renaissance-africaine/>.

through “making fun” of them. Wade was, after all, and despite whatever monuments he might erect, a man like any other. Thus his power was *banalisé*, or made commonplace, through conviviality; that is, through inscribing both “the dominant and the dominated in the same epistemological field” (ibid.: 14). In some sense, Wade’s power was “consumed” through the laughter and mocking it generated.

Bringing power down to the everyday did not necessarily entail open opposition, though even when it did, such opposition played on a variety of ambiguous symbols that did not just contest state power but rewrote it. In 2008 and 2009, public protests spread throughout the country as people objected to rising food prices, frequent electrical outages and persistent unemployment. In a 2008 protest against electrical outages, residents of several poor districts in Dakar wore red armbands during their march through the streets. The armbands referenced a comment Wade had made suggesting that instead of striking or protesting, Senegalese citizens should emulate the Japanese by wearing a red armband to show their disapproval. Thus adopting the armbands was, according to one Senegalese journalist, an example of “ironic bravado” (Antil 2010: 5). Achille Mbembe might also call it “toy[ing] with power” (1992: 22).

When they weren’t playing with, mocking and laughing at power, *refoulés* were often morally evaluating it. Using a discourse that was highly structured around religious idioms, *refoulés* (and Senegalese publics more generally) would admonish the ruling elite for being greedy (*xaabaabal*), insatiable (*bëgg-lekk*), idle (*tayal*), proud (*réy*), and promiscuous (*dënd*). Apart from commenting on the judgment that would be meted out on the final day of reckoning, *refoulés* also described how such *ñàkk-fayda* (weakness in morals) made people *ñàkk-dolé* (weak in physical strength). It was often said that president Wade, members of Parliament, and directors of local NGOs would be too terrified to face what the *refoulés* had faced in the pirogue.

“If you tried to get them to board a pirogue to go to Europe, they wouldn’t even step inside,” Moustapha said. “Why? Because it’s hell. It’s hell and we survived it. Not everyone does. Those people wouldn’t last one minute. You have to be *dolé* [strong] to live through it.” With comments like this, Moustapha reshaped conceptions of power by recasting the state as “weak” and reinvesting clandestine migrants with moral fortitude.

The state may have been strong enough to enforce (tacitly or not) the expulsion of thousands of migrants from Spain and North Africa, but because it lacked a moral center, because it deprived *refoulés* of their right to a “life with dignity,” as Moustapha said, the sovereign legitimacy of Wade’s regime was essentially broken. Thus, for *refoulés* in Senegal, the center of power was morally corrupt and figuratively weak. Rather than receding into the shadows after their return, however, *refoulés* continued to reshape what it meant to be a moral actor. Often that meant occupying and claiming the margin. Whereas the margin may have been articulated as a space of neglect before their departure, one to which they had been relegated, now it was a space of resistance vis-à-vis the state. “*L’état, c’est pour les voyoux, les bandits!*” as Abdoulaye exclaimed. “The state is for thugs and bandits!” Not wanting to be considered a thug or bandit meant finding an alternative space from which to operate. “The youth have always been ‘outside’ the state,” Ousmane from Soumbédioune said. “But then when you see what’s on the inside? When you see the machinations going on? For me, I would rather stay outside. For me, I say no thank you. Who would want to be part of such a machine?”

As bell hooks wrote in 1990: “[M]arginality... [is] much more than a site of deprivation... it is also the site of radical possibility, a space of resistance” (149). When reading hooks, it is not hard to imagine Moustapha and his compatriots saying the same thing:

It was this marginality that I was naming as a central location for the production of a counter-hegemonic discourse that is not just found in words but in habits of

being and the way one lives. As such, I was not speaking of a marginality one wishes to lose—to give up or surrender as part of moving into the center—but rather of a site one stays in, clings to even, because it nourishes one’s capacity to resist. It offers... the possibility of radical perspective from which to see and create, to imagine alternatives, new worlds (hooks 1990: 149-150).

In this way, the “margin” that *refoulés* occupied and began to claim as their own was a space open to emergent and unfinished possibility and alternatives. It was a new center. And it held the potential for balancing out the deficit left by their failed migrations through the acquisition of a new form of embodied capital, a subject to which I now turn.

Shame—Courage

As Mansour described in his portrait, shame was one of the potential consequences of failure. By attempting to leave Senegal without informing his family, Mansour challenged the gerontocratic authority operating in his household. His *petite déception* was two-fold: first, he had kept his departure a secret, which upset the structure of domestic power among his kin. Secondly, his attempt had been ultimately unsuccessful, something which marked him as having bad luck. Upon his return, his presence in his grandfather’s house was a constant and visible reminder of his non-conformity to adequately pay his respects to his elders. His body both revealed the secret he had kept about his departure and bore the mark of failure. “My grandfather could not see past it,” he said. “My failure was shameful for him.” Because his family considered his physical presence to be disgraceful and potentially inauspicious, he was alienated from the compound, and his workstation was “disappeared” to the other side of the street.

When I asked Mansour if he was ashamed of his attempt to migrate, he said no. He was not trying to do something dishonorable, he explained. He was only trying to help his family. Though his grandfather’s shame was external to Mansour, he remained subject to it, suggesting

that his status as “shameful” was ascribed without necessarily being achieved. As such, his family’s shame was experienced as a lack of recognition or mis-identification.

In psychoanalysis, shame “is a reaction to an unfulfilled libidinal striving... to attain reciprocity,” or recognition in a social milieu (Karlsson and Sjöberg 2009: 336). Shame is both a revealing (of an undesired self) and an exclusion (from a social world). It is thus intrinsically linked to visual perception (ibid.: 344; see also Goffman 1963). The body becomes the primary site through which shame is actualized and experienced. On the one hand, the gaze of the parent, community, or state objectifies, and thus renders the body hyper-visible. On the other hand, the shameful body is also the object of refusal, which is the denial or withholding of visible recognition. It is the active turning away of the gaze. For Mansour, it was this tension between the hyper-visibility of his body as the offending agent and the subsequent denial of its existence through extradition that caused him so much anguish.

Gunnar Karlsson and Lennart Gustav Sjöberg point out that shame is an individual response to social rejection. “Being rejected in one’s subjectivity brings about an objectification of one’s self, which equals psychological death, being a petrified or dead soul” (Karlsson and Sjöberg 2009: 354; see also Link and Phelan 2001). This “petrification” is the result of losing social recognition, or the confirmation of self that comes when we are seen by others. As Mansour described in his portrait, greeting his kin in the morning only to be ignored was existentially painful. Even before his banishment, taking meals at his grandfather’s house had become unbearably uncomfortable. “I didn’t feel at home there,” he said. “[W]hen I was hungry, I was obliged to leave...” Being unrecognized was thus tantamount to a negation of his existence (Taylor 1994; see also Taylor 2008). Mansour’s body materialized his purported deviance and was thus the medium through which he experienced his non-conformity. His self-banishment

from the house during meal times thus presaged his formal banishment that would come later.

Ndary also recounted stories of failed migrants coming home to angry relatives. Though he kept his departure a secret from his family, he knew of other migrants who had been sponsored by their kin or community to make the journey. In Chapter 3, he described a hypothetical mother who had sold her jewelry and pleaded with her son to take the pirogue to Spain in order to help the family. But in such cases, when the voyage was *gâté* (spoiled, ruined), the returning son could face possible ostracism. “I know people who were excommunicated from their families,” Ndary told me. “Refused at the gate to the compound! They were not allowed to enter. Not even their mothers would look at them.”²⁰²

In addition to dealing with his family’s recriminations and rejection, Mansour’s debt also continued to shadow him. As Liza Schuster and Nassim Majidi point out in the context of Afghani deportees, borrowing money for migration is a “common coping strategy” for those without access to sufficient funds. Deportation then becomes a “particular economic setback... When [migrants] return empty handed, it is the entire family that bears the indebtedness and economic losses” (Schuster and Majidi 2013: 228). While Mansour’s family was not precisely liable for the repayment of his debt, they nevertheless felt burdened by its existence. “They judged me,” Mansour observed. “They said I should never have borrowed that money only to give it to the *passeur*. I should have spent it here, they said.”

As a result of his unsettled balance, Mansour’s daily strategy as a *refoulé* involved evading his creditors. Having only paid 5,000CFA (\$10) back to one of them, he had to hide when they came calling. “When I see them coming, I turn a corner so that I don’t run into them.” He thus strategically disappeared from sight partly to avoid an uncomfortable confrontation, but also

²⁰² It should be noted that, according to Ndary and the other *refoulés* I met, such cases are extraordinarily rare. In fact, of the 170 young men I interviewed, only Mansour had been banished from his family’s compound.

because he expressed a real fear that, if they found out that he had used their money on a clandestine voyage, they could take him to the police and file a report. In the end, he said, “I have no idea how I will ever repay them.” His visibility, in this sense, was not shameful as much as it was dangerous.

Both scholarly literature and media reports highlight the shame and stigma a failed migrant might face upon returning home empty-handed in a variety of national contexts (Ba and Ndiaye 2008; Carling and Carretero 2006; Cessou 2010; Drotbohm 2015; Hernández-Carretero and Carling 2012; Migreurop 2011; Peutz 2006; Sbouai 2013; Schuster and Majidi 2013, 2015). And, as this section has so far illustrated, both shame and social alienation were indeed potential results of failure and forced return. But at the same time, *refoulés* also frequently used their experiences of passage and forced return as a way to claim a courageous identity. As Hernández-Carretero and Carling point out, clandestine migration often perpetuated the image of migrants “as courageous men willing to risk their lives to protect their dignity and confirm their commitment to their family” (2012: 412). This self-image did not suddenly turn against them when they were forced back to Senegal in part because *refoulés* did not see themselves as culpable for their repatriation. “We did everything right,” Moustapha said. “We traveled there as warriors, and were repatriated against our will. If anything, it is the state that should be shamed.” Recasting themselves as “warriors” gave *refoulés* a discursive foothold from which to critique the state as the ultimate transgressor.

One subjective value to be obtained from attempting to cross the Atlantic in a fishing pirogue was the sense that one had faced the worst in life and could now approach future encounters with a hard-won strength of character. Ibrahima put it to me this way:

Me, I saw a lot in the pirogue. I should have stayed there in the sea. I should have died like all the others who died there. My life depended on death or departure.

There were things that happened inside [the boat]... Honestly, I didn't see myself living [after that]. Because I was in the middle of the ocean. I didn't see myself living. I didn't even see myself arriving in Spain. The only thing I saw was my own drowning in the sea.

After seeing his own death and surviving it, Ibrahima felt changed. He had faced and, on some level, accepted his mortality, which translated into a new kind of fearlessness. As his epigraph describes: "Even if death comes today, I would say that the life I have lived [since the voyage] has been a bonus. Being in the boat has enabled me to fear nothing. Even if a lion approaches me, I will not run. I will stay because what I lived through was harder than that." Although failure did, in many cases, indicate "an important loss of status," *refoulés* could also convert their suffering into a new status of courage and fearlessness (Schuster and Majidi 2015: 8). For Ibrahima, it meant that, although his journey remained invisible to his family, he had acquired a new sense of self as a committed son and a valorous man who could face a lion without trepidation.

