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Points of departure; points of entry
Push and pull factors
Remittances
Sending country vs receiving country
Social costs of migration
Undocumented migrants

Introduction

This paper concerns itself with the recent phenomenon of West Africans leaving the African continent and seeking work in Spain. By the year 2003, a barely noticeable blip on the screen of the age-old phenomenon that is migration became a conspicuous trend. Depending on one's perspective this trend is either a natural flow of people from one region to another, or it is an alarming turn of events that needs immediate global attention. However, when it involves significant loss of life—as does the sea journey of the poorest aspirants—surely all who ponder the migrant question would agree that this qualifies as a crisis. The next question becomes, then, is it best to focus on minimizing the risks or to focus on deterring the would-be migrants at the onset of their journey? This question and its possible answer are further nuanced by whether those determined to leave receive incentives for choosing to stay at home or whether government officials and others who respond to the crisis in both sending and receiving countries practice a forceful type of deterrent that merely halts the process of migration but does not tackle the issue of why the person chose to leave in the first place.

From a research point of view, this migration represents a situation in flux with facts that change even as words are put to paper. While no precise beginning date can be established, the year 2004 appears to be a significant one in this modern history. In the year 2003 there were thousands of African migrants in Spain—although most were Moroccans. As of 2006, Gambia alone had over 20,000 undocumented migrants in Spain. (OECD International Migration Outlook 2006; World Migration Report 2005) A little more than two years ago, it appeared that the migration numbers were about to explode and rival those of Eastern Europeans, Latin Americans and North Africans.

Today, if one can believe the analyses by government officials and news reports, the tide of migrants has been stemmed, and there are the beginnings of an attempt to address the issues that beget such a wave of migration in the first place. However, upon closer scrutiny and with the inclusion of the perspective of the migrants themselves, a different picture could emerge.²

General overview of migration

Migration, or the mass movement of people from one place to another, is not a phenomenon new to this group of West Africans. Instead, it is as old as humanity itself. Even in the West African region that is the focus of this paper, there have been large movements of people from their place of birth to areas new to them—be it Fulani herdsmen of the past who were looking for new grazing areas for their cattle; the internal migration of country folk looking for a new start in urban areas; war-weary citizens fleeing the prospect of certain death if they remained in the region where their roots define them, or the newly educated elites choosing the country of their colonizer over their now-independent nation. Finally, there is one of the greatest forced migration experiences in all of history that started some 500 years ago when Africans left the shores of the continent and settled in the New World. What all of these seemingly disparate movements of people have in common is the very fact of their permanent uprooting that in turn translated into a new beginning, transfiguring both their homelands as well as the area to where they moved. One can only expect the same for the current situation of young people who are leaving Western Africa in search of a better life in Europe.

²See Ambassador Navarro as well as Roca as cited in the bibliography. Throughout the present article, all figures for migration represent official reporting of immigrants. If one were to count those who escape detection, the numbers would increase exponentially.

Whatever one's position on the issue of whether or not migration is a naturally occurring phenomenon, two undeniable facts stand out: the boat travel represents a high-risk, deleterious experience for the migrants, causing great exasperation among their families; and for those who are interested in the African Diaspora, this entire migration constitutes a significant moment in Diaspora history. Arguably it represents the third most important migration period in modern African Diaspora history. From the perspective of African Diaspora studies, the implications are vast for this third wave of migration. Finally and most specific to the current study is the boat migrant. Despite recent pronouncements that the flow of human beings out of Africa in this perilous mode of transportation has been arrested, there continues to be significant enough movement of the African continent's people to warrant further study, policy initiatives, and action.

There already exists a significant amount of research on the impact of "brain drain" from developing nations into developed ones with the capacity to absorb these talented, educated elite. Less focus exists for the "brawn drain" flowing from these same countries.³ Given that manual laborers also possess certain skills and expertise, their absence from their countries of origin should receive equal, if not more, study than their educated counterparts. This is particularly true when vast amounts of young people leave a country.

General overview of migration policies

³ More often than not the term "brawn drain" is associated with the talents of athletes who seek better opportunities in more industrialized nations. Here, however, the focus is on the manual laborer who is equally talented in his or her field but finds little chance to advance economically and socially at home. OECD International Migration Outlook provides statistics on the brain drain, most notably as it relates to doctors. The number of university-level educators is noteworthy as well, although there is little statistical data on this. There is even less dis-aggregation of the data by country for manual laborers. Furthermore, the uneducated, by default represent an overwhelming percentage, albeit not the only makeup of this group because educated persons work wherever they can find employment.

