

STUCK IN TRANSIT: NARRATIVES OF YOUNG SENEGALESE EMIGRANTS EN ROUTE TO EUROPE

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My research is concerned with the different ways the mobility of the poor is restricted by a global migration that focusses on securitization, allowing western governments to engage on violations of human rights of migrants.

As a result, these immigration and border control policies are responsible in both increasing the risks and costs of crossing European borders, creating a very lucrative market for smugglers and traffickers.

The research examines how the change in global migration over the past three decades combined with both the externalization of European borders and the continuing outsourcing of border control to transit and sending countries has resulted in a continuous migration crisis in both the Atlantic and the Mediterranean. The first major crisis happened in 2005-06 with the rush to Spain by young Africans using traditional boats to the Canary Islands. The

large number of clandestine migrants arriving in the Canary Islands combined with the dramatic images of dead bodies floating in the Atlantic or washing off the African Coast attracted the attention of the western media for a long period of time.

The same amount of attention is also given to the experience of risky border crossing from North African countries to Italy with its records of death in the Mediterranean Sea described by some as a “liquid cemetery.” Less discussed is the experience of thousands of young Africans in countries of transit and their hope and fear of crossing borders, their countless stories of harsh conditions of travel and of life in transit countries like Morocco, and Turkey and Greece. My research focusses on the narrative of travel and failed and/or successful border crossings by young Senegalese emigrants and the prospect of staying, continuing, and returning. Although

we include cases of both successful crossing and hopeless return to home, we are mainly interested in the extended life experience of the young Senegalese in places where they were envisioning staying only temporarily.

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