Ibrahima's comment is reminiscent of what other *refoulés* said about their changing identities after migration and return. Moustapha, whose visible status as a *refoulé* was a central feature of his public identity, also attributed his newfound determination to the experiences he endured in the boat as well as the struggles he sustained after repatriation. As he described in his portrait, he no longer feared state reprisals for his activism. "I'm not afraid of being arrested and I'm not afraid of dying. I lived through clandestine migration and there is nothing on this earth worse than that." In this way, migration and forced return gave him the fortitude to openly and sometimes aggressively challenge the state regardless of what coercive or disciplinary powers might be brought against him. For him, the state apparatus was nothing compared to the open ocean. In a similar way, Mamadou also expressed the ability to face the "hardness" of life with a new steadiness of spirit.

Since our return, times here in Senegal are very hard and there's absolutely nothing we can do about it. But we always know that we have lived through worse than this. We experienced a different reality in the boat, in the middle of the ocean in the darkness of night, with no way to see what was coming. And we survived, so nothing can destabilize us anymore.

If, as we have seen in Mansour's case, the assignment of shame was a real consequence of failure, we can also see that *refoulés* re-negotiated their inferior status by creating a new system of counter-honor as a way to manage or "offset" their stigma as failures (Kusow 2004: 194; Schuster and Majidi 2015: 8). By reevaluating their journeys as courageous, they enhanced their embodied cultural capital, the acquisition of which, according to Pierre Bourdieu, entails "work on oneself (self-improvement), an effort that presupposes a personal cost... with all the privation, renunciation, and sacrifice that it may entail" (2010 [1986]: 85).²⁰³ We can see this re-negotiation, or enhancement, at work in the practices surrounding the conservation of repatriation papers.

In an unanticipated fieldwork development, most repatriated migrants—those who had been processed juridically in the Canary Islands—insisted on presenting me with clean, legible copies of their repatriation papers. They often explained that they kept the originals sealed up at home in ledgers, plastic sheaths or safe boxes far away from the elements or the curious hands of children looking for something to play with. If, as the literature suggests, shame among deportees is such a central motif, then why did so many *refoulés* meticulously protect, and then eagerly photocopy and tender to me, the visible evidence of their expulsion? When I asked *refoulés* about this, many of them explained that these documents were the only remaining proof of having endured *le drame*—the drama of clandestine passage. As Khadim from Tëngéej put it to me, "I want to show my children these papers one day. To show them that their father lived

²⁰³ According to Bourdieu, cultural capital becomes symbolic at the point at which it is recognized, or more appropriately misrecognized, as being symbolic of a kind of prestige, class or status; that is, cultural capital becomes symbolic when it enters into social relations.

through something extraordinary.”

Far from being ashamed, these *refoulés* wanted to be recognized by their children as men of strength and character. “I risked everything to give my family a better life,” Abdoulaye said. “I want my children to know that about me.” Like Cabeiri deBerg Robinson’s Kashmiri *muhājirs* (refugees), who migrated as an “intentional labor of reestablishing a proper domestic life,” my participants sought out a “proper” life—that is, one which supports the family—through sacrifice (2013: 205). In this way, their papers were not simply artifacts of an historical past. Rather, as *refoulés* repurposed them to new ends, these papers became active media through which they could “revolutionize” or “cast off” the unbearable constraints of forced return and reconfigure their identities as men of honor.

Counter-honor was produced, in part, by redefining the rules by which honor was evaluated. Most of the *refoulés* I met were, like Nathalie Peutz’s Somali deportees, “more indignant than ashamed of their deportation” (2007: 185). Their indignation, and the collective indignation of their communities, was based on the idea that what had been done to them was profoundly unjust. Interpreting their forced return through a moral register allowed *refoulés* to reset the scales, so to speak. By standing in contradistinction to the perceived injustice of the state, counter-honor was thus generated by a reevaluation of what was morally acceptable.

Despair—Faith

Many of the young men I spoke with recounted stories of trauma that attended both their experiences of passage and their homecoming. As Chapter 4 revealed, transit involved facing a host of earthly challenges and otherworldly entities that were not easy to leave behind. Many were haunted by the death of friends, the phantasmal visions of cities rising out of the ocean or

lovers coming to greet them, the appearance of *dëm* (shape shifters or cannibals) who preyed on the weak. Indeed, it was all the more difficult to recover from such traumatic experiences when forced return was their eventual and inescapable *dénouement*. Sometimes laid up for weeks or months, *refoulés* struggled with the reality that their sacrifices had amounted to nothing. As Anaïk Pian reflects, “[T]he first moments of return are [often] associated with emptiness... [and] malady” (2010b: 89). Even the easiest of recoveries frequently meant listless days in bed, disturbed by memories and an almost suffocating disappointment. As Abdoulaye recalled, he could only sleep and watch television after his return. Even eating was impossible.

Returned migrants sometimes experienced temporary “breaks” with reality, as they put it. Both Papis and Mamadou, who made the journey together, described how they lost their sanity for months after their repatriation. As Papis reflected, “I was completely discouraged. I stayed in the house more than three months without working. I was disgusted with life and I didn’t want to do anything anymore. To think of all those obstacles that we had overcome only to arrive in this state, repatriated with nothing.” Mamadou agreed.

I stayed away from my family for almost two months. My parents were obliged to see a marabout to find out what happened to me because they thought I was dead. I had gone to my friend’s house for a while. I stayed there night and day. But I was like a rabid dog, making noise, breaking things. Being aggressive with people. I made a lot of trouble for him. Eventually, I had to leave because of my temper. I was wild. And people were scared. When I came home, my father asked me where I had been. I couldn’t even look at him.

Every day, I left the house early in the morning and wouldn’t return until after dark. I would walk to the shore and spent all day there sitting on the beach staring at the waves. Everyone said I had gone crazy. I refused to wear a shirt or shoes, and only covered myself with some boxer shorts. I was lost and hopeless because I didn’t want to live anymore.

More dramatically, some *refoulés* were unable to resurface from the torpor of grief and shock.

These were the *fous*, the unrecovered minority who were returned to Senegal in body, but not in

spirit. As we heard from *refoulés* in Chapter 3, those who did not make the necessary spiritual preparations ran the risk of suffering irrevocable damage.

Because both passage and forced return entailed significant traumas that were often spiritual in nature, mystical treatments were frequently part of one's recovery. Abdoulaye said he could not feel settled until he visited his *mara* for *une rentrée spirituelle*, or spiritual re-entry. For him, transit and *refoulement* had "bent" the normal working order of things. They had not only removed him physically from a known social world, they had reinvested his imaginative energies in a future that seemed suddenly very acute and, at least for while, very much within reach. His journeys had taken him "out of time." Hovering like a needle above a spinning record, Abdoulaye described how his soul was suspended somewhere above the ocean between Senegal and Spain. And it would remain there until someone could help him return, until someone could press the needle back into the vinyl and the "blood could begin to flow again" in his veins. Until then, he would stay restlessly torn between two worlds: between life and death, Senegal and Spain, ocean and land.

This in-between space was not the afterlife, he explained, because "truly the final threshold only comes after death."

And I knew I was not dead. But I was somewhere in between. I cannot really describe it. It's like when you feel the sand between your fingers, like you're starting to dissolve. Like you could just brush yourself away with a breath of air. My *mara* told me, and I know from the Holy Qur'an, that this is a kind of *barzakh*. When you truly cross over, you are rejoined with Almighty Allah. That's why it feels like you're dissolving. So, my *mara* had to help me come back.

Abdoulaye's comment suggests that there may have been more than one "kind of" *barzakh*. The space he occupied was a threshold: he was neither on land nor in the sea, neither departed nor yet fully returned. For Abdoulaye, it was not a place he could stay because "truly" crossing over meant total annihilation, or "dissolving" into God. He knew he was not dead, and so this was not

the “real” *barzakh*, because at its most literal, that was a space where one’s soul remained after death and until the Day of Judgment (Qur’an 23:100).²⁰⁴ And yet, Abdoulaye was also caught, “suspended” somewhere between two worlds, in his own isthmus.

Importantly, he was not alone in this metaphysical midland. He was still, in some sense, “hosting” the souls of the passengers whom he had sworn to deliver safely back to land. Burdened by the extra cargo it still conducted, Abdoulaye’s spirit was initially “*trop peuplé*” or over-populated when he returned to Senegal. It was only with the help of his marabout that he was able to release the passengers from his existential inventory, and return from this intermediate *barzakh*. But it required many days of re-integration, in which he fabricated special talismans (*laars*) and received the healing prayers of his marabout. When he did finally return home, his new life would be different because, he explained, “I was not the same man.”

Compounding the spiritual and psychological traumas of being returned to Senegal, most migrants also faced serious financial complications. Ibrahima had saved a small sum (\$50) with which he was able to begin his *petit commerce* again. Others, like Mansour, had to “*reprendre à zéro*,” or begin from scratch. Often, this meant asking merchants for advance credit or friends for loans in order to return to work. For Abdoulaye, who had sold his boat and all of his fishing gear, it meant asking other fishermen to borrow their vessels in exchange for a portion of his catch. Such a situation provided only enough to feed his family, but not to *avancer* (get ahead). Thus, encouraged by his marabout and his father, Abdoulaye pursued a different vocation altogether. He began to perform *dhikr*.

Often requiring him to travel far and wide across Senegal, Abdoulaye’s talents as a spiritual *chanteur* were requested for a seemingly endless litany of *réunions*, all-night chanting sessions,

²⁰⁴ As William Chittick points out, “Once the soul completes its trajectory in this life, it moves on to the next place of in-betweenness. Islamic texts commonly call the first posthumous realm the *barzakh* or ‘isthmus,’ because it is situated between the ocean of this world and the ocean of the next” (2005: 104-105).

baptisms, weddings, funerals, and commemorations. He showed me a photograph of a baptism where he had been invited to perform in 2013. In the photo, he wears his gleaming white boubou with his trademark silver *ta'wiz*, just like the first day I'd met him. In his left hand, he holds three microphones. His right hand cups his ear. His expression is one of concentration.

This was in Saint-Louis. Other times, I go to Kaolack, Kaffrine, even up to Podor. People know me now as a *chanteur des Qads* [a singer of the Qadiriyya brotherhood]. I perform here in my village, too. Now, when the old men pass me on the street on their way to the mosque, they greet me and say “*Asalaam Alaikum*, Abdoulaye! Are you reciting *dhikr* tonight?” They don't even know I am a fisherman. They see me as a man of God.

If Moustapha had found his new function in fighting for the youth of Thiaroye and Ndary had found his in becoming a development actor with CARITAS, Abdoulaye's function after migration and forced return required a similar transformation. “But it's not easy, *dé*,” he said.²⁰⁵ “To sing like that all night, it's very difficult. And every Thursday, I hold *dhikr* sessions here in my house. We chant until the sun rises. It takes a lot of energy.”

In a later conversation with Ibrahima, I expressed my admiration for someone who could stay up all night reciting the many names of God. Ibrahima replied matter-of-factly, “Of course it's difficult! Islam in general is not easy. You have to pray five times a day, you have to fast every year during Ramadan, you have to learn the Qur'an and be able to recite the *surahs* properly. It's not an easy religion, but it gives you strength. To be a Muslim here in Africa is to struggle.” Contrary to Yayi Bayam Diouf's estimation that *refoulés* only wanted *la facilité* (that which came easily), which we heard in Moustapha's portrait, what Ibrahima and other failed migrants actually reflected was a conception that struggle and sacrifice were necessarily a part of their praxis as devoted and pious Muslims.