Article 13 of the U. N. Declaration of Human Rights states that: “Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state” and “Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country. This U. N. Declaration penned in 1948 grew out of concern for post World War II Europeans facing persecution at home and abroad. It is doubtful that the framers of the original U. N. declaration foresaw the huge outpouring of humanity from developing countries into more industrialized nations that is the pattern of much of today’s migration.⁴ Yet, today, a huge portion of the world’s migration is due to this economic pattern of labor migration. In this light, it is revealing to see how developed countries adhere to the principles of Article 13 of the U. N. declaration. The treatment of labor migrants in developed countries, specifically Western European nations, varies a great deal. Detailed analysis reveals a marked difference between policies in Italy, Spain, and Malta, the long-term focus of the current research. For the current project, however, Spain receives treatment here. Most specifically, it is Spain’s relationship with West Africans emanating from the country of Senegal.

With respect to the African Diaspora and prior to current migration patterns, the situation was often characterized by an outflow of migrants from their native countries into the former colonizing country; hence few are surprised to see an established community of francophone African immigrants in France, lusophone immigrants in Portugal, or Anglophone Africans in Britain, now with the third generation of those families and their European offspring. (Messina, Chapter 3) To be sure, there are other

⁴ Although intraregional migration continues as the dominant pattern in Europe, the inflow of people from the poorer countries grows at a steady pace. Furthermore, even though there is a larger influx of people from Maghreb nations and from Latin America than there is from West Africa, the very fact of the exodus of so many West Africans warrants study. See OECD’S *International Immigration Outlook* for both 2006 and 2007 for details.

major migrant communities from the whole of the African continent, Asia and the Americas. In fact, other regions far outpace West Africans in the number of immigrants in the peninsula nation. However, my interest is in Western Africa and Spain. Most specifically it is the plight of the migration of undocumented Senegalese who attempt to enter that Iberian nation by sea. What informs this paper are: motivations that **push** the person from a more or less secure physical environment and **pull** them to the uncertainty at sea and later the mere possibility of work in the Iberian peninsula; policies that are put into place in order to grapple with the situation; actions and outcomes that one gleans from both the sending nations as well as the receiving nations.

What can be said about the search for a policy initiative when all those involved possess a priori knowledge of both the root of the problem as well as its solution?⁵ It is obvious to all actors involved in the issue of undocumented migration that the primary reason for this migration is the pursuit of new economic opportunities. It is equally clear that, if one concern is to keep would-be migrants in the home country, a major corrective is to create opportunities for those who risk their lives at sea. Despite the obvious, however, getting from awareness of the issue to actual remedies is a much more difficult task than it seems to be in a theoretical setting.

Migrant scenarios:

The West African undocumented workers enter Spain through a variety of ways. Although my primary focus is the migrant who braves the waters to get to a new destination, there are many aspirants who make the journey by the less perilous mode of air travel. Of those with plane tickets, the majority enter with valid papers for short-term

⁵ For a succinct overview of the issue see the African Union's summary "African Common Position on Migration" as well as the article by Chou as cited in the bibliography.

stays, but then remain in the country. Particularly noteworthy are students who overstay their visas, professionals on short-term contracts who do not return at the close of the contract period, and tourists who choose to remain beyond the period allotted for such travel.⁶ Not surprisingly, this bespeaks a class difference among the migrants. Those who are fortunate enough to get higher education, travel for leisure or take advantage of their expertise in a foreign country, need not be extremely wealthy individuals.

Nevertheless, the very fact of their ability to move in such circles of higher education, leisure and world-class professionals places them in a rarified world of elites. The majority of the sea migrants are not a part of the above elite, and they pay a doubly high price for their travel. Not only is the journey a more perilous one. The actual payment for travel may be greater than airfare due to the amount of money paid to smugglers, coupled with the amount of time that the would-be-migrant spends waiting for the opportune moment for the clandestine journey.

Of those who brave the waters, the general points of entry, like the general points of departure are shifting locales that are determined by a number of factors. For example, a few years ago, Morocco was the preferred country of departure for most West Africans.⁷ Regardless of their country of origin, the migrants would make their way to Morocco by hitching rides and by walking. Morocco's northern-most coast is the closest possible African terrain to the European continent. From there, the two European territories of Ceuta and Melilla are literally a stone's throw away. With the closing of that first route, other avenues temporarily opened up. Among them are the western

⁶ I am grateful to two Senegalese whom I shall call Serangue and Mamadou for their candid interviews regarding their migration experiences. In addition, Mr. Omar Diatta, head of an NGO in Barcelona Spain provided much of the information for the on-the-ground observations.

