

## **Legalization, Transnationalism and Integration: The case of Senegalese Migration in Europe**

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### **Objective**

Many European countries have embarked on a variety of legalization schemes for resident irregular migrants over the past twenty years. This policy intervention has led to debate, with *sans papiers* claiming the rights and stability associated with legal status while politicians and policy makers debate what kind of migrants should have access to these rights (Laubenthal 2007). At the same time, the debate around immigrant integration in Europe revolves around the degree to which migrants trade their pre-existing social, political, and cultural allegiances for membership in secular European society; it is questionable whether transnational practices – such as sending remittances, participating in hometown associations, or engaging in circular temporary migration – help or hinder this process of assimilation. Previous research on Latin American migration to the United States has found that incorporation in the host society does not weaken transnational practices (Itzigsohn and Saucedo 2002), but the relationship between transnationalism and immigrant integration in European societies remains unexplored.

We wish to test the relationship between the legal and political dimension of immigrant integration embodied in changes in legal status and the social, cultural, and economic dimension of integration evidenced in transnational practices. Does legalization – a move towards fuller legal inclusion in the host society – lead to a decrease in transnational activities that connect migrants to their sending communities? We hypothesize that the impact of legalization will differ across countries according with different contexts of reception of immigrants. We also hypothesize that the impact of legalization will vary with the type of transnational activity, with legalization promoting some kinds of connections with home communities (such as the ability to circulate between origin and destination) while perhaps attenuating other kinds of transnational activities. Our final hypothesis concerns the link between transnational practices, legalization, and integration in the host society: instead of a monotonic relationship between integration and transnational practices, we expect that the interaction of legal status and measures of integration will have varying impacts on the transnational practices of migrants in European societies.

These hypotheses will be tested through quantitative techniques looking specifically at the Senegalese population. We will thus bring new evidence on the understanding of African migration, a flow of special interest for European policy makers, as exemplified by the various Euro-African conferences on migration (Rabat, Tripoli, Paris) or The Global Approach to Migration and the priority actions focusing on Africa (Commission of the European Communities 2006). More specifically, we will contribute to a better understanding of the process and consequences of legalization.

## Data & Methods

The analyses performed in this paper will rely on a new data source extracted from the Migration between Africa and Europe (MAFE-Senegal) project<sup>1</sup>. This project aims at filling the gap, largely admitted, in data availability on African international migration (Hatton and Williamson 2003; Lucas 2006). In short, the MAFE survey design rests on the two following principles:

- (1) *Longitudinal data*. The MAFE project collected rich retrospective data on more than 1,700 individuals interviewed in 2008. Life histories were collected on various core aspects of the interviewees' life such as family formation, education and employment, housing, migration, etc. In addition, one module is specifically dedicated to the legal status of the individuals while they were living outside of their country; other modules focus on transnational practices, such as remittances, investments at origin, and visits. All the information collected is time-varying so that all changes in the above cited domains are recorded in the data. Therefore, it is possible to study to what extent transnational activities tend to decrease or progress after change of legal status.
- (2) *A transnational sample*. The MAFE project was conducted both at origin (1,150 individuals in Dakar, Senegal) and in the selected destination countries of Spain, Italy and France (200 migrants per country). These three countries account for 45% of the international Senegalese community<sup>2</sup> and about three quarters of the Senegalese spread across Western countries<sup>3</sup>. The transnational character of the MAFE database allows inclusion in the analyses of individuals who have returned in Senegal after a stay in Europe and thus avoids potential biases in the retrospective measurement of transnational activities. Furthermore the inclusion of three different countries allows study of the extent to which transnational practices vary according to the destination country, especially in relation to varying policy contexts regarding regularisation.

The first part of our results will describe the legal status of Senegalese migrants, how they enter into Europe and to what extent initially undocumented migrants access a legal status. It will furthermore explore how legal and illegal migrants differ in terms of integration at destination (as measured by occupational status, housing conditions, and other indicators) and in terms of transnational practices.

The second and more substantial part will test the influence of the legal status on transnational practices through discrete-time event history models, estimated through binary logistic regression (Allison 1995). Separate models will be used to explain (1) remittances to relatives at origin; (2) investments in land, housing or business; and (3) visits to Senegal. The legal status will be the main variable of interest. Indicators of integration at destination will also be

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<sup>1</sup> The Migration between Africa and Europe (MAFE-Senegal) survey is a project coordinated by INED (France), in association with the Institut de Population, Développement et Santé de la Reproduction of the University of Dakar (IPDSR, Senegal). It also involves the Pompeu Fabra university (UPF, Spain) and the Forum Internazionale ed Europeo di Ricerche sull'immigrazione (FIERI, Italy). The survey was conducted with the support of the Agence nationale de la recherche (ANR, France), the Ile de France Region, the Institut de recherche pour le développement (IRD, France), the Centre population et développement (CEPED, France) and the FSP programme entitled 'International Migrations, territorial reorganizations and development of the countries of the South'. The MAFE-Senegal project is now being enlarged to Ghanaian and Congolese Migrations thanks to European funding. For more information, see: <http://www.mafeproject.com/>.

<sup>2</sup> Personal computation of the last Senegalese Census (2002).

<sup>3</sup> Personal computation of the Database on Immigrants in OECD countries (DIOC).

introduced, such as the kind of occupation and the type of housing, in order to test their effect on transnational practices. Finally, other variables will be introduced to control for their influence on transnational practices (migration duration, family situation, etc.). All variables likely to change over time will be treated as time-varying variable in the dataset.

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