When I last saw Abdoulaye in 2014, he described how he'd gone to the bank and applied for

²⁰⁵ Here, the “*dé*” indicates a linguistic point of emphasis in Wolof.

a loan to buy another boat. Although they denied him because he lacked collateral, he was clear that even if he'd been approved, he might do some of the fishing, but he would rather put his brothers in charge of the daily operations. Now, his life was devoted to chanting *dhikr* and investing his efforts in becoming a marabout with his own disciples one day *insha'Allah*. He said that going on the journey and being sent back gave him a special esoteric knowledge of the world and its secret truths that would make him a worthy spiritual guide. Though he had trained with his *mara*, his passage and return were a kind of “education,” he said, that most people did not have.

For many of us, going in the boat was *hijra* [protective migration] because we were escaping a life of indignity. As it says in the Qur'an, every Muslim has a right to perform *hijra*. Even the Prophet, peace be upon him, made *hijra* from Mecca to Medina. And our journeys were also an education. For many of us, it gave us *xam-xamu Yàlla* [knowledge of the divine]. This is why, when we return, we must first seek *la rentrée* from our marabouts. Then, some of us, like me, want to develop our *xam-xamu Yàlla* and share it with others. You cannot keep it to yourself alone. Because when you see those things in the water, you come to feel the force of God like a wave that can swallow you like that! But in sparing you, He shows *la miséricorde totale* [total mercy]. And you see it with your *heart*. That is something you must help others to see.

For Abdoulaye keeping this knowledge to himself was unthinkable. In aspiring to distribute his *xam-xamu Yàlla*, Abdoulaye confirmed his moral belonging to the spiritual community of the Prophet. By aligning himself, and his flight, with the Prophet Muhammad, Abdoulaye claimed his place within the *umma* (the global community of Muslims) and confirmed his commitment to emulating the actions of God's most perfect human. As Abdoulaye never tired of pointing out to me, even when the Prophet was hungry, he gave his food to others. That Abdoulaye would strive to model himself after this kind of man was no small aspiration. It was “not easy,” as he and others often reflected. But it also signaled the desire for a moral existence that centered not on the individual but was substantiated by and sustained through social relations.

For the young men I met, being a Muslim meant praying and fasting, and hopefully one day making the best of all possible migrations: the *hajj*. Such actions were frequently framed as constituting one's individual relationship to God. But being a good Muslim also meant living within a moral community. It meant sharing with and sacrificing on behalf of others, especially kin. Being generous and, importantly, being *seen* as generous was thus a valuable social marker. In this way, making *zakat* (charitable contribution) was a sign of piety with respect to relations with other humans. But because the *refoulés* I met were largely unable to make financial *zakat* to others, they sought less formal means of contributing to their communities through attempting to migrate and in continuing to strive for generosity after their return.

This moral striving was often articulated as a social project that stood in contradistinction to the state. Though, as we have seen, *refoulés* and broader Senegalese publics did openly protest when living conditions were sufficiently eroded, they also functioned largely outside the state because they saw its inner workings as fundamentally venal and thus better to avoid altogether. As it was often suggested, the reason the state was so corrupt was because the people who staffed it had lost touch with their commitment to others and were more interested in individual enrichment and status. As Ousmane pointed out earlier, when you saw what was happening “inside” the state, why would you want to be a part of it?

Conclusion

“For groups, as well as for individuals, life itself means to separate and to be reunited, to change form and condition, to die and to be reborn. It is to act and to cease, to wait and rest, and then to begin acting again, but in a different way. And there are always new thresholds to cross...” (Van Gennep 1960: 189).

This chapter has explored how *refoulés* have managed their various forced returns to Senegal. It has argued that return continues to be part of *refoulés*' ongoing and emergent struggle to be

recognized as men of honor who sacrificed for their families by undertaking the perilous journey to the Canary Islands via pirogue between 2005 and 2008. Like departure and transit, returning home and picking up the pieces was indeed difficult, but it was also frequently valued as a manifestation of someone who was a *guerrier*, or warrior. In part, becoming *un guerrier* was first expressed in the resolution to leave Senegal. But it was also further elaborated in the struggles that ensued after return.

One way that return was framed as a struggle was in response to the state's appropriation of Spanish aid and work visas, which had presumably been designated for the *refoulés*. Because of this substantial influx of foreign aid, a bevy of local NGOs sprouted up, each vying for a share of the patrimonial proceeds. Initially *refoulés* struggled to understand where the projects, programs and profits had gone. They manifested in the streets and outside the gates of the Presidential Palace, demanding answers. When it became clear that the money had been "eaten" by the state and local NGOs, *refoulés* did the unexpected. They did not migrate again in the thousands. Instead, they refused to leave. Whereas migration was articulated as a resistance to state negligence in Chapter 2, the refusal to leave became a new mode of protest after return. Through their community activism, Ndary and Moustapha, as well as other *refoulés*, found a renewed conviction not to attempt migration again. Instead, they saw their forced return not as failure but as an opportunity to resist the mobility they once so fervently sought.

Sometimes the immediate result of return was shame and social stigma. As Mansour's story illustrated, return meant being excommunicated from his family, even though his status as a shamed son was not one he accepted. Further, as he described in his portrait, his banishment did not last. His grandfather was eventually persuaded to admit Mansour back into the compound once he came to appreciate his grandson as a potential link to resources coming from *ailleurs*, or

elsewhere. Others, like Ibrahima, kept his departure a secret from his family, but also embraced a newfound sense of fearlessness after coming home. Memories of transit and return thus continued to figure into how *refoulés* like Ibrahima conceived of themselves as men of courage.

Returning home after expulsion was frequently a traumatic experience. The shock and disappointment could, at times, be paralyzing. Frequently, as Papis and Mamadou recounted, *refoulés* endured a period of self-alienation, as they tried to come to terms with the losses they had sustained. But *refoulés* also articulated return as part of a process of becoming a moral actor within a social community. Conceptions of this morality often revolved around spiritual recovery and re-invention. Though Abdoulaye could not re-integrate immediately upon return, the ministrations of his marabout helped him eventually to surface from the *barzakh* in which he found himself. Further, Abdoulaye used the spiritual education he gained during transit and expulsion as a way to devote himself to a new pious vocation.

Broadly speaking then, return was not one thing; it meant different things for different *refoulés*. For Abdoulaye, his failure to migrate translated into a spiritual knowledge that he hoped to share with others. His forced return was the catalyst for a novel way of becoming a faithful and pious Muslim. He articulated his desire to help others see with their souls what remained largely invisible to the eye. For Ndary, his community's development became integral to his own. His experience of loss enabled him to claim a new identity, one that was articulated around the improvement of other people's conditions. For Moustapha, his return galvanized an unshakable insistence that *refoulés* throughout the country needed and deserved to be recognized. For Moustapha, the suffering that *refoulés* had endured as part of their forced return was unjust, and was thus a visible critique of the state as the epicenter of iniquity. For Ibrahima, return meant continuing to struggle for his family's survival even though his suffering remained

largely invisible to them.

As Chapter 2 argued, migration was not merely a road to individual gains, such as status and wealth. It was seen as a way to support families and communities in the context of increasing austerity and uncertainty by mobilizing what meager resources were available before those resources dried up. Facing a state whose proclivity to irrational spending on prestige projects or outright corruption outweighed its obligations to create the conditions of “*la survie digne*” (dignified survival) in Senegal meant that young men had to “take matters into their own hands,” as Ibrahima put it. Their repatriation was thus constructed as an immoral act perpetrated by an illegitimate regime whose only interest in them was the provision of development aid, which many saw as paying for Wade’s reelection campaign in 2007. In this way, the *refoulés* I spoke with were less stigmatized by their failure than they were righteously emboldened by it.

If the scholarship on deportation focuses on the immediate moment of return, it misses the continuing struggles, the social negotiations, and the emergent modes of becoming that characterize forced return for many. The status of *refoulé* is not, in other words, a static position; rather, it is something that changes over time. Most of my participants had been returned to Senegal in 2006 and 2007. Therefore, speaking with them beginning in 2011 meant that a full five years had already passed for some. Paying attention to this longer *durée* reveals that the meaning of return itself changes over time, as do its passengers.

The scholarship on deportation also tends to privilege the moment of return as the most decisive. By virtue of its analytical scope, such research inadvertently overlooks the ways in which return is often one of many defining moments in a migrant’s life. *Refoulés* in Senegal continue to struggle with their circumstances, one of which is forced return. *Refoulés* are also more than the sum of their departures, transits and returns. As Abdoulaye reflected, “Yes, I am

refoulé. But I'm also a husband and a Muslim and a brother to my siblings." The men I met are fathers and fishermen; they are mechanics and sons and husbands; they are often unemployed, often struggling; and they are constantly transitioning from one social index to another. Being a *refoulé* does not cancel out the social identity of being a son. Nor does being a son cancel out or supersede being a *refoulé* because in fact the two are inextricably linked to one another. It is impossible, on some level, to understand departure and transit, let alone return, without also attending to how these young men conceived of themselves as social actors embedded within families and communities.

VIII. EPILOGUE

Enduring Struggles

This dissertation has explored what motivated young men to leave Senegal via fishing pirogues in such great numbers between the years of 2005 and 2008. It has also explored what happened during transit in the hopes of reaching the Canary Islands. And it has tried to understand how these men experienced forced return and reintegration. It has highlighted peoples' individual and collective experiences as a way to understand what performing sacrifice, supporting kin, and aspiring to spiritual emancipation might entail for young Senegalese men. Highlighting personal stories reveals how a person's "[e]xperience is both *of* something (an intrusion from the external world) and *in* something (an internalization by reflection)" (Guyer 2004: 24). Experience is both a reaction and a reformulation of meaning.

The clandestine journeys described in this dissertation were often undertaken under the veil of secrecy. Some failed migrants continue, to varying degrees, to live in a kind of clandestinity. Most of the young men I met did not share their stories of boat migration with family and friends. As Ibrahima put it, he didn't want his mother to have "those visions in her head." More dramatically, Mansour was obliged to evade the creditors to whom he owed money, a reality that continues to constrain his movements throughout the city where he lives. Others used their clandestine histories as a way to reconfigure new futures and new subjectivities. Moustapha found a "function" in becoming the president of AJRT. Ndary became a development actor who helped advocate for women's associations in rural agriculture and village management. Abdoulaye, who had sold all of vocational possessions, turned to religious singing in the service of his brotherhood as a way to make ends meet and to embody something of the divine path to Sufi enlightenment. All the *refoulés* I met came back to Senegal as changed men. While their

financial resources may have been exhausted, the events they lived through gave them a renewed sense of courage and dignity.

Refoulés are faced with the challenge of translating their experiences of failure into something potentially generative. Those translations may take the form of challenging the state, even if obliquely. Or they may take the form of investing all one's imagination into fabricating a bed (see Mansour's portrait). Both of these require a certain flexibility and an emergent sense of value in a climate of shifting social and economic relations. As Anaïk Pian points out, "The analysis of repatriates' trajectories is... inseparable from the political context of the battle against clandestine immigration. But [these same trajectories are] also inseparable from the articulation of prevailing social relations, which existed before and continue long after the journey to Europe" (Pian 2010b: 97). Indeed, as this dissertation has argued, return is not a fixed moment in time that neatly wraps up a journey. Return continues for many years after landing back in Senegal as *refoulés* hash out how to continue struggling in the face of failure.