⁷ This is true for the Maghreb region as well as for eastern Africa; however, the current study chooses to focus on West Africa.

African areas away from the major cities of Conakry in Guinea, Bissau in Guinea-Bissau, Banjul in Gambia, the Casamance region of Senegal, Nouakchott in Mauritania and even Praia on the island nation of Cape Verde. Increasingly the would-be-migrants leave from small fishing villages rather than large port areas because there is a greater possibility of escaping detection in the more rural areas. Current choice ports of entry are the Canary Islands off the coast of Western Africa and any where the boat touches the shore in Andalusia. For this twenty-first century wave of migrants, Spain is now a nation of choice—at least for the initial entry into Europe—just as Malta and Italy were a few years ago. At first glance, these three countries appear as peculiar choices for West African migrants. Unlike Britain, France, Portugal and the Netherlands, these countries have very few historic ties with the African continent.⁸ Furthermore, there have been few obvious welcoming signs—like intense advertisements for labor contracts—that would draw the migrants to these countries. The steady migration into these three countries is undoubtedly because they have been easier to enter than other European nations. In all three countries, geographic proximity to the continent of Africa plays a major role. With regard to Spain, the choice may also have to do with immigration policies that, in the immediate past, at least, were more lax than they were in other Western European countries. This inattention to immigration issues is beginning to shift radically, largely at the insistence of the European Union. It is further possible that this peninsula country offers a more welcoming social environment, and that in turn transforms Spain into a

⁸ Spain has historic ties with Equatorial Guinea dating back to its purchase of the region from Portugal as an eighteenth century colony. Italy has late nineteenth century through twentieth century ties with the horn of Africa.

desired point of entry as opposed to other countries that were the previous ultimate goal.⁹ What clearer explanations might one offer for French-speaking Senegalese who must learn both a new language and a new culture when landing in Spain and not France, the earlier destination of choice? The older migration of former colonized into former colonizer countries still obtains, but a new pattern has emerged. It is one with no particular historical relationship with the receiving country.

For the sea migrants, poverty, low educational attainment, and relative youth of those who travel are now coupled with the steady growth of women and their small children who attempt the dangerous journey. Finally, the young people do not always strike out on their own, but rather, are doing so with the tacit approval of their family members. Indeed they are increasingly pushed into action by those close to them.

Migrants often do not act as lone agents in their decision to migrate. Several actors come into play when considering the process of migration. From the sending end, it is necessary to consider the family members, the village or community, and the smugglers. On the official side of the equation are the governments and formal organizations that exercise some level of policy decisions in the matter. Equally important are the actors on the receiving end of migration. The actors here are also governments and formal organizations. However, they also include individuals like new neighbors, co-workers, and other average citizens who have an opinion if not always a

⁹Responding to the more welcoming social environment is quite different from taking advantage of the lax attention to immigration as mentioned earlier. The former entails conscious choices on the part of the Spanish people to be more inclusive. The latter reveals a lack of attention to the country's policies. For the former, see studies by Bledsoe, Sow, and others as well as direct interviews with Sow that have helped to convince me of the shades of difference between the reception of immigrants in various European countries. For the latter, see Frontex as cited in the bibliography.

voice in the matter of migration. Finally, for the receiving countries, the media is a key player, but the role of the media in the sending countries remains largely untapped.

Not surprisingly a primary motivation for the young migrants is the vision of a better life for themselves and their loved ones.¹⁰ Add to that the proven fact that this internet generation—even in poor rural areas—receives a constant barrage of images that create an illusion of how well the rest of the world lives.¹¹ How many young people are likely to prefer to remain at home where even the most basic of last century's commodities like running water and electricity elude them? Even with the relative comfort of the bosom of the family, few cherish the thought of the status quo. By any means possible, then, these young people will seek a better life for themselves and for their families. The means of overcoming poverty for a poor person often translates into the boat experience.

Some families actually weigh carefully their options for deciding which family member is the most likely candidate to successfully cross the waters and find employment “on the other side”. The chosen one might be a strong male youth who possesses great will power to succeed. Conversely, it may be someone whom the family feels is less needed in the day-to-day struggle to survive at home. The community is also an actor in the push factor. Fueled by the by the global social disease of “keeping up with the Joneses”, neighboring families feel compelled to obtain the same material possessions or upward mobility as their neighbors. The smugglers figure prominently in the migration experience. Without them, it would be impossible for the poor to make the trek. In the past the journey often occurred aboard fishing boats that, by nature, are not

¹⁰ Interviews with street vendors in Madrid inform this statement.

