

Migration attempts from Senegal – who tries, who succeeds, who fails?

Evidence on individual selection and the role of immigration policies

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Introduction and research objectives

Restrictive immigration policies are regarded by European destination countries as a way to control migration, but may at the same time build up “pools of migrant candidates” in the origin countries. In such a context, one needs not only a better understanding of the motives and characteristics of migrants at destination, but also of migrant candidates remaining at origin, and of the factors determining whether they do or do not carry out the move. Does immigration policy indeed play a role? And if yes, does it affect the migration decision or the actual move to Europe? Or are other factors dominating at the two stages (decision-making and actual move), in particular the presence of a migrant network?

The aim of this paper is to investigate the two processes – migration decision and actual migration – jointly. We analyse the case of Senegalese migration “candidates” and their actual move to the three main European destination countries, France, Italy and Spain. To operationalise the migration decision-making before departure, we use information about migration “attempts”, which reflect the stated intention but require in addition that the individual has already taken some concrete steps towards migrating. More specifically, the research objective is to examine if and how migration push- and pull factors, in particular levels of and changes in migration policies as well as the existence and location of migrant networks affect the attempt to migrate to France, Italy and Spain, the successful realisation of the attempt, or both processes.

The existing empirical literature on determinants of migration is to a large extent restricted to either realised migration or stated intentions before moving. Papers that do investigate gaps between the migration decision and the outcome refer mostly to the “theory of planned behaviour” (Ajzen, 1985), which considers intentions to be the main determinant of behaviour. Several papers examined internal migration patterns and concluded that there is a significant group showing “inconsistent” behaviour, not acting upon the stated intention (e.g. Sly and Wrigley, 1985 (Kenya); Fuller et al., 1985 (Thailand); Gardner et al., 1985 (Philippines); De Jong, 2000 (Thailand)). Analysing intentions/attempts as well as actual migration behaviour in the context of long-distance international migration is rather challenging and empirical evidence remains scarce. An exception is the study by Van Dalen and Henkens (2008), who use data from a survey capturing migration intentions in the Netherlands, as well as a tracer survey two years later to ascertain in how far migration intentions were realised. The findings suggest that intentions are an important but far from perfect predictor of migration, and that the same factors determine intentions and actual migration. However, no comparable study exists for a developing country context. In addition, given that studies have focused on internal migration and migration of Europeans, the role of immigration policies targeting non-EU foreign born has not been examined.

The findings of this paper should thus provide new insights into selection processes underlying migration decisions and actual migration from a Sub-Saharan African country at the individual and

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family levels, as well as regarding the role of contextual factors. Moreover, the study contributes to the increasingly active discussion on measurement of immigration policies (e.g. Czaika and de Haas, 2011).

Data and Methods

This paper uses a new set of biographic survey data collected in 2008 in the framework of the MAFE-Senegal project (Migration between Africa and Europe).² In the region of Dakar, approximately 1,100 non-migrants and return migrants were interviewed. In addition, 600 migrants were interviewed in the main Senegalese destinations in Europe (Spain, Italy, and France).

The survey design rests on two principles:

(1) *Longitudinal data*, obtained through the collection of retrospective life histories covers the life of the respondents from their birth till the time of the survey. Life spheres covered in the questionnaire include, for instance, employment, family formation and housing histories, as well as the migrations of members of the respondent's social network. At the same time, the retrospective data allows us to cover historical time from the mid-1960s to 2008.

(2) A *transnational sample*, collecting information on non-migrants and return migrants at origin, and on current migrants at destination.

The analysis takes advantage of information capturing not only realised migrations to France, Spain and Italy and the preparation period before departure, but also unsuccessful attempts and the planned destination. It is therefore possible to identify individuals who have never attempted migration, individuals who attempted migration but have not migrated, and individuals who attempted and migrated. Moreover, one can determine the targeted destination country and date both the start of an attempt and the departure to France, Italy or Spain.

The processes of attempt and migration can be described formally as follows (see e.g. Litchfield and Reilly, 2009):

$$y_{1ii}^* = x'_{1ii}\beta + Pol'_{1i}\delta + Econ'_{1i}\gamma + \varepsilon_1 \quad [1]$$

$$y_{2i}^* = x'_{2i}\gamma + Pol'_{2i}\delta + Econ'_{2i}\gamma + \varepsilon_2 \quad [2]$$

where y_{1ii}^* is the latent propensity to attempt migration, y_{2i}^* is the latent propensity to migrate, and X , Pol and $Econ$ are factors of individual and household variables, immigration policy variables and economic context variables.

This equation structure suggests the use of a bivariate probit model with selection, where the error terms ε_1 and ε_2 are distributed as bivariate normal with means zero, variances one, and correlation ρ . We make use of the retrospective data and incorporate the temporal dimension of the decision-making process by estimating the attempts equation as time to the first migration attempt to France, Italy or Spain with discrete-time event history methods jointly with the binary migration realisation equation. The units of analysis in the bivariate probit model with selection are thus person-years in the first equation, and individuals in the second equation.

² The MAFE survey is coordinated by INED (C. Beauchemin, Paris), in cooperation with the "Institut de Population, Développement et Santé de la Reproduction" University Cheikh Anta Diop (IPDSR, Senegal). Other partners: Pompeu Fabra University (P. Baizan), the Centro Nacional de Investigacion Cientifica (A. Gonzalez-Ferrer), and FIERI (Forum Internazionale ed Europeo di Ricerche sull'Immigrazione; E. Castagnone).

Time-varying covariates in the attempts equation and characteristics measured at the end of the attempt in the migration equation are introduced to capture effects of changes in individual characteristics (e.g. gender, age, education, marital status, employment status), and family characteristics (e.g. household composition, type of dwelling, subjective wealth measure, and variables identifying migration experience in the social network). As the attempts of individuals surveyed took place at different points in time, it is furthermore important to capture the effect of economic conditions in the targeted destination countries as well as at origin, and of the restrictiveness of immigration policies at destination at the time of the attempt and migration.

In this respect, a contribution of the paper consists in the construction and test of immigration policy indicators which vary over time and are comparable across the three countries. The indicators have been developed based on the in-depth analysis of policy texts, at legislative and regulative levels. A list of ca. 40 indicators has been identified, covering the most important dimensions of entry: requirements for visa for short stays, automatic acquisition of residence permit, variables related to illegal migration such as permanent regularisation mechanisms, conditions in retention centres, requirements for family reunification, labour immigration and entering the country as a student. The policy conditions in a given country and year are then scored according to three categories established for each indicator. Finally, variables for analysis are defined by aggregating the scores.

According to the preliminary findings, still without inclusion of policy variables, more educated Senegalese males who perceive that their household is in financial difficulties, have some previous international migration experience and network connections in the destination area, are more likely to attempt to move to Europe. However, once the decision-making process is taken into account, the individual determinants of actually moving do not completely fit with the conventional wisdom. On the one hand, no gender differences are observed in the likelihood to successfully carry out the migration plan. Moreover, years of education are not a significant predictor of moving, conditional on having attempted migration. On the other hand, both material resources in the attempter's household and personal links to other migrants in the country of destination substantially improve the migrants' chances to succeed. In this regard it seems important to highlight that only country-specific migrant social capital and migration-specific human capital turns out to be helpful in the realization of the move. In fact, migrant networks elsewhere, as well as previous migration experience to other African countries, significantly reduce the chances to actually leave. Finally, the role of contextual variables also seems to vary throughout the process leading to an international move. Widening gaps between origin and destination economic conditions increase the likelihood of migrating but not necessarily of starting the attempt in the first place.

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