This dissertation has also explored how young men used their bodies as the last remaining tools of resistance. Left with little else in the way of leverage, young men operationalized their very physicality as an extension of their frustration and striving. In this way, clandestine boat migration out of Senegal was not unlike the Dirty Protest in Ireland, when Irish Republican Army prisoners, who were incarcerated in the Maze Prison during the Troubles of the 1970s and 80s, refused to wash and instead used their excrement to protest captivity and torture (Aretxaga 1995). As Begoña Aretxaga describes it, the punishment and humiliation the prisoners faced "fueled feelings of hate and anger that threatened to overcome [their] psychological integrity" to such an extent that using the last remaining weapon at their disposal became the only possible option for a re-claiming of subjecthood (131). In much the same way, the humiliation of not

being able to provide for their families, and thus obtain *la vie digne* (a dignified life) in Senegal, threatened to subsume young men, their subjectivities, and their moral worlds. Though they may not have faced threats of physical torture in prison, the pain of not being able to contribute to their social worlds was similarly excruciating.

Moreover, their invisibility vis-à-vis the state before departure, during processes of expulsion, and after return reshaped and reformed subjective understandings of what it meant to be visible. For Aretxaga's Northern Irish Catholics, "political status... implied a deep existential recognition, the acknowledgement that one's being-in-the-world mattered" (ibid.: 133). For young Senegalese men, political recognition—which is to say, a state that listened to their demands for dignified economic and social conditions—would have enabled them to sustain their families and their faith in a way that was socially and morally meaningful. Instead, the young men in these pages used migration as a way to materialize their existential significance. Facing political alienation, and subsequent erasure, was not an option. Remaining invisible and unrecognized by the state was too much to bear, and so they resorted to rather dramatic affirmations of faith, family and identity through dangerous and seemingly "irrational" migration practices that called on the body itself, and its removal, as a vehicle of transformation.

Importantly, this phenomenon, in fact, generated significant global "recognition" as news outlets and policy makers, NGOs and activists all rushed to the scene. If young men faced invisibility in Senegal in 2005 and 2006, they won hyper recognition on the shores of Tenerife and Las Palmas. Unfortunately, like the Irish prisoners, clandestine migrants embodied a deeply historical taint of "otherness" that reflected an enduring colonial discourse, which then informed postcolonial political arrangements between the former metropole and its independent colony. Having been categorized as "savage" during the colonial moment, clandestine migrants from

Senegal perhaps unwittingly embodied the fictionalized idea that Africa was a place of despondency by performing the mimesis of despair on the shores of the Canary Islands—arriving in droves, near-dead, pushed to the utmost extreme, undertaking “kamikaze” missions by the thousands. In this way, “the fantasies of savagery projected onto [them] were appropriated, literalized, and enacted” (Aretxaga 1995: 136).²⁰⁶ They became exactly what Europeans had (anxiously) imagined. Except now, they were coming home to roost. In this way, they “represented the rejection of the civilizing mission of... colonialism” (ibid.: 140). In turn, the metaphor of the “wave” or “flood” of clandestine migrants arriving on European shores effectively summoned an atmosphere of panic and a consequent call to immediate action on the part of European nations, either for nationalistic (Erjavec 2003) or humanitarian (Horsti 2012) reasons.

Earlier this year, Senegalese author and critic, Fatou Diome, appeared on a popular French evening television program explicitly condemning European inaction with respect to assisting migrants who were crossing the Mediterranean. “The life of an African costs less than a European,” she said flatly.

If white people were dying on the beaches [of the Mediterranean], the whole world would be trembling right now... Here in Europe, with its battle fleets and its economy, if we wanted [to use those resources] to save people in the Atlantic or in the Mediterranean, we would do it. Because the money that we’ve invested in FRONTEX, it could have been used to save people. But we wait until they die first. It’s as if we think that letting people die will dissuade others... But for someone who leaves and who can envision the possibility of failure, what awaits him is a peril of absurdity, and thus he can avoid it. But for someone who leaves to survive, who thinks that the life he may lose is worth nothing, for him his force is *inouï* (exceptional) because he’s not afraid of death.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁶ “[M]imesis constitutes not a simple repetition but a reappropriation entailing a process of reconfiguration” (Aretxaga 1995: 142).

²⁰⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xgZ0LcMUghA>.

When listening to this passage, I cannot help but remember the young men with whom I spoke and how they would talk about death. And while their stories—and how recounted them to me—may well have been part of their performance of masculinity, in this dissertation I have been less concerned with the “veracity” of their claims, or ascertaining whether or not they really *were* unafraid of death. Instead, I have been more interested in the way such performances inform broader ideas of striving and sacrifice in Senegal today. That these ideas that are constantly under construction, never quite finished or fixed, should not be surprising. Emergent and interrelated as they are, neither the striving nor the journey end.

Unfinished Mobilities

Clandestine migration from Senegal to Europe is far from over. Today, migration across the Mediterranean is at the front of international debates on border control, humanitarian intervention, and national sovereignty. The Mediterranean Sea has become both an artery and a graveyard for many departing the shores of Libya in search of a better life. Though outnumbered by refugees from Syria, many of these boat migrants of Senegalese nationality. A recent report conducted by the UNHCR finds that Senegalese are among the top ten nationalities to arrive in Italy in 2015 (UNHCR 2015). As of this writing (October 2015), well over 500,000 migrants have arrived in southern Europe this year alone with more than 3,000 dead or missing.²⁰⁸ This is on par with the 3,072 deaths at the Mediterranean crossing in 2014 (Brian and Laczko 2014: 18).²⁰⁹

²⁰⁸ On October 13, 2015, Frontex tweeted that 710,000 migrants had entered the EU in the first nine months of 2015. However, as Nando Sigona at the University of Birmingham has recently argued, the Frontex numbers are significantly higher than IOM and UNHCR estimates (590,000 migrants). This is in large part because Frontex routinely and openly “double-counts” migrants, a problematic policy to be sure, especially for the agency charged with “protecting” Europe’s borders (Sigona 2015).

²⁰⁹ Mortality estimates should be approached cautiously, as the real death toll is likely much higher. As Tara Brian and Frank Laczko point out, “Some experts have suggested that for every dead body discovered, there are at least

Such numbers tend to flash across television screens and newspaper headlines in a way that reinforces the sense that such migrations are coming “out of nowhere.” But news cycles tend to forget previous migrations and the confluence of factors that inspired them. For Senegalese migrants, the Mediterranean route is but the newest path in a long line of trajectories that have been shifting across land and water for years. Moreover, while journalists and analysts today frequently underscore the considerable investments Syrians make to migrate, similar expenditures undertaken by West Africans go unnoticed, reflecting the persistent assumption that West African migrations are motivated by brute poverty.

This final chapter redirects our attention to the ways in which contemporary clandestine boat migration from West Africa to Europe is not a spontaneous eruption but is linked to past histories of migration that took place in the early to mid-2000s. In so doing, it maintains one of the central arguments of this dissertation—that is, contrary to policy discourses that continue to blame poverty as the single most important feature pushing people out of West Africa, clandestine migration was and continues to be motivated by host of social factors besides absolute need. The young *refoulés* I met were not financially destitute at the time of departure in the years between 2005 and 2008, and can therefore hardly be characterized as the poorest of the poor (De Haas 2007: 65). Rather, they were able to migrate precisely because they had some access to liquid or fungible assets, as we saw in Chapter 3. Moreover, instead of being pushed by unremitting

two others that are never recovered” (Brian and Laczko, 2014: 11). Claire Rodier suggests that figures of migrant mortalities are problematic because, for one thing, trying to track clandestine migrants—where they depart, how they travel, and the conditions under which they sometimes perish—is nearly impossible (Boff 2015). The International Organization for Migration (IOM) estimates that 40,000 migrants across the globe have died between 2000 and 2014. For a data base of bodies recovered on beaches, in deserts, in airplane landing gear, on trucks, in boats, or in detention centers after having been asphyxiated, exhausted, drowned, shot, starved, run over, electrocuted, frozen, crushed, burned, or dehydrated at Europe’s borders, see the websites: The Migrant Files (<http://www.themigrantsfiles.com/>) and Fortress Europe (<http://fortresseurope.blogspot.ch/>). According to the Migrant Files data base, the number of dead for this part of the world since 2000 stands at nearly 20,000, with 9,000 missing. But given that these numbers are compiled from media reports, they should be treated as underestimates because they do not include people who died and left no trace.

poverty, the young men in this dissertation articulated their departure from Senegal as part and parcel of their compelling desire care for kin and to become a “good Muslim” by striving in the way of God.

The same can be said for migrations happening today. For those who live in Senegal, the continued salience of clandestine mobility is hardly surprising. Though many state officials, as well as some scholars, optimistically declared in 2008 and 2009 that boat migration out of Senegal was over, largely resulting from the presence of Frontex off the Atlantic coast, Moustapha and others argued that such celebrations were not only hasty, but politically motivated. “Every day, every week, people are going to Morocco or Libya in order to reach Europe. The President says it’s all over, but everyone knows that’s not true... Do you think Europe will continue to give money if they [the state and NGOs working on issues of migration] tell the truth [that migration continues]? They want to get paid, so they lie and say migration is finished.” Moustapha suggested that bilateral agreements and NGO funding would be jeopardized if the truth about their seemingly ineffective interventions were to come to light.

And yet even among Senegalese scholars, I was sometimes met with incredulous looks when I explained my research agenda during fieldwork. “Why would you want to study boat migration?” one professor asked me. “That’s all over now” (see Sene 2015). Everyone, it seemed, was ready to move on. That ministers of the state would defend the idea that migration was over was par for the course. But I was nonplussed as to why scholars who had worked on clandestine migration in the past seemed so ready to call it finished. Aly Tandian was one of the few scholars I met in Senegal who maintained that clandestine migration was in fact as omnipresent as ever. Friendly and unassuming, Tandian is the Director of the *Groupe d’Études et de Recherches sur les Migrations et Faits de Société* (Research Group on Migration and Society,

or GERM) at Gaston Berger University in Saint-Louis. When we spoke in 2013, he explained that the departure points had changed in recent years. “And, yes, that’s because of Frontex,” he said. “But you cannot claim that clandestine migration is over. It’s simply not true.”²¹⁰ In a 2015 interview with the newspaper *Enquête Plus*, Tandian made it plain: “One thing is clear: boats are continuing to land on European shores, even if the pace of [Senegalese] arrivals experienced a brief reduction. Now there’s a revival.”²¹¹

As discussed in Chapter 5, Spain was quick to respond to the seemingly sudden influx of boat migrants on the Canary Islands in 2006 by extending its border control apparatus (SIVE). When Frontex increased their joint-patrol operations off the West African coast beginning with Operation Hera in 2005, migratory routes shifted to the overland journey across the Sahara to North Africa where, it was rumored, one could earn the money to buy passage across the Mediterranean from coastal departure points in Libya. Indeed, Libya’s immigrant population swelled in 2008 to roughly two million. Of this number, nearly half were characterized by Laurence Hart, Chief of Mission for the IOM in Libya, as intent on getting to Europe (Kenyon 2008). Libya’s appetite for labor migrants in the 1990s, its central role in the creation of the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD) in 2000, its pan-African immigration policies, and its proximity to Italian shores all contributed to making it an attractive “stepping stone to Europe” (Hamood 2006: 5).²¹²

²¹⁰ Personal interview, May 16, 2013.

²¹¹ <http://www.enqueteplus.com/content/pr-aly-tandian-directeur-du-groupe-d%E2%80%99etudes-et-de-recherches-sur-les-migrations-faits-de>.