¹¹ Whether through television, boot-leg or legitimate videos, and occasional opportunities to surf the net, no poor, rural youth are completely cut off from images of world materiality and excess in the 21st century.

seaworthy crafts meant to cross international waters, but rather local boats designed for plying the fishing trade a few miles from the fisherman's shore. The people who agreed to transport the aspiring migrants are sometimes fishermen eager to earn a little more money from transporting the migrants. Increasingly however, the actors are professional smugglers, often referred to as "the mafia," who are unscrupulous and uncaring about their human cargo. These include drug smugglers who can have a higher success rate of getting their "shipment" to its destination.¹²

A Spanish Case Study

The new migration of West Africans to Europe, like all migrations, is a multi-level phenomenon involving more than the would-be immigrants and those who work to get them to their desired destination. Implicit in the process of this migration are also the nations themselves from which the young people leave as well as the countries to where they flock. Spain becomes an excellent case study for the migration of West Africa's young to Europe. It is one of the most current of desired locations by the young people— if not as a final destination, at least as a foothold into European society. Further, the West African nation of Senegal offers a rich vein of data for analysis. Of note is the evolution of the formal reactions to the migration by government entities and other actors from both Spain and Senegal. Also the study is enriched by the human factor of those who actually experience the migration process. Migration from Senegal appears to occur in a more organized fashion but also responses to migration appear to be more

¹²For example, in August, 2007, more than 90 young people were stranded by their smugglers off the coast of Mauritania with their money taken and their lives in peril. They were duped by the smugglers who left them to fend for themselves after the smugglers apparently realized that officials were closing in on them. These were some of the relatively lucky ones who did not reach their destination. Far too many die at sea, either because they are abandoned by their smugglers or because their rickety boat crafts are no match for the rough waters of the open sea. See Bajo article in bibliography. Spanish newspapers and television do an admirable job of documenting each individual crisis as it unfolds.

forthcoming, including from President Wade with his characteristic outspokenness on the broader subject of developing nations and developed ones.¹³ Because of these factors, a greater degree of research already exists on Senegal than on the majority of other sending nations.

Of the recent West African immigrant groups in Spain, the Senegalese appear to enjoy more success once immigrants reach the peninsula. Some of this is undoubtedly due to the longevity of this national ethnic group in Spain. Unlike countries like Ghana and Guinea, Senegal has a longer record of activity in Spain, particularly in the Catalonia region. Hence, upon arrival into the country, there is a better possibility that the new immigrant can receive the basic necessities of shelter, food, and clothing as well as the possibility of help in finding gainful employment. This self-help strategy does not always work, but it nevertheless shows a higher scale of organization than what many other West Africans enjoy in Spain.¹⁴

Spanish reaction to this migration has been mixed and depends greatly on a number of factors, among them: time frame under consideration, political party affiliation, region of the country, and to some degree, age of the person. When it became obvious that so many from the developing world were entering the country without benefit of legal papers, Spain began to forcibly attempt to keep out those who wanted to

¹³ Wade freely shares his consistent opinion that, because developed nations had a hand in the underdevelopment of struggling nations, it is only fitting that they work towards solving the development problems of the latter. In addition, Wade is one of the original architects of NEPAD (the New Partnership for African Development) that advocates, among other initiatives, the partnering of developed nations with developing ones.

¹⁴ The Senegalese NGO, like that of many such NGOs that came into existence in recent years, serves the clear objective of helping to integrate the recently arrived into Spanish society. In addition, the Association of Senegalese in Catalonia recently celebrated twenty years of official existence. For some observers, however, the presence of Senegalese in that region is as old as thirty years. I am grateful to Mr. Omar Diatta, Director of the Senegalese NGO for facilitating information on the Association and for other discussions related to West African immigrants in Spain.

enter their country illegally. Initially, the strategies used by Spain were predictable military maneuvers that served more to exacerbate the problem than to remedy it. Rather than address the issues of why the young people leave the African continent and arrive on their shores, Spain threatened the governments of those countries with cutting off development aid. Now with the backing of its EU partners, Spain exercises a more diplomatic approach that involves a greater degree of dialogue with African countries. ((Ros; Chou) Now, due to a number of combined factors, Spain's current migration strategy is arguably one of the most progressive in Western Europe. Whether it is from the top-down—government to grass roots organizations—or vice versa, Spain is providing a model for other EU nations seeking to grapple with a situation that has its deepest roots in the first modern colonial contacts between the continents of Africa and Europe.