²¹² Like ECOWAS, CEN-SAD is a regional economic community that sanctions the freedom of movement of persons, commodities and interests within and among member states. There are currently 28 member states in CEN-SAD. As a consequence of the UN embargo imposed on Libya between 1992 and 2000, as well as the lack of general support from other Arab states, Gaddafi reoriented himself as an “African leader” and opened Libya’s domestic borders to sub-Saharan immigrants as a way to encourage pan-African solidarity (De Haas 2006). And Tripoli is short 300 kilometers (186 miles) from the island of Lampedusa, off the coast of Sicily.

As many as 50,000 migrants made the trek from sub-Saharan Africa to Libya in 2008.²¹³

However, as scholars Sylvie Bredeloup and Olivier Pliez point out, not all sub-Saharanans in Libya were looking for passage to Europe. In fact, migration across the Sahel and Sahara is linked to historical patterns of regional mobility as people have engaged in commercial trading, transport

Figure 6: Trans-Saharan Trade Until the 1700s



Source: Lydon 2010

and labor mobility, especially in the context of environmental changes, economic uncertainty and regional insecurity south of the Sahara (Bredeloup and Pliez 2011). In other words, the history of Sahel-Saharan migration predates transit migration to Europe. Carrefour towns like Gao (Mali), Agadès (Niger), and Tamanrasset (Algeria), once vibrant points along the nineteenth-century trans-Saharan trade routes are today being revitalized by a growing number of trans-Saharan migrants (Bensaâd 2001, 2004, 2005, 2012; Brachet 2005, 2009; Lydon 2010; see Figures 5 and

²¹³ Due to the nature of irregular and clandestine migration, obtaining reliable estimates is difficult (see Collyer 2007; De Haas 2008). Moreover, it is difficult to assess how many of these migrants were Senegalese citizens.

6). While some of these people are intent on reaching Europe, others are seeking employment in oil-rich North African states.

Figure 6: Contemporary trans-Saharan Migration Routes



Source: Carling 2007a

Mobility Partnerships conducted between Libya and Italy in 2009 changed the migration landscape once again as both countries agreed to jointly patrol borders and repatriate illegal immigrants in an effort to reduce the numbers landing on Italian shores (Jawad 2010).²¹⁴ Using the myth of invasion, Italy increasingly detained migrants in camps on the island of Lampedusa

²¹⁴ In 2010, the EU also conducted a Country Strategy Paper with Libya for 2011-2013 with the goal of stemming illegal immigration (EU-Libya 2011-2013).

before sending them back to Libya (De Haas 2007; HRW 2009). Once returned, migrants were held in ad hoc detention centers in Misrata, Tripoli and along the northwestern coast under conditions that were questionable at best and inhumane at worst (Global Detention Project: Libya). This posed real legal and ethical problems for scholars and human rights activists who were watching the situation unfold. As Rutvica Andrijasevic points out, Libya “has no asylum system and has not signed the 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees” (2010: 150). In addition to subjecting migrants to detention, torture and execution, Libyan forces also forcibly repatriated approximately 140,000 people, many of them sub-Saharan Africans, between 2003 and 2005 (HRW 2006). Often, such repatriations involved no more than a ride in the back of a truck before being “dumped” in the desert (HRW 2009).

Then the Arab Spring happened. And West African immigrants in Libya faced a much harsher reality. Rumors linking them to mercenary forces hired by the state’s military apparatus made them vulnerable to attacks from rebel sympathizers. According to Hein de Haas, longtime scholar of African migration and co-director of the International Migration Institute, sub-Saharan migrants became effectively “trapped” in Libya with no way out, except by sea (2011b).²¹⁵

On 24 March 2011, a boat filled with 72 sub-Saharan migrants fleeing the conflict in Libya left the shores of Tripoli, and, after making it halfway to Lampedusa, they ran out of fuel. At the time, the Mediterranean Sea was peppered with NATO and Coalition military vessels, which were enforcing a naval blockade and carrying out airstrikes against Gaddafi’s regime. Despite the heightened military presence, and the repeated distress calls sent out over Italian, Maltese and NATO military channels, the migrant boat drifted for fourteen days in some of the most highly monitored waters on the planet. When, pushed by Mediterranean currents, it finally wandered

²¹⁵ It is important to note that most of the boat migrants arriving in Europe in 2011 were actually North Africans fleeing violence in Tunisia and Libya, as well as Arab states (e.g. Jordan, Lebanon, Syria) (Fargues and Fandrich 2012).

back to the Libyan coast, the boat had long since run out of food and water, and only nine of the original 72 passengers remained alive. As Charles Heller and Lorenzo Penzzani have illustrated in excruciating detail, the deaths that occurred on what came to be known as the “left-to-die boat” were completely avoidable. In this case, doing nothing was a death sentence. The “politics of irresponsibility” with respect to migrants in distress had “turned the sea into an unwilling killer” (2014: 670).²¹⁶

Two years later, protracted violence in places like Syria, Eritrea and Somali, and the collapse of a coherent central government in Libya conspired to stimulate a renewed surge of movement across the Mediterranean. At 4 A.M. on 3 October 2013, close to 400 migrants lost their lives when their boat caught fire no more than 500 meters from Lampedusa (Yardley and Povoledo 2013). A week later, another 34 perished 120 kilometers from Malta, prompting the Prime Minister, Joseph Muscat, to call the Mediterranean a “cemetery.”²¹⁷ In response, Italy instituted *Mare Nostrum* (Our Sea), a search and rescue operation that was, by all accounts, very successful in aiding boats in distress as they crossed the Mediterranean.²¹⁸ However, *Mare Nostrum* had its problems. First, it was expensive. Despite a €1.8 million concession from the European Commission’s External Border Fund, the Italian state alone bore the brunt of the operational burden, which cost roughly €9 million per month (Scherer and Polleschi 2014). And secondly, it was unpopular. EU heads of state, like Britain’s David Cameron, were none too pleased with Italy for opening Europe’s doors to a flood of migrants (Travis 2014).

When *Mare Nostrum* was decommissioned after a year, Frontex stepped in to implement Operation Triton in 2014. Importantly, Triton was not a search and rescue campaign, but a

²¹⁶ See their film on Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/89790770>.

²¹⁷ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-24502279>.

²¹⁸ In its twelve months of operation from October 2013 to October 2014, *Mare Nostrum* rescued an estimated 150,000 people.

military intervention focusing on “border control and surveillance.”²¹⁹ In contrast to Mare Nostrum, part of Triton’s official mandate was to disrupt the human “trafficking” networks that were blamed for the influx.²²⁰ In this way, the EU was able once again to recast military patrols as humanitarian interventions. As Polly Pallister-Wilkins argues:

To see the migrant boat ‘crisis’ in the Mediterranean as a humanitarian emergency does a number of things. In addition to obscuring the underlying structural causes of such migration flows, it works towards the continuation of such a border control system while failing to take account of the fact that interventions to save lives and secure borders have the same practical effects... [H]umanitarian border policing in the Mediterranean works to consolidate already powerful subject positions produced through earlier acts of intervention and earlier modes of border policing efforts (2015).

In other words, constructing contemporary Mediterranean migration as an “emergency” erases the cultural, political and economic histories that made such migrations possible, even necessary. As discussed in Chapter 2, Senegalese clandestine boat in 2006 and 2007 was not a spontaneous surge of mobility coming “out of nowhere.” Rather, it was rooted in Senegal’s cultural and historical matrix and in its postcolonial political economy, which often had as much to do with Senegalese leaders as European interests. To cast migration as emergency, then, is to ignore the history that led to this moment. It also tends to shroud militarization behind a veneer of humanitarianism, and often reframes migrants as either hapless victims, nefarious criminals, or irrational simpletons on a kamikaze mission. And finally, front page catastrophes where

²¹⁹ <http://frontex.europa.eu/news/frontex-launches-joint-operation-triton-JSYpL7>.

²²⁰ Other differences included issues of scope and cost. While Mare Nostrum operated in international waters across the Mediterranean, Triton’s range of patrolling extended only to fifty kilometers off the coast of Italy. In addition, the bill for Triton (€3 million per month) was one-third of Mare Nostrum’s monthly budget. As a consequence, while Mare Nostrum deployed a fleet of 32 ships, a variety of helicopters and planes, as well as a submarine, Triton was limited to the use of six maritime patrol vessels, two surveillance aircraft and one helicopter (<http://frontex.europa.eu/news/frontex-launches-joint-operation-triton-JSYpL7>). Importantly, this is a function of the way Frontex works, and goes to the heart of the European ideal of “burden sharing.” With very little in the way of tangible assets of their own, Frontex must rely on Member States to dedicate resources for various operations at the border. When European states decline to allocate the necessary equipment, Frontex must simply “make do” and hope that when they lobby Members for more resources, their calls will be answered. See Bourreau and Stroobants (2015) and Taylor (2015).

hundreds of people perish reinforce the sense of emergency without attending to the “quiet, regular additions to the Mediterranean’s death toll” that occur on a daily or weekly basis (Shenker 2013).

On 11 February 2015, 300 people, the majority of whom were Senegalese and Malian, disappeared after their boats sank off the coast of Lampedusa.²²¹ And on a single day in April of this year, more than 700 were lost in the Mediterranean, many of them Senegalese.²²² Various media outlets, as well as organization like UNHCR, IOM, Human Rights Watch and Migreurop all condemned 2015 as even more deadly than 2013 and 2014 and urged European leaders to come up with a solution to the crisis. The Mediterranean route claimed well over 3,000 lives in 2014 and over 1,200 lives alone over the week of 13-21 April 2015. That month, IOM reported that the number of migrant deaths (over 1,700 up to that point) was thirty times higher in 2015 than for the same four-month period in 2014 (56 deaths).²²³ And yet, Fabrice Leggeri, the head of Frontex, said in April 2015 that Frontex’s job was not to save lives, but to patrol the EU’s borders (Kingsley and Traynor 2015).²²⁴

Paradoxical though it may be, the fixing and securitization of borders makes them generators of circulation (Bensaâd 2005: 19). Due to increasing controls both on the African and European continents, trans-Saharan migration is becoming longer, more fragmented, and more dangerous. As Michael Collyer reports, the trans-Saharan leg of the journey is by far the most difficult, taking anywhere from four days to two weeks depending on one’s departure point and destination (2007). Intended to reduce clandestine migration, increasingly militarized controls often only make such travel riskier and more protracted. What took weeks or months in the past,

²²¹ <http://Int.ma/blog/blog-rfi/300-migrants-disparus-naufrages-en-mediterranee/>.

²²² <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-34070971>.

²²³ <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/04/iom-mediterranean-death-toll-top-30000-2015-150421232012080.html>.

²²⁴ And yet, in the last two months of 2014, 11,400 people were rescued in 77 separate Search and Rescue operations (see <http://frontex.europa.eu/feature-stories/operation-triton-winter-developments-qXDamY>).

now sometimes takes years, with people spending significant amounts of time in one of the several transit nodes while trying to make money for the next leg of the journey. An ECOWAS-OECD report from 2006 suggests, “More stringent control of European borders makes clandestine migration land routes longer and more difficult. This leads to more or less temporary settlement of migrants for several years” (ECOWAS-OECD 2006: 9).

Militarized borders also contribute to shifting class distinctions among migrants themselves. As pointed out in Chapter 3, the clandestine journeys undertaken by the young men in this dissertation were not an option for the poorest of the poor. Rather, the young men here were of a particular class in that they had access to some form of fungible assets (land, cars, boats, etc.) that were then liquidated to pay the pirogue fare. Moreover, whereas in 2006 one might have to pay \$1,000 for a place in a pirogue, today West Africans must first pay to cross the Sahara before even setting foot in a boat. As the risk associated with these overland itineraries becomes more acute, the cost of smuggling escalates. West Africans in Morocco have reported spending between €2,000 (\$2,780) to €7,000 (\$9,700) for the entire journey across the Sahara (Collyer 2006: 136). These small fortunes are often earned incrementally along the way or allocated from family members back home. As family debt escalates, people are less likely to turn back (Carling 2007a; Collyer 2007). The ironic result is a situation in which border controls, meant to inhibit migration, actually provoke and re-direct it (Castles 2004).

It has become commonplace for media reports to reference the “middle-class” status of Syrian refugees, who pay up to €6,000 for passage across the Mediterranean (Mullen and Fantz 2015; Squires 2015). But rarely do journalists discuss similar investments made by sub-Saharan Africans, perhaps because the underlying assumption is that they are too poor to afford such prices. Such assumptions reify stereotypes of black Africans as fundamentally impoverished

while ignoring the actual investments made in funding clandestine journeys. They also fail to underscore the degree to which the privilege of mobility is becoming increasingly inaccessible for most people, even if their survival depends on it.²²⁵

In the first half of 2015, people around the world were shocked at the tallies coming in each day as more boats succumbed to Mediterranean swells. And yet, up until 29 April 2015, the Senegalese government was mysteriously silent on the recent spate of clandestine departures of its citizens from Libya (Fall 2015; Gueye 2015; Nossiter 2015).²²⁶ Although most of the recent Mediterranean boat migrants are fleeing political violence in Syria, Eritrea and Somalia, Senegalese are among the top ten nationalities of arrivals in Italy. Between January and April 2015, close to 1,200 Senegalese migrants had arrived in Italy (Olivier 2015). By September, that number increased to almost 5,000 (UNHCR 2015). And, not surprisingly, *refoulements* have also restarted.²²⁷ According to the Senegalese minister of youth, Mame Mbaye Niang, 400 Senegalese migrants were repatriated in February of this year alone.²²⁸ By May, that number had increased to 2,000 (Felix 2015). He argued that because the Senegalese nationals leaving North African shores had been living in Libya for two to three years, the recent victims did not represent a renewed surge in clandestine migration. “Of course he would say that,” Moustapha protested when I spoke to him earlier this year. “The state wants Europe to think clandestine migration is over. For Senegal, pretending to be an obedient *chien de garde* [watch dog] for the EU keeps the money rolling in for the state and for NGOs.”

²²⁵ See MediaPart interview with Emmanuel Blanchard, president of Migreurop, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e3b44nl6o5Y>.

²²⁶ http://www.bbc.co.uk/afrique/region/2015/04/150428_senegal_migrants.

²²⁷ In December of 2014, the Spanish parliament legalized immediate expulsions for irregular migrants without the benefit of due process.

²²⁸ http://www.seneweb.com/news/Immigration/mame-mbaye-niang-nbsp-laquo-nbsp-les-vic_n_153760.html.

Watching the drama unfold on their televisions, or in the newsfeeds, some scholars have suggested that contemporary clandestine migration is reminiscent of the Black Atlantic (Ifekwunigwe 2013). “This is not the first time,” writes Jayne O. Ifekwunigwe, “Africans have been crammed like sardines into vessels and transported across hostile waters” (229; see also Smallwood 2007). She urges us not to take the analogy too literally—after all, most people today are not forcibly captured and transported against their will. Instead, she argues, “we [should] consider the limits of volition, the degree of risk, and the material conditions en route for clandestine African boat migrants in order to think about historical continuities, in particular, the persistent devaluation of African life and the looming possibility of death” (230). Such a line of reasoning asks us to consider the difference between migrants and refugees, a distinction that is becoming increasingly problematic for some.

For Karen Akoka, drawing too fine a line between (economic) migrants and (political) refugees is dangerous. “This distinction rests on the idea that, on the one hand, there are legitimate foreigners—real refugees—and, on the other hand, there are false foreigners, whom we call ‘migrants’” (Mouzon 2015). The 1951 Geneva Convention defines refugees as those who face persecution without really defining “persecution” per se, except to suggest that it encompasses threats to life and freedom, though not exclusively (UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, Article 33). Such indeterminacy can work in the favor of legal practitioners advocating on behalf of refugees (Maiani 2010; see also Grahl-Madsen 1966). But it does not help to elucidate who exactly is under threat nor from what. Instead, it suggests that one person has the “choice” of staying, while the other is compelled to leave. As Akoka points out, this distinction “supposes that economic hardship is not a kind of violence, or that it is a more

tolerable violence.”²²⁹ And yet, as the young men in this dissertation have shown, economic and spiritual violence can be excruciating to endure. Conversely, overcoming such violence is often conceptualized as part and parcel of one’s path to striving in the face of hardness.²³⁰

Diogoufi

In March 2012, Senegal saw its second peaceful transition to a newly elected president.²³¹

Although riots had threatened to destabilize the country in the lead up to elections, and at least seven people died during the protests, prompting some to call it the beginning of West Africa’s “Arab” Spring, sitting president, Abdoulaye Wade, gracefully conceded power to his former protégé, Macky Sall, in March. In a region marked by electoral violence, civil wars and military coups, Senegal is something of a beacon of political stability, though this has not necessarily translated into better governance.

Of the many promises Macky made on the campaign trail, one was to “clean house” once he was in office; that is, to shore up the national budget by eliminating redundancies, trimming the bureaucracy and fighting corruption (Skelton 2012).²³² Macky abolished the Senate in an emergency measure in August 2012, explaining that he would use the 8 billion CFA (\$16

²²⁹ The term “refugee” itself is far from neutral or self-evident. During the interwar period, socialist advocates wanted it to include victims of economic persecution. If that had succeeded, Akoka suggests, then legitimate refugees would have been people who were hungry, and not necessarily those fleeing political abuse, discrimination or violence. In the end, occidental countries adopted a definition of the refugee that enabled them to discredit socialist regimes in the east (e.g. the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, Hungary) and Asia (e.g. Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia) while staffing Western European industries with docile laborers.

²³⁰ Interestingly, none of the young men I interviewed in Senegal ever contemplated applying for asylum because, they said, Senegal “was not at war.” However, this seems to be changing. According to UNHCR, almost 4,000 Senegalese have applied for asylum in Italy this year alone, although the vast majority of them (67%) have been denied recognition (UNHCR 2015). Lacking the substantive claims to be recognized as refugees, many Senegalese migrants continue to be repatriated.

²³¹ The first time this happened was in 2000, when Senegal’s second president, Abdou Diouf, who had been appointed by Léopold Sédar Senghor to take over the presidency in 1980 when Senghor retired, surprised the world by being one of the few incumbent African leaders to concede electoral defeat peacefully, thus ending forty years of Socialist Party rule in Senegal.

²³² In the twelve years under Wade, the executive branch had swelled with a growing staff of ministers as Wade tightened his grip on power in what Amadou Mahtar Mbow has labeled a “hyper-presidentialism” (2011: 69).

million) annual budget to help flood victims in the latest monsoon season disasters. Though this may seem drastic, it is worth pointing out, as Linda Beck does, that the Senate was something of a chimera. Created in 1999 by a worried Abdou Diouf whose political bloc was splintering ahead of the decisive 2000 elections, the Senate had “little *raison d’être* other than the distribution of patronage posts to reinforce dwindling support among [the Socialist Party] ranks” (Beck 2008: 66). In contrast to a legislature whose representatives are popularly elected, members of the Senegalese Senate were appointed by the President.²³³ By the time Macky Sall arrived, the Senate had become a club for Wade’s political allies, which led some critics to argue that, in the end, the suppression of this legislative body had less to do with helping *sinistrés* (victims) of the perennial floods and more to do with consolidating power and quelling opposition after Macky’s electoral success (Dieme 2012).

The new President also conducted an aggressive government-wide audit. It was widely believed that, under Abdoulaye Wade, government functionaries had been “milking” the system with impunity. Several agencies, including the Ministry of Fishing, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Tourism and the Ministry of Energy, were found guilty of *fractionnement*, or contract splitting in the procurement of public transactions. This practice allowed functionaries to “subdivide” business deals into smaller pieces to avoid exceeding applicable budget limits and to subvert the process of competitive bidding for government contracts.²³⁴ In addition, members of the bureaucracy were suspected of staying on the payroll at various agencies, but never actually putting in a day’s work. Some ministers and employees were accused of earning salaries on the sly, while others continued collecting checks for family

²³³ Wade also abolished the Senate in 2008 following the 2007 presidential elections, only to re-establish it with “hand-picked” crony-ministers loyal to Wade’s party. Under Wade, even the monocameral Parliament functioned “as an auxiliary of executive power” (Mbow 2011: 69-70).

²³⁴ http://www.seneweb.com/news/Economie/audits-2012-de-l-rsquo-armp-chef-pape-di_n_143928.html.

members who had passed away. A handful of cunning functionaries deftly exploited ministerial posts that were either totally fictive or long defunct but, because of lack of budgetary oversight, were still receiving state funding.

In 2012, I was living around the corner from a satellite office for the Ministry of Justice in Point E. Normally it was a sleepy building, with only a handful of people, mostly young security guards, who showed up for work. Suddenly one day, a gaggle of well-dressed office workers were standing outside in the early morning sun. Rounding the corner of the driveway, I was surprised by the crowd. When I asked Foday, one of the regular guards, what was going on, he looked up from his perch on a broken plastic chair. “*L’audit*,” he said, shaking his head. Like many others, Foday thought the audit was a good idea, but was poorly executed. “It won’t fix the problem,” he said. “These people have connections. They’ll get paid, even though they don’t work here.” That day, almost fifty people showed up to be counted on the payroll, though I had never seen most of them.

After the audit, Macky eliminated a total of 59 offices, including committees, delegations, agencies, and societies (Wade 2012). On 16 December 2013, he abolished ANEJ and FNPI, as well as other “decentralized” youth offices in an effort to cut back on government spending and to “harmonize” a fragmented system of agencies whose directives were independent of, and often at odds with, each other.²³⁵ To replace the constellation of disorganized youth agencies, he established the *Agence Nationale pour la Promotion de l’Emploi des Jeunes*, (ANPEJ), a centralized national agency to promote youth employment on 10 January 2014 (Ama 2014; Kande 2013). It remains to be seen if ANPEJ will be any different from its predecessors.

When I asked Moustapha in 2013 if he thought economic conditions would improve for

²³⁵ For more on ANEJ and FNPI, see Chapter 2, and http://www.senenews.com/2013/12/16/reduction-du-train-de-vie-de-letat-le-president-sall-supprime-lanej-le-fnpj-lajeb-et-lanama_70784.html.

refoulés after the elections, he was cautious.

It's important to remember that in 2007, Macky was the Prime Minister. He was Abdoulaye Wade's right-hand man. He was an integral part of the government that began this whole repatriation business. Ousmane Ngom, the Minister of the Interior, signed an accord with Spain under the orders of his boss, who was Macky, the government's premier chief at the time. He was the real President, not Wade. We cannot speak of the *refoulé* money without also pointing to him as the main architect of this plan. He knows full well everything that happened, and how and to whom the money, which was destined for the *clandestins*, was *détourné* [diverted].