When the Socialist Worker's Party of Spain (PSOE) came to power in 2004, it began to usher in a number of reforms that countered some of the actions of the previous government led by the more conservative Popular Party. While those changes may not appear to be radical in comparison with global initiatives related to migration, within their Spanish context, they constitute relative breakthroughs. Among those changes has been a reexamination of immigration policies that has culminated so far in the formation of a cabinet-level position on immigration. As evidence of the mood of the average Spanish citizen, President Zapatero enjoys a 91% approval rating for his immigration policies in contrast to Mariano Rajoy and his Popular Party. Not only did Rajoy lose in his bid to replace Zapatero as president, he also failed in his attempt to legislate austere penalties for undocumented immigrants. Among the proposals were segregated

schooling and signed integration contracts that, among other characteristics, would have the immigrant pledge to speak only the Spanish language. These initiatives worked in Italy, but were soundly defeated by the Spanish people. Spaniards of the hip hop generation often embrace the cause of fellow young people—if not as their own cause at least as part of the perception that the young are “victims of society.”¹⁵ Predictably, the mood of the Canary Islands as well as Andalusia offers a different picture when it comes to immigration. These regions are the first to receive the undocumented migrants, and reception for these West Africans is less welcoming there.

Within the EU there are a number of intergovernmental agencies, NGOs and other entities are involved in the question of undocumented migrants. Of those, two have particular importance to this article: the ministerial coalition that produced the Rabat Declaration and the organization known as Frontex. Within Spain itself, both the Spanish Red Cross as well as the National Guard play decisive roles in the matter of undocumented migrants.

The 2006 Rabat Declaration is an initiative by the European Union that managed to get fifty-seven countries from the European Union and Africa to sign an agreement related to joint cooperation. Twenty-six of these are African countries and twenty-one countries are from Europe. The stated aims are for the two regions to work together for the mutual benefit of both continents. In addition to agreeing that legal migration is the only type of migration acceptable, the action plan of the declaration seeks ways to stem the flow of illegal migration by addressing its root causes. The EU has provided an increasing number of financial resources to bolster the effort, and it appears to adopt a

¹⁵ Not only do the Spanish young express their acceptance through work in NGOs and other social outlets, they partner with the migrants in the production of videos and other media viewed by the young. See Mensah in the bibliography as one example of this cooperative spirit among the young

multi-pronged approach to undocumented migration. While the EU clearly supports Frontex and its coercive approach to halting migration, with the Rabat Declaration it is also attempting a soft power approach of development initiatives (Chou)

Frontex, on the other hand gets physically involved in removing undocumented migrants or preventing them from reaching any part of Europe. It defines itself as an “EU agency **based in Warsaw**, [that] was created as a specialised and independent body tasked to coordinate the operational **cooperation between Member States** in the field of border security”. Frontex has become very adept at stemming the flow of migrants—apparently by any means necessary. The organization is in the forefront of the effort to detain would-be migrants in holding camps before they can reach the European cities where they want to work. They now repel these young people in national waters that are sovereign to African countries like Senegal, Mauritania, and Gambia. This legal situation became questionable to NGOs like ECRE, and now Frontex is working with African governments in joint efforts to keep the young people on African soil. (Frontex) Specifically through their operations called Hera I and Hera II,¹⁶ Frontex states in one example that: “Frontex experts and Spanish authorities identified 100% of the illegal migrants. 6076 of those illegal migrants were returned to their countries of origin backed by the Spanish authorities; the countries of origin were mainly Morocco, Senegal, Mali, Gambia and Guinea. Through the information collected during the interviews, it was possible to detain several facilitators mainly in Senegal and to avoid the departure of more than one thousand people.” Their self-touted successes in their first year of operations netted them an increased operational budget in subsequent years.

¹⁶ Named after the Greek goddess who was both the wife and sister of Zeus. The naming pattern is similar to other operations that Frontex undertakes.