Moustapha went on to explain that Senegalese youth in general, and *refoulés* in particular, didn't vote *for* Macky as much as they voted *against* Wade in the 2012 elections. If Wade's first term (2000-2007) was characterized by disappointed hopes and broken promises, so much so that young men felt compelled to leave the country en masse via pirogue, his second term (2007-2012) was a strict lesson in the abuse of power. Opposition politicians were imprisoned, journalists were muzzled or arrested, government corruption and political cronyism ran rampant, and national budgets were invested in prestige projects and urban infrastructure that benefited the wealthy rather than creating jobs, improving food security or reducing poverty. At the end of Wade's twelve-year tenure, official unemployment stood at fifty percent, though it was widely believed to be much higher (Genova 2012). By the time elections rolled around in 2012, people in Senegal were verifiably fed up with Wade's authoritarian regime. Though anti-Wade sentiments had been simmering for years, public disapproval exploded into mass riots in 2011 when Wade tried to change the constitution.

Throughout 2010 and 2011, continued electrical outages and rising food prices had resulted in popular protests across the country (Hinshaw 2011).²³⁶ But in June 2011, Abdoulaye Wade proposed two constitutional amendments, which ignited an already tense socio-political landscape. The first of the amendments would have lowered the number of votes necessary to

²³⁶ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-13938217>.

win the election in the first round from fifty to twenty-five percent. The second amendment would have created the post of vice president, which most people saw as a convenient way for Wade to appoint his son to executive office and thus establish a monarchy. On 23 June, Alioune Tine, president of the *Rencontre Africaine pour la Défense des Droits de l'Homme* (African Assembly for Human Rights, or RADDHO), invited political opposition parties, civil society organizations and citizens' movements to mount a unified front against Wade's proposed changes. With a slogan warning Wade not to tinker with the constitution (*Ne Touche Pas Ma Constitution!*, or Don't Touch my Constitution!), the social movement M23 (*Mouvement du 23 juin*) was born. Violent protests across Senegal forced Wade to abandon the proposed changes.

To add insult to injury, in January 2012, the Constitutional Court approved Wade's bid to run for a third term (Bojang 2012).²³⁷ In 2001, Wade spearheaded a constitutional amendment to impose a two-term limit on all future presidents. Though he had been re-elected to a second, and presumably final, term in 2007, he publicly declared his intention to run in the 2012 election as early as 2009, arguing that his first term was already underway when the amendment was adopted and thus "didn't count" toward the two-term limit (Ba 2010).²³⁸ When the Constitutional Court approved his candidacy, the country erupted in violence.²³⁹ And few people believed that free and fair elections would be possible (Duhem 2012).²⁴⁰ As Ndary recounted it, *refoulés* were especially incensed.

We were calm during the 2007 elections because we hoped that Abdoulaye Wade would do what he promised. He signed the accords with Spain for 13 billion CFA to return us to Senegal by force, and we were so discouraged because we had lost

²³⁷ See portrait on Tëngéej, footnotes 4 and 5, and <http://m.voanews.com/a/violence-breaks-out-at-protest-against-senegals-president-139639603/152279.html>; <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-16770305>.

²³⁸ <http://www.voanews.com/content/a-13-2009-09-17-voa50-68709547/409461.html>.

²³⁹ <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-13938217>.

²⁴⁰ There were widespread reports of manipulation during voter registration. In several cases, registration bureaus would only accept 20 new voter registrations per day, while in other cases many people (largely youth) were forced to wait at the bureaus for several hours only to be told that the office had "run out of paper" and the new voters should return the next day (Carayol 2011).

all our resources. But [Wade] said he would use that money to help us. Then in 2012, five years later, nothing happened. When Wade tried to change the constitution, we revolted! That's why you saw all the young people in the streets, burning tires, throwing stones at the police, manifesting all over the country. Everyone was fed up. But who were all those youth burning the buildings and facing the gendarmes? They were all *refoulés*!

Initially, M23 opposition leaders seemed unified against Wade in 2011, but infighting caused them to splinter in the lead up to the general election in February of 2012, a situation which made Macky the only viable alternative in the runoff.²⁴¹ In fact, Macky was the first to part ways with the M23 coalition three days after promising to “remain united” and singing the national anthem with his opposition leaders on the second floor of a Dakar hotel (Carayol 2012). When Abdoulaye Wade won only thirty-four percent of the vote in the first round, the only candidate who seemed able to defeat him was Macky Sall, who had garnered twenty-six percent. Powerful opposition leaders like Moustapha Niassé, Idrissa Seck and Ousmane Tanor Dieng abandoned their presidential hopes and united behind Macky, urging their supporters to the vote against Wade in the runoff in a campaign they called *Tout Sauf Wade* (Anything But Wade) (Dabo 2012).²⁴² But few of the *refoulés* I met were convinced that conditions under Macky would be much different. “*Ils ont fait le deal,*” Ndary said. “When the opposition got behind Macky, they made a deal. No one wanted Wade to stay in power. So we settled for his apprentice.”

In a 2014 conversation I had with Thiat, founding member of the rap duo Keur Gui Crew, he was similarly pessimistic about the prospects for substantial change under Macky. Keur Gui's penchant for incendiary lyrics that openly criticize local and national politicians has distilled and

²⁴¹ With 238 registered political parties today, Senegal's political field is decidedly competitive, which works to the advantage of the party in power (<http://www.lagazette.sn/la-bonne-affaire-pour-le-pouvoir/>). By allowing members of the opposition to register formally in 1981, President Abdou Diouf (1980-2000) ensured the fracturing of powerful blocs into smaller disputatious bodies. The plethora of parties often became embroiled in jockeying for position and competing for favors from the ruling party. As Donal B. Cruise O'Brien reflected in 1983 just after the re-election of Abdou Diouf, multi-party politics were introduced in Senegal as a way to fracture the vote, giving the opposition just enough “electoral rope with which to hang itself” (1983: 8; see also Bayart 2009: 185).

²⁴² http://www.seneweb.com/news/Politique/senegal-le-laquo-tout-sauf-wade-raquo-en-marche_n_60798.html.

given voice to the frustrations of youth across the country, and has landed the “raptivist” group in jail more than once. Born out of the political crisis of 1988 and the school strikes of 1987-1988 (Diouf 1996), which left young students like Thiat and his conspirator Kilifeu with another wasted academic year, Keur Gui formed in 1996. In 2011, they became the mouthpiece for the Y’en a Marre (Enough is Enough) movement, a popular youth revolt that joined forces with M23 and eventually led to Wade’s electoral defeat.²⁴³ In 2014, Thiat traveled to Seattle to give a talk on the role of hip-hop in mobilizing youth in Senegal. “Today is no different than under Wade,” Thiat said when I saw him. “The only difference is that Macky is younger.”

In their 2014 single, *Diogoufi* (“nothing has changed” in Wolof), Thiat and Kilifeu lament the continued electrical outages and water shortages, the lack of hope, and the persistent corruption under Macky’s presidency.²⁴⁴ The song begins by calling out politicians as “The same cats/The same dogs.”

The same goings, the same comings
The same circumstances, the same facts
Same movie, same plan
Same electoral promise
Same selling of the coastline²⁴⁵

²⁴³ http://www.walf.sn/politique/suite.php?rub=2&id_art=75520.

²⁴⁴ Just after I left the field, Dakar was beset by a major water shortage, which started on September 12, 2013 and continued for over two weeks. A broken water main in Louga 250 km north of Dakar shut down water service to the capital, causing riots and long lines at neighborhood water trucks. According to utility auditors, the pipe under question had been improperly installed, shortening its 30-year life expectancy to less than 10 years.

<http://www.lapresse.ca/international/afrique/201309/26/01-4693651-penurie-deau-a-dakar-la-colere-gronde.php>.

²⁴⁵ The state retains ownership rights over most land in Senegal. Historically, in rural zones, customary law has dictated the manner in which properties were transferred. However, this is changing. Countries like China, the United States and the United Kingdom are purchasing vast tracts of arable land for agricultural production all across Africa. Despite its location in the semi-arid Sahel, Senegal, which is nestled within the Senegal River basin, sits on an impressively large aquifer, whose accessibility (e.g. between seven and fifty meters below ground level) and productivity make it attractive for large-scale farming. For groundwater maps of Senegal, see <http://www.bgs.ac.uk/research/groundwater/international/africanGroundwater/mapsDownload.html>. Land deals in Africa are often conducted “with limited consultation of the local population, without adequate compensation of the previous land users, and without seeking opportunities to create new jobs or enhance environment sustainability” (Rulli et al. 2012: 892). Land deals also frequently allow states like China or the US to export food and biofuel products back to national markets, thus contributing to an already worrisome state of food insecurity for many in Africa. In addition to agricultural land deals, urban development is also a lucrative transnational enterprise. In the capital city of Dakar, which is hemmed in by the Atlantic on three sides and which hosts a large population (3 million) of poor rural migrants, wealthy expatriates and Senegalese nouveau riche, land is at a premium. The state is

The country in total chaos
Two years and everyone's had enough

The chorus repeats a familiar refrain among Senegalese people: “The way you wake up is the way you will go to bed... They cut deals and sell off our land. You go straight to jail if you dare to speak out.”

“The problem,” Moustapha said, “is that Macky is part of the *ancien régime*. Remember: he was Wade’s protégé from the beginning.” Macky’s political career began in the halls of Wade’s *Parti Démocratique du Sénégal* (PDS), where he moved quickly through the ranks and then into the national bureaucracy. Wade appointed him as director of the National Petrol Company (PETROSEN) from 2000-2001, then as Prime Minister (2004-2007) and finally as President of the National Assembly (2007-2008). Due to his technical competence and unassuming patience, he was labeled Wade’s “*fils discret*” (discreet son), a status he enjoyed until the blood began to sour between the student and his master (Ba 2015a). During Macky’s tenure as head of the National Assembly, he began asking questions about the President’s son, Karim Wade, and his dubious handling of construction contracts in preparation for the Organization of the Islamic Conference Summit, which was slated to take place in Dakar in 2008. Because of his prodding, and Wade’s patriarchal obduracy when it came to his son, Macky was swiftly voted out of his

able to procure considerable rents by acting as the primary arbiter of territorial arrangements. Macky Sall has upheld and expanded his predecessor’s practice of selling desirable parcels to various inter- and transnational interests, thus contributing to a 256 percent rise in housing prices in Dakar from 1994 to 2010. The *corniche*, or coastal road skirting the northwestern edge of the city, is a prime example: luxury hotels, new shopping malls and upscale condominium housing developments sit on land sold by the state to foreign interests. In 2014, Macky ignored opposition from Dakar’s City Council and authorized the construction of a new Turkish Embassy along a protected section of the waterfront, where residents would jog, lift weights, or relax in the past, but was now off limits (Saelens 2014). And the phenomenon does not stop there. From the Cap Vert peninsula down to the *petite côte*, large luxury resorts catering to wealthy European, African, and Chinese patrons have sprung up, dislocating Senegalese families and reshaping traditional fishing communities like Saly, Mbour and Joal. Additionally, there has been recent controversy over the eviction of families, the bulldozing of houses and the forcible appropriation of land surrounding the old airport in Dakar. With a footprint of more than ten square kilometers (or one-fifth of the total size of the densely populated capital), the old airport land could be worth tens of millions of dollars (Brice 2015)

post at the National Assembly in October of 2008. But he wasted no time in establishing his own party—the *Alliance pour le République* (APR)—in December of that year.

Moustapha continued. “But before things went sour, Macky was Wade’s campaign manager when *goorgui* [the old man] was reelected in 2007. And now it’s *him* who’s running the country! What do you think he’ll do? Same as all the rest. There’s no point in waiting around. Here in Senegal, we survive outside the state.”

Continued Corruption

Other voices echo Moustapha’s overwhelming disappointment when it comes to Macky’s presidency. After voting Abdoulaye Wade out of office, the hope was that Macky would do better by the citizens than his predecessor. But the general sense today is one of facing a consummate *gâchis*, or wasted opportunity. In 2013, when I was finishing up fieldwork in Senegal, people often complained of Macky’s obsession with prosecuting Karim Wade and his cronies for embezzlement while ignoring his promise to improve everyday living conditions for people (Ba 2015b, 2015c, 2015d, 2015e, 2015g; Gomis 2013; Ndiaye 2015; Ndour 2015).²⁴⁶ “He told us he would lower the prices on food and fuel if we elected him,” Ibrahima said. “But today Macky is more concerned with his vendetta against Karim.”²⁴⁷

In reflecting on the uprising of citizens’ protests, which embodied the hope of change and unseated Wade only three short years ago, one author says: “Today, Senegalese people have renounced protest. If there’s no water, people ask their neighbor. If the electricity doesn’t come on, people use candles. No more manifestations. Instead, a red kerchief can buy a sachet of

²⁴⁶ See portrait on Tëngéej, footnote 5.

²⁴⁷ Following in the footsteps of his predecessors, the new President does in fact seem preoccupied with alternately coopting or imprisoning PDS opponents (Ndao 2015).

coffee or sugar!” (Ndao 2015a; see also Ndao 2015b).²⁴⁸ Another author puts it this way:

“Senegalese people have the impression of living in a nightmare without end” (Fall 2015).

When I spoke with Moustapha in 2014 about AJRT’s prospects for establishing partnerships with other NGOs in Senegal, he was duly pessimistic. He explained how first lady Marième Faye had come under fire for using funds from Black Pearl Finance, a subsidiary of BCME Capital (*Banque Marocaine du Commerce Extérieur*, Moroccan Bank of Foreign Commerce), in order to establish a million-dollar NGO in Senegal called *Servir le Sénégal* (Serve Senegal) (Faye 2015; Khalil 2014).²⁴⁹ Although *Servir le Sénégal* was putatively created to help needy populations, critics were quick to point out that both Black Pearl and BCME were the same institutions with which Karim Wade had entertained illicit ties during his tenure as Minister of Energy, and which had likely played some part in the embezzlement of funds from Senegalese state coffers and the financing of fraudulent energy, transportation and real estate development contracts (Gomis 2013).²⁵⁰ “You see how even the first lady is using ‘development’ to make money?” Moustapha laughed.

Like I said, it’s an industry! It’s business. Listen, the citizens of Senegal have solidarity with one another, but we do not expect anything from the state. *Comme d’habitude* [as usual], the state is where people eat money and the president, and now his wife, they do as they please. Even when officials want to appear like they’re doing something good, there’s always an ulterior motive. And here in Senegal? There is no justice to control them.

When he isn’t trying to appear benevolent, Macky seems downright autocratic, much like his predecessor. Using especially broad definitions of “national security,” his government has arrested and imprisoned journalists for speaking out against the current regime, a popular Wade

²⁴⁸ For the history of the red kerchief as a mode of protest, see Chapter 7.

²⁴⁹ http://www.setal.net/Affaire-Marieme-Faye-Sall-L-image-de-la-Fondation-servir-le-Senegal-en-question_a31337.html.

²⁵⁰ For more on BCME, see Rboub (2003) and http://www.dakaractu.com/Black-Pearl-Finance-Le-labyrinthe-d-un-montage-financier_a72448.html; <http://www.financialafrik.com/2013/04/17/qui-se-cache-derriere-bmce-capital-dakar/>.

pastime (Kane 2015). Political immunity has also been granted to former Wade cronies, such as Awa Ndiaye, who was accused of pillaging public funds through the purchase of, among other things, very expensive cutlery during her tenure as minister of Women and Female Entrepreneurship in 2008.²⁵¹ Along with \$60 spoons, \$80 knives and \$3500 stoves, Ndiaye also spent \$160 a piece on USB keys, for a total of \$2.3 million in expenditures.²⁵² Despite the impressive list of overpriced items, she was acquitted of all charges shortly after Macky came to power.²⁵³ Thus, the “justice” meted out during the audit of Wade’s administration seems ambivalent. On the one hand, operatives who embezzled money or took advantage of government posts have been prosecuted by the CREI (*Cour de Répression de l’Enrichissement Illicite*, or anti-corruption court). On the other hand, former Wade loyalists, like Ndiaye, have personally benefited from realigning themselves with the new President, a widespread phenomenon in Senegal that critics call “political transhumance” (Ba 2015f; Sow 2014).

According to Ibrahima Sow, professor of philosophy at IFAN (*Institut Fondamentale de l’Afrique Noire*), the logic behind transhumance, be it animal or political, is “one of the belly.”²⁵⁴ Motivated more by appetite than ideology, transhumance occurs when even the most intransigent party stalwart switches sides depending on who is in power. Called partisan infidelity by some, Macky has publicly condoned transhumance as a flexible mode of “professional mobility.”²⁵⁵ For scholars like Sow, however, transhumance not only threatens democracy by coopting and neutralizing members of the opposition—who would normally provide a check on unrestrained

²⁵¹ http://www.leral.net/Awa-Ndiaye-Innocence-Ntap-Ndiaye-Baila-Wane-Pape-Diouf-Sitor-Ndour-Djibo-Leyti-Ka-Ces-anciens-dignitaires-du-regime_a151958.html.

²⁵² http://www.pressafrik.com/Audition-de-l-ancienne-ministre-de-la-famille-Awa-Ndiaye-ses-couteaux-et-ses-cuilleres-l-ont-poignardee-a-la-DIC_a84269.html.

²⁵³ <http://www.lagazette.sn/le-cas-awa-ndiaye-les-elements-a-charge/>.

²⁵⁴ http://www.seneweb.com/news/9/apologie-de-la-transhumance-macky-seul-c_n_153081.html, http://www.leral.net/De-la-transhumance-animale-a-la-transhumance-politique-une-meme-logique-au-Senegal-celle-du-ventre-Pr-Ibrahima-Sow_a142574.html.

²⁵⁵ Many see Macky’s apologist stance on transhumance as a way to further consolidate power in his bid for re-election in 2017 (Ba 2015d; Diop 2015).

power—it also represents an ethical dilemma. Transhumants, Sow writes, “disown and denounce their former convictions without hesitation and without shame simply to rally behind their enemy of yesterday who has become President of the Republic today” (Sow 2014).

Most Senegalese understand all too well how shifting allegiances define the political topography of Senegal. The halls of Parliament, the Presidential Palace and ministerial offices are often characterized as spaces where well-connected operators make deals in their own self-interest with little regard for the masses. But, as Ibrahima pointed out to me in 2012, such shifting allegiances are not merely indicative of political “indecision.” Rather, they are attached to concrete benefits. “With Macky,” he said, “self-interest has become the law.” Ibrahima was referring to the President’s recent decision to wire state money directly into the bank accounts of his ministers and administrators for the provision of private housing.

In 1991, Abdou Diouf signed a decree stating that every five years government functionaries would be entitled to a “loan” of 4 million CFA (roughly \$6,900 at 1995 exchange rates) to be used towards the acquisition of private lodgings.²⁵⁶ Importantly, Diouf made it clear that the funds were strictly a “loan” and that any properties acquired by the functionary remained assets of the state after the person left his or her post. In 2000, Wade increased the “loan” amount to 10 million CFA (\$13,000 in 2000), arguing that it was a response to the 50% devaluation of the CFA six years prior in 1994.²⁵⁷ Four years later, he modified the decree again, this time stipulating that any acquired property would thereafter constitute a personal endowment for each government minister, judge, prefect and administrator in the ranks.²⁵⁸ Under both Diouf and Wade, all purchasing arrangements were made through the Minister of Finances, which at least appeared to ensure that the money was indeed spent on necessary housing and not personal

²⁵⁶ Décret n° 91-490 du 8 mai 1991, http://www.ige.sn/images/stories/dcrets/Decret_91.490.pdf.

²⁵⁷ Décret n° 2000-790 du 15 septembre 2000, http://www.ige.sn/images/stories/dcrets/Decret_2000.790.pdf.

²⁵⁸ Décret n° 2004-1279 du 28 septembre 2004, <http://www.jo.gouv.sn/spip.php?article4422>.

enrichment. But in 2012, Macky went one step further by wiring the 10 million CFA directly into the bank accounts of ministers and functionaries and thus bypassing budgetary oversight altogether. Such funds were thus seen as personal “gifts” for the political elite. “But this is Senegalese money,” Ibrahima said. “It’s Senegalese taxes, which should go to build a better country. Me, here, on the street, I pay my small fees to the commercial agent every day.”²⁵⁹ And then Macky wires it directly to [the ministers’] accounts! And how many people work for the government? Hundreds, thousands maybe? If you add it all up, that’s a lot of rice.”

Ibrahima was not alone in his ire when the story of the wire transfers broke. Some promised renewed youth protests (Gaye 2015). Others once again turned their gaze across the Atlantic to imagined places where the future might be more certain. Mansour was rueful when he said, “Life for people is no better than it was under Wade.”²⁶⁰ As electricity outages, water shortages, unemployment and rising food prices persist, young people are continuing to embrace clandestine mobility as a way to manage the “hardness” of life through struggle and striving. Indeed, we see this with the persistent presence of Senegalese migrants in boats trying to cross the Mediterranean today.

In 2008, European ministers, African heads of state, and Frontex officers all celebrated the end of boat migration out of Senegal (Sene 2015). In retrospect, such jubilations seem premature. As Moustapha put it, “As long as life here in Senegal is hard, and as long as legal migration is impossible, the clandestine route will have passengers.” This dissertation has argued that clandestine boat migration out of Senegal between 2005 and 2008 was not simply a response to

²⁵⁹ “Informal” commerce doesn’t mean it’s unregulated. For street vendors, a low-level agent from the Ministry of Commerce comes to collect 250CFA (\$.50) each day from each merchant.

²⁶⁰ During fieldwork, people often complained, “*Dafa Macky*,” which is a Wolof phrase playing off the commonly used “*Dafa metti*,” meaning “It hurts” or “It’s hard.” In this case, *Macky* replaces *metti*, though the allusion is that they both mean the same thing. This has led some to question whether all the protests of M23 were worth the trouble (Sambou 2015) or if they changed the way politics in Senegal work (Kelly 2012).

rising poverty; nor was it an irrational option of last resort for young men. It was an increasingly visible and valued mode of spiritual striving and a means to provide for families. And yet, the after effects of clandestine migration left an indelible stamp on the Senegalese national psyche. As young *refoulés*, their families, and their communities continue to live with the memories of migration and the realities of forced return, they must also come to terms with the financial losses incurred to fund the voyage as well as the social and spiritual dimensions of failure. The aim of this dissertation has not been to suggest that the lack of economic opportunity played no role in the exodus of boat migration out of West Africa in the early to mid-2000s. Rather, the young men I met argued that it was a way for them strive for a moral and meaningful existence within, and not independent of, their social worlds. The hopes they sustained, and the trials they experienced, have enduring value. Preparing to depart, undergoing passage, and facing forced return continue to shape *refoulés*' conceptions of what it means to live a dignified life. If part of that life meant embracing the idea that change, however far flung it seemed, was possible, then these *refoulés* came to the table ready to take their chances. Life may have been hard, and full of risk. But one had to struggle. This is perhaps one reason why clandestine migration out of Senegal is, in fact, far from over.

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