For the migrants who are not forced back into African waters by Frontex, the Spanish Red Cross is often the first to respond to their arrival, especially if there is a disaster at sea. Theirs is a rescue mission, plucking survivors out of the water and hauling the drowned to make-shift morgues. Feeding, clothing, and providing shelter to those who have spent days at sea becomes the next priority. It is a scene that is played out constantly on Spanish television as well as other media. Behind the scenes and once the basic human needs of the migrants are assured, the National Guard takes possession of the captured migrants. The migrants are then detained in temporary holding facilities. If the authorities can determine their country of origin, they are returned home. If no home country can be gleaned, they are taken to Madrid where they are further held for a period of two months. Unless there is a revelation of their home country, the former sea migrants are released into Spanish society. Some without orientation fend for themselves by any means necessary, while others with a bit of knowledge of the migration process find informal or formal support outlets to help with their integration into the new country.¹⁷

In contrast to the efforts of receiving nations and regions, the governments and other non family actors from the sending countries in Africa have had less direct say in the matter of their young people leaving in high numbers. This is starting to change from the highest levels to the level of non state actors with less political and economic sway. For example, there is now a joint effort between the EU-ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) that attempts to tackle the root causes of migration. These in turn are tied to the Millennium Development Goals as put forth by the World

¹⁷ Again Mr. Diatta's observations proved invaluable to this portion of my research. In addition, see the articles as cited in the bibliography and as an example of a situation that repeats itself with only slight variations.

Bank. Initiatives are beginning to emanate from the continent's ruling governmental body—the African Union—and an overarching policy agreement among African countries that grapples with the crisis is gradually coming to fruition. Among the most telling actions is the creation of an official position known as a Migration Officer with concrete duties related to all manner of migration, including the flow of undocumented Africans out of the continent.¹⁸

As an example of both regional cooperation and the legal course of action from sending nations, there is the attempt to clamp down on undocumented migrants from the Bundung Magistrates' Court in Gambia whose decision to imprison those Senegalese migrants and to later deport them to their country. NGOs and other non-governmental entities are beginning to address the situation. Of particular note are actions taken by the NGO West African Women's Association (WAWA) which is beginning to grapple with the social costs of this migration.¹⁹

Not only at the official level are discussions and actions starting to take place, but it appears that at the level of the family unit there are second thoughts on sending their young people where they are placed in harm's way. One can only expect more initiatives like that of the Thiaroye-Sur-Mer group which was formed out of concern for their loved-ones who were dying at sea. Despite the lure of supposed riches and social betterment among their migrant offspring, these rival co-wife mothers, engaged the help of local *mourides* (Islamic leaders) in order to combat the perception among their youth

¹⁸ Other actions include the multilateral "African Common Position on Migration and Development" and the "Workshop on Inter-state and Intra-Regional Cooperation on Migration Management." Visit www.africa-union.org for greater detail and for other pro-active initiatives.

¹⁹ For the legal action taken by Gambia see, Bajo, et al. Regarding WAWA, the organization held its founding meeting in August, 2007, and they are in the forefront of efforts to stem the tide of losses of the region's youth. See the article "From Dakar, the Voice of Women Against Youth Migration"

that getting to Europe was easy and that life on another continent was paradise.

(“Migration-A Mother’s Load”) One can only expect more such grassroots initiatives and at a higher level of regional organization.

Above is a summary of the difficult side of the journey made by undocumented migrants from their native countries to their new home. Proactive measures by both the receiving and sending nations provide some hope that the most negative effects of the sea journey will decrease substantially in the not-too-distant future. Upcoming research includes a comparative look at what happens to those who make it beyond the shore and into the host country. What economic impact do they have on nations now with low birth rates for its native citizens and with more jobs than citizens to work them? How are these nations changing as a result of the influx of West African immigrants. Will the impact on European culture be similar to the way that Ethiopians and Somalis, for example, impact the current Washington DC area?²⁰ Data is beginning to be more readily available on the effects on the family and the society “back home”. Most of this data shows positive gains for the sending country like remittances that contribute to the family and the local economy. (Bledsoe, Sow, Ros, Trager) Future research reveals some of the negative consequences to a migrant’s long-term absence from the homeland. Also part of the larger research is the issue of why some people stop migrating while others choose not to leave at all. Equally important is the study of when migrants voluntarily return home. A broader, comparative study allows me to measure

²⁰ Due to their lack of educational and economic attainment, these migrants have less in common with groups like Miami Cubans who radically overhauled the economy and culture of the Southern Florida area. This is to the point that Miami is arguably the financial capital of the whole of Latin America. In addition, Miami Cubans, a power-wielding factor in national elections.

longitudinally these factors and outcomes and show what the broader implications are for African Diaspora studies.

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